Final Exam Questions
Department of Political Science, CEU
2015/2016 Academic Year

Field 1: Political Theory

1. What are the “positive” versus the “negative” accounts of liberty?
2. What are the main objections to utilitarianism?
3. Evaluate Okin's claim that the family is the linchpin of gender injustice.
4. Compare and contrast the difference principle and Pareto optimality as means to define the achievement of distributive justice.
5. Assess Nozick’s principle of acquisition.
6. Should expensive tastes be compensated?
7. Is prioritarianism a better alternative to egalitarianism?
8. Under which circumstances, if any, should religious accommodation be granted?
9. Should we be comprehensive or political liberals?
10. Should principles of justice apply to everyday behavior?
Field 2: Political Economy and Public Policy

1. How do institutions, ideas, and interests interact in political economy analysis? In what ways might we argue for the analytical centrality of any of these three factors, if at all?

2. What is methodological individualism? Compare it to alternative approaches in social science.

3. Discuss the problem of the so-called equity-efficiency trade-off.

4. What are the main collective action problems in the political arena, and which are the remedies to these problems? Please provide two concrete examples.

5. What is the agency problem and what are its remedies?

6. Explain the concept of market failure, its origins, and various types.

7. Explain the concept of government failure, its origins and various types.

8. Democracies and non-democratic regimes have different economic and social policies. Discuss.

9. Is rules-based economic policy-making by independent agencies compatible with democratic political systems? If so, in what ways?

10. How have political economists explained the emergence of democracy? Provide a summary of one such theoretical model.
Field 3: International and Comparative Politics

1. What are the major critical arguments against democratic rule? Discuss the pros and cons of these arguments (with particular attention to elitism, populism, fascism, and classic liberalism).

2. Discuss the majoritarian and the consensual configuration of institutions and evaluate their impact on the quality of democracy.

3. Secessionist movements in Europa (like Scotland, Katalonia, Flanders) - are they a potential danger to European integration? Why - or why not?

4. Discuss the principal features of presidentialism and parliamentarism in contrast to each other and evaluate their likely impact on democratic consolidation.

5. Illustrate the logic of path dependence using examples from historical comparative research. In your answer, also reflect on strengths and weaknesses of path dependence arguments.

6. Discuss the similarities and differences between the following non-democratic regimes: totalitarianism, post-totalitarianism, classic authoritarianism, sultanistic rule, and competitive authoritarianism and demonstrate the utility of these concepts by applying them to specific regimes.

7. Discuss the role of parties in modern democracies. Contrast the recent developments in postindustrial societies with the patterns characterizing the mass-party era.

8. What characterizes the modern nation-state compared to previous models of political organization?

9. Discuss the changing relationship between the executive and the legislative branches in European states.

10. Discuss different types of democracy and their possible applicability to Eastern and Western Europe.
Field 4: Research Methods

1. a) What types of research questions are best tackled using an interpretivist qualitative research project? To illustrate your points, compare and contrast with research questions that are best answered using different designs.
   OR
   b) Discuss the key challenges that emerge regarding concept formation and measurement?
   OR
   c) Suppose you are running a regression analysis to understand the effect of economic development on the level of democracy with data from several countries. How can your analysis control for the effect of other variables that may affect this relationship? What methodological problems can you expect to occur in controlling for those other effects and how can you deal with them?

2. a) What are the usual steps needed for preparing and carrying out primary qualitative data collection?
   OR
   b) What are the different strategies for selecting cases in comparative political research and what are their pros and cons?
   OR
   c) Discuss the assumptions behind the different forms of regression modeling. Discuss the impact violations of these assumptions have.

3. a) What are the main ingredients, trade-offs, and pitfalls when designing your empirical research? Address the differences between experimental and observational studies and between comparative and single case studies.
   OR
   b) Please discuss the pros and cons of opt-in recruitment strategies in qualitative research projects with human participants.
   OR
   c) Please discuss the advantages and disadvantages of leading statistical software. Advise a new NGO on their options citing the pros and cons.

4. What are validity and reliability? How do you assess them and how can they be improved?

5. What is the role of the normal distribution in data analysis? Compare the main ideas underlying the statistical analysis of discrete and of continuous data. Illustrate their respective applicability in political science.

6. Explain the application and interpretation of a t-test. Consider all forms of t-tests and describe research scenarios under which you would use one or another. Also consider when the t test is appropriate and inappropriate and why. Describe alternative methods available for these situations.
7. Explain Type I and Type II errors in a test of a statistical hypothesis. How are they related and how can they be reduced? Use as an example the hypothesis of independence of the following variables: whether or not the mayor and the majority of the councilors in a municipality come from the same party and whether or not the municipality has some expenditure covered by bank loans or the selling of property.

8. Give a brief summary of multivariate statistical methods (regression analysis, analysis of variance, log-linear analysis). Illustrate their applicability to problems in political science.
Field 5: Political Communication

1. Discuss how and why mass media are trying to find a balance between the interests of the public and public interest in light of the role of news media in a liberal democracy.

2. Review the arguments in favour and against the theory of minimal media effects.

3. Discuss the merits and demerits of public vs. commercial funding for public affairs coverage in broadcast media.

4. Discuss the ways in which media system characteristics are related to how politically informed and engaged citizens are (i.e. different citizens in distinct political contexts).

5. Critically review the role of soft news - infotainment to political information and engagement.

6. Present the main arguments for and against the notion that the internet is making news media better.

7. Discuss the positive and negative implications of interpersonal communication complementing media exposure as a source of political stimuli for citizens in a democracy.

8. Critically discuss the implications of the internet for professional journalism and its coverage of public affairs.

9. Discuss the validity and implications of the claim that citizens naturally split into distinct issue publics and that this may influence to what extent citizens can control elected politicians in a democracy.

10. Explain whether and how political parallelism and journalistic professionalism can coexist.