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 the following question:

1. Develop a syllabus for an MA survey course in Comparative Politics. Explain your selections of topics, your focus on different parts of the literature, how you would account for the strengths and weaknesses of CP, and how you would convey the complexity and importance of this area of political science to your students? Realizing that there is always a trade-off in a course such as this between depth and breadth, how would you reconcile the need to convey the historical development of CP approaches with CP’s broad scope and world-wide coverage of political phenomena in the contemporary period?

Afternoon session

Answer two (2) of the following questions:

2. In the aftermath of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War in 1991, there was a general belief (as in 1918 and 1945 after the end of two world wars) that a new world order of peace and harmony was finally emerging in the world. Yet, as we have seen in the Russian takeover of Crimea and threats to Ukraine, the Syrian civil war that has killed over 140,000 civilians, the emerging Iranian nuclear threat, the developing North Korean nuclear and missile program and other threats around the world, that this may not be the case once more. Just last week none of the four BRIC countries voted for a UN resolution condemning the Russians (not by name) for their actions. How can we understand this from a CP point of view?

3. Despite efforts by the US and its allies to reshape Iraq and Afghanistan into democratic societies, the situation in those countries remains problematic. Moreover, the early promise of the Arab Spring has obviously not been realized and hopes for a more democratic Arab world have been largely abandoned. This paradigm is not limited to the Middle East, however, as many scholars have argued that the "Third Wave of Democratization" has ended and that democratization is in decline throughout the globe. The issue of democratization has a long history in Comparative Politics theory. Identify the major approaches that have evolved in this area and discuss which of these, if any, enhances our
understanding of the reasons why it has proven so difficult for democratic institutions to thrive in the Arab World and elsewhere.

4. Comparative politics is a field in which scholars apply a great deal of methodological diversity. Among the many methodological choices which researchers must make, one concerns the unit of analysis. Traditionally, the nation-state and its constituent political actors (political parties, bureaucrats, interest groups) have been the unit of analysis of many comparative political studies, but today that practice is being challenged by taking individuals, genders, cities, provinces, continents, networks, and even the world as units of analysis. What is your position on the appropriate unit(s) of analysis in the field? Justify your answer by identifying strengths and/or weaknesses from multiple studies (both classic and recent) using different units of analysis.

5. Scholars have made numerous attempts to explore the intersection between comparative politics and international politics. Liberal intergovernmentalism (Moravcsik), two-level games (Putnam) and the so-called ‘new interdependence approach’ (Farrell and Newman) are just several of the numerous analytical endeavors to adjust CP to the global interpenetration of national polities and markets. How successful have these endeavors been? What are the challenges in developing theoretical and analytical approaches that span the divide between the ‘methodological nationalism’ of comparative politics and transnational focus of international relations?

6. It has been said that the study of revolutions in comparative politics tells us much about the evolution of the discipline more generally, with the waning of the influence of Marxism, the rise and demise of psychological and values-based theories and the emergence of comparative historical institutionalism. Provide a review of the literature on revolutions that covers the work of Barrington Moore, Tilly, Gurr, Skocpol, Goldstone et al, responding first to the claim made above that its evolution reflects that of political science as such since the 1950s, and secondly assessing how successful that evolution has been in keeping pace with the changing character of revolutions in recent decades.