

**Comprehensive Exam**  
Fall 2017  
Comparative Politics  
School of Public and International Affairs  
University of Georgia

**Morning**

Instructions: answer one of the following questions.

1. Create an outline for a comparative politics pre-seminar syllabus (an intro to CP graduate course). Which topics would you cover? Which would you omit? Which works are essential readings for the course? Which readings would you omit? Offer a detailed justification for the topics and the works included and excluded.
  
2. In comparative politics, what defines best practices in terms of creating theories and testing them empirically? With your answer to this question in mind, which approach to comparative political research do you think is most useful? (You may choose, for example: most similar systems design; most different systems design; case studies; the large-*n* statistical approach; or experiments. You are not limited to these approaches, however.) To argue in favor of your preferred approach, identify one testable hypothesis you feel the existing comparative politics literature has not adequately addressed. Then, discuss the relative advantages and disadvantages of your preferred approach, as compared to those of other common approaches, both in general and as applied to the testing of your specific hypothesis.

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**Afternoon**

Instructions: answer two of the following questions.

1. The 1980s and 1990s were decades of globalization and welfare state retrenchment. The received wisdom was that these two phenomena were causally related; that is, that globalization was the main cause of welfare state retrenchment. Discuss this proposition. In your answer, you will need to define the terms globalization and retrenchment, and you will need to assess the magnitude of change of each. To the extent that you question the received wisdom on the effects of globalization, outline alternative sources of welfare state retrenchment, or, more broadly, welfare state change.
2. Research on political behavior generally ascribes outcomes (turnout and participation, vote choice, strategic behavior, etc.) to factors intrinsic to the individual, including ideology, partisanship, and several demographic factors. To what extent are such outcomes also dependent upon the context to which an individual is subject, such as electoral institutions, the party system, or the competitiveness of the election? Is there any evidence that individual-level and contextual factors work in tandem to explain political behavior?
3. How do individual grievances grow into large-scale, violent, internal conflicts (civil wars)? What kinds of political and economic conditions are likely to create grievances against the government? In your answer discuss the strategic and tactical considerations of the aggrieved in organizing resistance (i.e., problems of collective action), as well as the state's response to grievances, and how this may contribute to or help prevent violent conflict.
4. Academic debate on the European Union has moved away from Integration Theory and the attempt to explain the existence of the supranational structure; instead scholarship has diversified to consider Europeanization, enlargement, EU public policy, the democratic deficit, and EU foreign policy, among other issues. Discuss two major threads in EU research today, along with their major debates and findings. Do you agree with Simon Hix, who argues EU scholars should study the EU as a polity, applying the mid-range theories of political science we rely on to explain domestic political systems?
5. What do we know about why democracy emerges and survives? Historically, economic conditions, including development generally and income inequality, have been viewed as important contributing factors to the creation and maintenance of representative government and other checks on state power. What theoretical reasons and empirical evidence do we have to support the claim that economic conditions are related to democratic transitions and survival? Which conditions are the most important in determining whether a country becomes and remains a democracy?

6. Do you agree with the following statement: “Spatial models present a useful theory of what motivates vote choice and of how parties compete.” Explain your answer.