Middle East Technical University

Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences

Department of Political Science and Public Administration

2010-2011 Fall Term

QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

**COMPARATIVE POLITICS & GOVERNMENT**

Please answer **two** of the following three questions:

1. The onslaught of neo-liberalism in Europe marked the beginning of the end for the welfare state".

Do you agree? If so why, if not why not? Please write an essay discussing the above statement with reference to notions such as full employment, competitiveness, social and economic (in)security, etc.

1. Write an essay on semi-presidential systems, by comparing and contrasting them with presidential and parliamentary systems. In your opinion, which type of executive system is better for Turkey, especially after the October 2007 referendum? In answering the question, you are expected to give examples from other countries in order to support your ideas.
2. Is the modern state (relatively) autonomous? Explain and discuss the contributions of state-centered theories? How and what these theories attempt to explain? Give examples from different theories and/ or countries.

**Previous Years:**§         Write an essay critically evaluating S. Huntington’s notion of the clash of civilizations in the context of political development theory.

§         Please write an essay which analyzes the history and trends in Comparative Politics, focussing basically on the methodological shortcomings of the field.

§         Please compare and contrast the disciplines of Comparative Politics and Comparative Government. What are their defining characteristics and to what extent are they related to each other?

§         Write an essay critically evaluating Karl Marx’s and Antonio Gramsci’s conceptions of the relationship between ‘base and superstructure’ by taking into account their implications for comparative study of state-society relations.

§         Write an essay critically discussing the concepts such as corporatism, populism, neo-patrimonialism in regards to the characterisation of state-society relations in the Third World social formations.

§         Please write an essay about the history and trends in Comparative Politics, focusing basically on the methodological shortcomings of the field.

§         "Following an analysis of how various models of party can be located in terms of the relationship between civil society and the state, we contend that the recent period has witnessed the emergence of a new model of party, the cartel part, in which colluding parties become agents of the state and employ the resources of the state (party state) to ensure their own collective survival". Make an assessment on this statement referring to party system change in Western European democracies.

§         Write an essay on the theories of development and underdevelopment by focusing both on the mainstream and alternative/radical approaches.

§         Karl Marx and Max Weber are sometimes considered the precursors of social sciences. Their ideas have substantially shaped the field of Comparative Politics, too. Write a comparative essay on some of the most essential concepts in the thought of Marx and Weber that influenced the major subfields of Comparative Politics.

§         What is Comparative Politics? In what types of studies does the discipline engage in? How does it relate to Political Science in general and Comparative Government in particular? What are some of the main turning points and problems in the history of Comparative Politics?

§         Compare and contrast presidential, parliamentary and semi-presidential systems by analyzing their advantages and disadvantages. In answering the question, you are expected: 1) to provide examples (country cases) for each system, 2) to comment on the Turkish case and discuss the desirability of a presidential system in Turkey.

§         Please write an essay on the applicability of presidential system in Turkey. In answering the question, you are also expected to provide clear examples from other presidential countries as well as the basic characteristics of this system.

§         Compare and contrast modernisation and dependency approaches. Do you consider them as providing relevant frameworks for the analysis of state/society relations in the contemporary era? If so why, if not, why not?

§         Discuss the relationship between democracy and liberalism in the context of globalisation.

§         “…state power is capitalist to the extent that it creates, maintains, or restores the conditions required for capital accumulation in a given situation and it is non-capitalist to the extent that these conditions are not realised”.

§         Do you agree? If so, why? If not, why not? Please write an essay explaining your answer.

§         What do we understand by the concept of “postmodern political theory”? Discuss in a critical context by considering the works of Derrida, Foucault and Lyotard.

§         Write an essay critically evaluating the compatibility of the Statist-Institutionalist approach to the state-society relations and the characteristics of Max Weber’s methodology.

§         Write an essay critically evaluating Karl Marx’s and Antonio Gramsci’s conceptions of the relationship between ‘base’ and ‘superstructure’.

§         Postmodernity is claimed to have emerged from within modernity and to contain all contradictions of modernity. Discuss.

§         What is the connection between democracy and liberalism?

§         What is the connection between “state”, “nation” and the “nation state”? Give references to recent debates in globalization theory.

§         Elaborate on the concept of participation relating it to different types of democracy.

§         To what extent can "civil society" help enrich public life in a period marked by fraying communities, widespread apathy and unprecedented levels of contempt for politics?

§         To what extent can nation-state be considered as one of the consequences of modernity? How can we explain racism, fascism and patriotism and their relationships with the nation-state? Are they archaic forms of "nation-ness", or the extremities of modern nationalism?

§         “There is no need to ‘bring the state back in’ to Marx’s account of the making of modernity. It was in at the beginning”. Do you agree? If so, why? If not, why not?

§         “The Enlightenment project is no longer a living force in contemporary culture”. Do you agree? If so, why? If not, why not?

§         What are the complexities and difficulties in thinking of “political science as science”. Answer your question by giving references to different traditions of thought in contemporary political theory.

§         Please write a comprehensive essay analyzing the evolution and proliferation of standpoints and attitudes regarding democracy, participation and protection of fundamental rights and freedoms in various political parties, groups and movements in Turkey, in the period between 1950-1980. In your essay make specific reference to individual political parties and their stands (such as HP, MP-ÇKMP, MHP, MNP-MSP, AP, YTP and of course CHP and its evolution) in the light of major theories of democracy and political parties.

§         Discuss the meaning of the civil society debate within the context of the new global order.

§         Write an essay discussing the notion of democracy and its bases on universal human rights, fundamental freedom and equality as they are conceived in the public-private dichotomy and new social movements.

§         Elaborate on the concept of participation relating it to different types of democracy.

§         Compare and contrast the significance of the concept of hegemony in the theoretical frameworks of Antonio Gramsci and Nicos Poulantzas.

§         How meaningful is it, in your view, to distinguish between alternative conceptualisations of state-society relations in terms of state-centred and/or society-centred perspectives?

§         How is the relationship between law and polical power portrayed in contemporary liberal tradition. Answer by reference to Rawls and Habermas. How would Foucault criticize this tradition?

§         Evaluate the contributions (negative and/or positive) of any two of the following writers to political science: Almond/Verba, Gramsci, Habermas, Easton, Skocpol.

§         Discuss the advantageous and disadvantageous aspects of presidential model for Turkey.

§         What are the dimensions of globalization? How can a developing country responds to this process?

§         Write an essay on the logic behind studying Comparative Politics? What is the discipline about? What are same of the basic parameters and problems in studying Comparative Politics? In answering the question, make sure to include some of the most important historical turning points in the history of the discipline.

§         Write an essay on the logic behind studying Comparative Government. What is the discipline about? What are some of the basic parameters and problems in studying Comparative Government? What were some of the basic turning points in the history of the discipline?