Introduction: Preliminary examinations are about demonstrating breadth; dissertations are about demonstrating specialized knowledge. Good answers to preliminary examination questions can illustrate critical points with examples from single or many countries. There is no orthodoxy in favor of one or the other. But always remember that the main function of case material (regardless of how many countries it involves) is the buttress theoretical arguments based on the general literature. Accordingly, an essay conveys that a student (1) is well-versed in the key literature and (2) able to knowledgeably summarize and support the theories in this literature and/or a case or cases of their own choosing.

Answers for each question should be no more than 2,500 words. You may turn in your reference pages by 1:00 pm the day after your examination. Your reference pages are not counted in the word limit.

**All students will answer one question from section 1.**

Then, for sections II-V, students have a choice between options A and B. Clearly indicate at the top of the first page of your examination which option you select.

**Option A:** You will select two questions as they are written from sections II, III, and IV. The questions cannot be from the same section. Write an essay on each of the two questions.

**Option B:** Answer one of the questions in sections II-IV as written. In your second essay in option B, you select Section V, which asks you to relate your personal research area to one field as defined in sections II, III or IV. Note that the two essays in option B may not relate to the same section. For example, a student might relate her or his research to the field of comparative political behavior and social politics (Section IV) for the essay pertaining to Section V, and then each student should answer one question as written from Sections II or III. The purpose of this section is that you demonstrate a strong command of the research literature in your area of expertise and the chosen section.

**Section I: Theory Methods Questions (answer one of the following two questions).**

1.) Some scholars advocate building bridges to connect theories. Explain what this means, and what caused such trend. Then, pick a research area within comparative politics to illustrate how these theories can be bridged.

2.) The strong correlation between economic development and regime type has become almost axiomatic within comparative politics. Yet the causal chain between these two variables has often been ambiguous. Citing specific examples, explain how advances in research methods, or improvements in theoretical reasoning, have, over the years, improved our understanding of the relationship between these two concepts.
Section II: Comparative Institutions and Government

1.) The so-called "Third Wave" of democratization spurred a new wave of research on the causes of democracy. What are the major accomplishments of the most recent wave of democratization research? What questions remain unsolved? What new puzzles has research on the "Third Wave" uncovered?

2.) In an important article (Comparative Political Studies, December 2009; vol. 42, no. 12), Bing Powell shows that the type of political system (majoritarian vs. consensus regimes) has surprisingly little influence on party-voter agreement over the last two decades.

In your essay, evaluate the significance of this finding. What research led to the conclusion that majoritarian regimes produce less representation than consensus regimes? What mechanisms supposedly brought about this difference across regimes? Second, what might explain the disappearance of regime effects on citizen-government congruence, or citizen-party agreement?

Section III: Political Economy

1.) Discuss three studies that evaluate the effects of economics on politics. Also discuss three studies that evaluate the effects of politics on economics. Discuss if and how these studies fall under the study of political economy in comparative politics. In your answer, be sure to address what is political economy. Given the discussion, show the significance of the contribution of political-economy to comparative politics as a discipline. How is political economy related to the real world?

2. Using empirical evidence, discuss the political implications of enclave economies. Be sure to discuss the impact of enclave economies on democratic practices, revolutions and civil unrest, and on domestic economic development. Are there problems with the empirical research that has been done so far, and what are your suggestions for future research in this area?

Section IV: Comparative Political Behavior and Social Politics

1.) Most political scientists would agree with the statement that “public matter.” However, the real issue is how and why they matter. Discuss the role of groups and public opinion in a political system. Discuss at least two works from the past 20 years and address the authors' contributions, strengths and weaknesses.

2.) Over the past four decades, plenty of evidence has emerged suggesting that political parties are losing their grip on voters in mature democracies or, as is the case in newer party systems, never may have had that grip in the first place. Discuss and evaluate the state of the state of the literature on electoral alignments in Europe (newer and older democracies). First, why did partisan alignments emerge in the first place? Second, what prompted the disappearance of stable party-voter linkages, or what prevented their formation in newer democracies? Third, what is the consequence of these developments for the representation of citizens in western democracies? Finally, evaluate which of the many models (be specific) in the research literature have the best chance to explain electoral behavior and the representation of citizens in Europe. (Robert)
Section V: Research Agenda in Comparative Politics
Pick one of the subfields of comparative politics in Sections II-IV and write a coherently organized and analytically rich discussion of how your personal research agenda relates to that subfield. Moreover, this research essay may not relate to the same section as your second essay under option B.