Comparative Politics
Spring 2007

Directions:

- Please put your NEW 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.

- 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 question you are answering.

- 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) and examination area. Please list the semester the examination is taken as well.

- 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.

MA Minors – please answer three questions, with no more than two questions from either Section A or B.

MA Majors – please answer two questions from Section A and two from Section B.
Section A.

1. Political culture has experienced a revival among comparativists in recent years. Identify and explain some of the main currents in the political cultural literature. Is there a unified theory and/or core set of assumptions that political culturalists share? Is there a unified and/or core methodology (or methodologies) in the literature?

2. Compare and contrast a subjective/inter-subjective understanding of political culture. Specify any differences in theoretical construction(s) and methodology (or methodologies).

3. Explain the issue of "selection bias" in qualitative (comparative) research. Then discuss whether or not it can be overcome in the design of a research project.

4. How is the concept of preferences and preference formation dealt with in the literature on "new institutionalism"? Are there any noteworthy distinctions between historical, rational choice, and sociological "new institutionalisms" on the issue of preferences and preference formation?

5. What is the best way to understand the diversity of forms of nationalism in different social, political, and ideological contexts?

Section B.

1. What if anything has the study of comparative genocide added to our knowledge of the origins and process of genocide?

2. How different are the measures different advanced industrialized economies take to reduce economic inequality within the domestic economy? What explains the differences? Are different states converging on their approaches to inequality? You may want to address the "Varieties of Capitalism" literature in answering this question.

3. What challenges did the Cold War present to democratization for capitalist societies on the front lines of the Cold War?

4. Using one or more specific country cases, discuss the challenges of democratization in a formerly or currently Communist state.

5. What are the virtues and drawbacks of close historical comparison of country cases?
6. Issues concerning measurement validity for both quantitative and qualitative research have emerged as an important topic in comparative analysis. What are these issues? What literature in comparative politics has been cited frequently in relationship to measurement validity problems?