Instructions:

In answering the following questions, you are expected to draw on as wide a range of literature, authors and cases as possible and to be systematic and detailed in your reference to them.

Morning session

Answer one (1) of the following questions:

1. Discuss the relevance of Marx, Weber and Durkheim to contemporary comparative politics. How have they been historically viewed within the field and how have developments over the last 20 years impacted their relevance to the field today?

2. It has been suggested that "The history of Comparative Politics reveals periods of intellectual stability punctured by moments of theoretical collapse". Do you agree with such an assessment? How would you characterize the contemporary scene? To what extent, and with what results, has the process of stagnation and renewal been influenced by development in adjacent fields, such as political economy and international relations?

Afternoon session

Answer two (2) of the following questions:

1. Half a century ago, one of the great figures of 20th century political science, Seymour Martin Lipset, argued that a stable democracy required certain social bases such as education, national income, political culture, class structure, civil society and state society relations. How has his thesis stood the test of time? To what extent has it been refined and developed? In your answer please specify works and scholars.

2. Electoral processes are a central concern in comparative politics, and in recent years there has been increasing concern with elections in ‘democracies with adjectives’ such as ‘guided’, ‘façade’, or ‘restricted’ democracies. Which theoretical perspectives best explain electoral processes and electoral outcomes, and how does the subfield of CP undertake research in this area? How does the standard of ‘free and fair’ or ‘credible’ elections relate to the situations in which one or more key attributes of democracy are missing (hence the adjectives)? Feel
free to respond to this question by making reference to one or more country or case study examples.

3. In the debate on ‘political culture’, some scholars argue that political culture fundamentally shapes the institutions of a state, while others believe that it is institutions that fundamentally give meaning to political culture. Define political culture and provide some guidance to the proper and improper use of political cultural explanations in light of the above debate, supporting your arguments with examples from two or more countries with which you are familiar.

4. Although some scholars have argued that nationalism would be overwhelmed by the levelling effect of economic and technological globalization, recurring nationalist/ethnic conflicts after the end of the cold war have shown that there is no immediate prospect of transcending nationalism, either as a principle of legitimization or as the basis of political organization. Make a comparative analysis of the politics of at least two countries or regions, explaining how conceptions of political membership, allegiance, and identity have been formed and transformed via nationalist/ethnic sentiments or ideologies.

5. “The evolution of theories of revolution over the last century has provided a bell-weather of the influence of the most important schools of thought in comparative politics, including social psychology, Marxism, modernization theory, theories of ideology and culture, and more recently theories of social movement mobilization”. Assess this statement, providing an account of, and explanation for the ebb and flow of intellectual understandings of political and socio-economic revolutions in recent decades.