COMPARATIVE POLITICS EXAM

FALL 2015

Please put your Student ID number at the top of each page of your examination. **DO NOT** write your name anywhere on the examination. Number your pages consecutively for the entire examination. Submit a cover page with your responses that lists the following: ID number, type of exam completed (e.g. MA major, MA minor) and examination area, as well as the semester in which you are taking the exam. Cite sources throughout your essay, where appropriate, using standard format and provide a single bibliography that includes all the materials used in preparing your answers. Clearly label each answer with the number of the question you are answering. Budget your time carefully, including time to think and organize while preparing and writing the answers. Focus on preparing coherent, well-organized essays that not only demonstrate your mastery of the literature, but also indicate how the literature expands our collective knowledge. Students are expected to work independently on this examination and not discuss the essay items and responses with others.

MA Majors – please answer one question from each section for a total of four.

MA Minors – please answer three questions. You can select your three from any of the four sections but you cannot select more than one from a section.
Section A.

1. What is selection Bias? And can it be overcome?

2. Evaluate the relative advantages and disadvantages of case-oriented versus large-N research designs. In your answer, use illustrations from a body of research in a thematic area of your choice (ex: democracy and democratization; parties and representation, political participation, etc.).

Section B.

3. What is (are) the role(s) of a model in political science? In your answer, consider diverse types of models, and support your argument with illustrations from a body of research in a thematic area of your choice (ex: democracy and democratization; parties and representation, political participation, etc.).

4. Is there a coherent theoretical and empirical core in the “New Institutionalism” literature? And how does it relate (some) to the “empirics” of New Institutionalism?

Section C.

5. Is a comprehensive theory of violence (be it revolution, civil war, etc) needed? If yes, why? If no, then what would be a better conceptualization of violence?

6. The constructivist-primordialist debate has ended. Has an integrative conception of ethnicity in terms of how it is conceptualized and measured emerged. If so, how? If not, why? (Provide concrete illustrations).

Section D.

7. How are issues of measurement of democratization linked to its conceptualization and definition? Provide specific illustrations in your response and indicate a “pragmatic” solution to the problematic of measurement.

8. Evaluate the suitability of a linear model of causality for the study of a substantive question of your own choice. (Several examples which you are free to consider: Under what conditions to parties or party systems grow more nationalized? How do social cleavages get transformed into the political domain? What caused the Arab Spring uprisings?). Be sure to include in your answer references to both linear and non-linear works. You might consider diversity of causal processes; causal complexity (ex: Ragin’s “The Comparative Method”); the role of time (ex: Pierson’s treatment of time in “Politics in Time”); etc.