This reading list is designed to assist students in identifying major works in the field of Comparative Politics in preparation for the comprehensive examination. The list is meant to serve as a guide to central works in comparative politics. The core reading list is NOT meant to be exhaustive or to substitute for taking seminars with CP faculty. In general, seminars offer you far better preparation for the exam than reading the items on your own, and will give you some suggestions for more recent works (since the last update of the core reading list). Furthermore, as students select sub-fields of special interest, they should supplement this list with recent articles, in depth case studies, or specialized works which might not be necessary for a student simply wishing to be generally informed about a sub-field. Finally, students should consult the CP faculty in preparing for their examinations, both for general advice and for supplementary readings.


The list is organized in three broad sections: 1) the identification of examples of different approaches to the study of comparative politics, 2) works important to research design and methods, and 3) the sub-fields of comparative politics.

1. The section entitled “Approaches in Comparative Politics” presents examples of works according to the basic methodological approach which characterizes them. While this section does not constitute a separate ‘subfield’ from which questions will be drawn on the exam, it is intended to help students classify works according to general approaches. Reading these books with others in the same section should help students learn how to identify a particular approach—what they have in common methodologically—and extend this insight into other works. Questions might ask, for instance, how two approaches compare in their answer to a given theoretical question. The ability to identify approaches would then be critical. The approaches are listed roughly in order of chronological development, though individual works within an approach may be more recent.

2. The research design section introduces the debates on research design and is most relevant for Part II of the comparative politics field exam. All students must answer one question on the exam about methods and research design.

4. The “subfields” section consists of more specialized works addressing particular theoretical issues. Each bold subheading with a capital letter identifies a general theoretical area from which two questions will be drawn for the comprehensive exam.
Case studies within each section should be read selectively, depending on the student’s primary regional interests. Familiarity with at least three cases is recommended. Further information on case studies can be obtained from the relevant faculty.

Within each section and sub-field, faculty have placed an asterisk (*) by those works which they expect students to have read before they take their Ph.D. examination. Some works may appear under more than one category. We recommend that students choose at least three subfields in which they will wish to read extensively, while in others, they may wish to limit themselves to the items listed with an asterisk.

This list will be updated and revised from time to time by the faculty in Comparative Politics. Students will be notified by the Graduate Program Assistant after a new list is compiled. Lists will be available from the Graduate Program Assistant. The latest edition of a title is given, but other editions are often available.

Some hopefully helpful hints:

In preparing for the exam, many students find it helpful to write out one-page summaries of key works. However, whether or not you write out summaries, it is useful to focus on the following aspects of works:

1) What is the principal argument of this work? You should be able to state this briefly (in one sentence), identifying the key independent and dependent variables, and specifying the relationship between them. That is, “x causes an increase in y,” not just “x and y are related.”

2) What debates does this work respond to? For example, what particular school of thought did this work criticize? How did it influence subsequent debates? Which authors criticized it? One strategy for identifying these contributions is to read works in roughly chronological order. Another is to consult faculty about how works might be grouped together according to subject matter.

3) What methodological approach does this author use? Does this approach seem appropriate for the questions asked?

4) What were the major critiques of this work? Students should develop their own critiques, but looking at book reviews of the work can supplement the critique.

We cannot state too strongly that trotting out canned summaries is NOT a viable strategy for passing the CP exam. Each essay answer should make an argument and deploy authors in support of that argument, using only as much of each author’s work as is necessary to support the argument. However, understanding the variables involved may help students select which works to include in their essays. Including works which are not relevant can be as damaging to our evaluation of a student’s understanding of the field as omitting works that should be included. Understanding the work’s place in a larger debate should help students remember the differences and contrasts among works in a subfield. Understanding its methods could prove useful in questions on research design as well as for questions on theory. And familiarity with critiques may help students determine whether they think a particular argument is persuasive or not.
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   A. Political economy
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APPROACHES TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS


Structural-functionalism


Political Sociology and Culture


Behavioralism


Constructivism


Historical Institutionalism


Rational Choice and New Institutionalism


RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS


* Campbell, Donald T. “Degrees of Freedom and the Case Study,” in Comparative Political Studies v8: 178-93.


A. COMPARATIVE POLITICAL ECONOMY


**Case studies**


Hall, Peter A., *Governing the Economy: The Politics of State Intervention in Britain and


B. POLITICAL PARTY SYSTEMS AND REPRESENTATION

Political Parties and Party Systems


* Mair, Peter, ed. *The West European Party System.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1990 [see especially chapters by Duverger; Kirchheimer; Lipset and Rokkan; Lijphart; and Sartori]


**Case Studies**


**C. POLITICAL CULTURE**


D. POLITICAL COMMUNITY: NATIONALISM, RELIGION AND ETHNICITY


**E. DEMOCRATIZATION**

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**Case studies**


**F. MASS MOVEMENT AND REVOLUTION**


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### G. POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

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