Comparative Politics Exam
Spring 2005

Student ID# ____________________________

Directions:

- Please put your Student ID number at the top of each page of your examination. **DO NOT** write your name anywhere on the examination.

- Submit a cover page with your responses that lists the following: ID number, type of exam completed (e.g. MA major, MA minor, PhD major, PhD minor). Return the examination to Traci when completed.

- Clearly label each answer with the number of question you are answering.

- Number your pages consecutively for the entire examination.

- Cite sources throughout your essay, where appropriate, using standard format and provide a bibliography that includes all the materials used in preparing your answers.

- This is an open book examination. Focus on preparing coherent, well-organized essays that demonstrate the breadth and depth of your knowledge. Avoid overlapping material from one question to the next.

MA Minors – please answer two (2) questions, one (1) from each section. You have four (4) hours to complete the exam.

MA Majors – please answer three (3) questions, with at least one (1) question from each section. You have six (6) hours to complete the exam.

PhD Minors – please answer three (3) questions, with at least one (1) question from each section. You have six (6) hours to complete the exam.

PhD Majors – please answer four (4) questions. Two (2) from Section A and two (2) from section B. You have eight (8) hours to complete the exam.
Section A.

1. Identify three ontological frameworks in comparative politics. Then, compare and contrast the conceptual and empirical dimensions of two out of the three.

2. Citing examples compare and contrast the "historical comparative method" of inquiry to the case study, and the cross-national methods in comparative politics. When is the comparative historical method most appropriate?

3. "Selection Bias" has become a hotly discussed topic in comparative politics. What is selection bias? And what is its relationship to small N research? Finally, can it be overcome in small N research designs?

4. Is there a coherent theoretical core in "new institutionalism" literature? If there is, what is it? If there is not, why is this the case?

5. What are some of the basic assumptions that underpin rational choice models?

6. Should the process of establishing democratic regimes be measured on a continuous scale, e.g. from –10 to 10 or as a dichotomous or trichotomous variable. Situate your response in the broader context of how democracy and democratization are conceptualized and measured.

Section B.

1. A number of scholars have discussed a difference between “communitarian” or “coordinated” and “Anglo-American” or “liberal” versions of capitalism. What are these differences and are they significant? Have the differences substantially diminished in recent years?

2. What is the role of ideas in political change? How can we distinguish the impact of ideas from other factors in determining political change?

3. Most of the post-Communist countries are simultaneously undergoing democratic reforms and economic reforms. What is the relationship between democratization and economic liberalization? Do these two types of reforms reinforce each other, or can they undermine each other?

4. What are the constructivist and primordialist approaches to the study of nations and nationalism? Compare and critically assess the main theoretical claims advanced by these two schools of thought.

5. What if anything has the study of comparative genocide added to our knowledge of the origins and process of genocide?
6. Modernization and the spread of global capitalism were supposed to undermine the basis for ethnic and religious conflict. Citing various studies, how do you explain the contemporary explosion of ethnic and religious conflict?