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. Does Comparative Politics have a coherent epistemological basis? If it does, explain what it is. If it does not, explain why not.

2. Answer either part “a” or part “b”

a. What is the comparative method?

b. What is selection bias and can it be overcome?

Section B.

3. Identify a large, multidimensional concept in an area of interest to you and evaluate whether or not it has been subject to some of the abuses that the methodological literature warns about (e.g., conceptual stretching).

4. Provide a comprehensive explanation of Lipset’s thesis and a critical assessment of whether or not it has been impoverished – conceptually and empirically - as it has evolved into a mainstay of the democratization literature.

Section C.

5. Paul Pierson, in his 2004 book Politics in Time, criticizes scholars who emerge first from a methodological perspective: “...When faced with a causal account employing a long-term temporal structure, quantitative scholars (as well as some rational-choice theorists) might well respond by exclaiming, “I can model that!” This riposte loses much of its bite, however, if the theoretical imageries and methods these analysts employ rarely lead them to consider the outcomes or hypotheses in question in the first place.” (pp. 9-10). Critically evaluate this claim. Use a substantive area of comparative research to anchor your discussion.

6. Critically compare and contrast “rational choice” institutionalism with “historical” institutionalism.

Section D.

7. Communist states have held on to power in East Asia and Cuba even though they collapsed over two decades ago Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Discussing one or more states, explain why Communist parties remain in power.
What factors threaten their hold on power? What theories or approaches can best help us understand the politics of Leninist states?

8. “Among the wealthy industrialized democracies, the United States is unique in many respects.” What would you draw on from your study of comparative politics to evaluate this assertion?

9. Ethnicity has become a newly salient political issue in states where it previously took a back seat. In Western Europe some political parties and leaders have promoted a politics of resentment again non-European immigrants and their descendants. Race and ethnicity have become politicized in countries such as Brazil, Bolivia, and Peru as part of a strategy of low-income and marginalized groups to make a claim for greater power and resources. Discussing one or more countries or world regions, consider whether and how the place of ethnic identity is affecting politics. What theories or approaches can help us understand the political role of ethnicity?