

Morning Section

Instructions:

Answer **one** question from the list provided below.

The best answers to the questions demonstrate knowledge of the theories, debates, methods, evidence, conclusions, and criticisms in the relevant literature. The best answers are also clear, logically organized, and informative to someone familiar with the major works in comparative politics. Be sure to address the question that is asked and take care to define your terms precisely. You can best demonstrate breadth by drawing on different examples, arguments, and literatures across your answers. You may find it useful to think about the question and outline your answer before beginning to write.

1. “Multi-methods” research designs have gained popularity in comparative politics as they supposedly combine the strengths of qualitative and quantitative methods. Has the “multi-methods turn” contributed to progress in the field of comparative politics? Why or why not? In your answer, take a position, make an argument, and draw on key works and strands of research to illustrate your claims and arguments.
2. Name two works in comparative politics that you think have made the most important contributions to the field in terms of introducing new ideas that influenced future research. Explain why you have picked these two works. Discuss their initial contributions to knowledge, the research they have inspired, and how subsequent research may have falsified or verified their insights. What are the key unanswered questions remaining for the research agenda inspired by each work?

Afternoon Section

Instructions:

Answer **two** questions from the list provided below.

The best answers to the questions demonstrate knowledge of the theories, debates, methods, evidence, conclusions, and criticisms in the relevant literature. The best answers are also clear, logically organized, and informative to someone familiar with the major works in comparative politics. Be sure to address the question that is asked and take care to define your terms precisely. You can best demonstrate breadth by drawing on different examples, arguments, and literatures across your answers. You may find it useful to think about the question and outline your answer before beginning to write.

1. Explanations for political violence typically fall into one of two camps. One attributes conflict to political grievances that groups harbor against the government, while the other views conflict as the result of structural conditions that create opportunities for rebel groups to organize. Is one of these views more useful for explaining conflict than the other? Does the empirical record support one view more strongly than the other?
2. How does the literature on authoritarian institutions help us understand regime changes (such as democratization and democratic erosion)?
3. New information and communication technologies have in some cases helped topple entrenched autocrats. But in other cases, they have failed to do so. Survey the burgeoning literature and explain (1) to what extent the expansion of the Internet and social media have challenged authoritarian politics, and (2) what have contributed to the different outcomes regarding authoritarian resilience in the digital age.
4. Some scholars argue that partisanship is the primary driver of vote choice, while others believe that the performance of the incumbent party is a better explanation of who voters choose. Discuss the evidence for these competing perspectives and indicate which you think holds more merit in comparative perspective (that is, outside of the United States).
5. European societies have undergone various economic and social transformations in the last half century. How have these transformations strengthened and weakened liberal democratic politics in Europe?