

Department of Political Science

PhD in Political Science

# Comprehensive Examination Guidebook

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EXAMINATION OVERVIEW AND GENERAL DIRECTIONS

Doctoral students sit for the comprehensive examination at the conclusion of all required coursework, or during their last semester of coursework. Students will ideally take their exams during the fifth semester in the program, but no later than their sixth semester. Advanced Entry students are strongly encouraged to take their exams during their fourth semester, but no later than their fifth semester. The comprehensive examination is a written exam based on the literature and research in the relevant field of study and on the student’s completed coursework in that field. **You must complete both field seminars in the two areas you wish to take the comprehensive exams in.**

### Petitioning to Sit for the Examination

Your first step is to petition to participate in the examination. Use the [Department’s comprehensive exam request form](https://cssh.northeastern.edu/polisci/comprehensive-exam-request/) and include the following information:

1. When you would like to sit for a comprehensive examination,
2. proposed primary and secondary fields areas (see below), and
3. a copy of your degree audit

This petition should be completed early in the registration period for when the student plans to sit for the exam.

All examinees must select a primary and secondary field from the following list:

* American Government
* Comparative Politics
* International Relations
* Public Policy
* Methods

After your petition is submitted, the director of the PhD program will set up an initial meeting with students who will be taking the exam the following semester to discuss the process and provide advice on studying. Although there are reading lists and sample questions later in this booklet, students are encouraged to meet with various members of the faculty who may suggest other readings and questions that will help each student focus on areas of potential weakness.

### Registration

Once your petition has been approved, you must register for ***POLS 8960, Examination Preparation - Doctoral***, for the semester you are taking the comprehensive exam. This constitutes full-time registration. Except for special circumstances approved by the Department and the Graduate School, no courses should be taken during the semester when you are sitting for your comprehensive examinations.

### The Examination

The examination is offered in the fall semester and the spring semester. The exam will generally be scheduled in the **second week of November** and **third week in March**. The exam takes place over two days, one day for each subfield, and lasts ***approximately 5 hours in duration***: 9am to 2:30pm with a required 30-minute break for lunch and one other short break. It consists of a total of three questions for each sub-field. Some sub-fields will be divided into sections, and students will have a choice of one question from each section. Other sub-fields will simply have a single list of questions, and students

may choose any three to answer. Students must avoid repetition in their three essays, i.e. no portion of the writing that appears in one answer should appear in the same way in another essay.

The exam must be typed on a computer in Renaissance Park. Students do not have access to notes or other material during the exam. The written portion of the exam is reviewed considering the following criteria: **1)** knowledge of the literature; **2)** effective communication; **3)** synthesis of major themes in the literature; **4)** application of theoretical and methodological concepts to current political policies and problems; and **5)** independent thought beyond the literature.

The exam is not in and of itself graded, though it is assessed by a committee of faculty. If that assessment is positive, the student proceeds to the dissertation proposal stage. If a student fails the exam, the student will be notified in writing of the failure and that the student has one more chance to re-take it, with the date determined at the discretion of the graduate program director. If the student fails twice, the student shall be dismissed from the PhD program.

### After Passing the Examination

A dissertation is required of all PhD Candidates. Once a PhD student has successfully defended his or her dissertation proposal, he or she has reached candidacy and has five years to complete and defend the dissertation. Additionally, once degree candidacy is attained, registration must be continuous until graduation requirements have been met.

In between passing the comprehensive exam and reaching candidacy, the student must register for POLS 9986: Research. The first two semesters that a doctoral candidate is working on a dissertation the student must register for POLS 9990: Dissertation Term 1 and POLS 9991: Dissertation Term 2 the following term. For each semester beyond the first two semesters, the student must register for POLS 9996: Dissertation Continuation until the dissertation is approved by the Graduate School and is submitted to the University Library.

Please see the graduate program office or the Department website for general information on preparing your dissertation proposal. This proposal is to be completed within six months after passing the comprehensive exam and is written in close collaboration with faculty on your dissertation committee. For detailed information on guidelines, rules, and regulations on the proper submission of a completed dissertation please see the Graduate School Submission guide on this web page, (<https://cssh.northeastern.edu/resources/theses-and-dissertations/> )

# COMPREHENSIVE EXAM READING LISTS

***Updated — Fall 2020***

The comprehensive exams consists of three questions per sub-field, covering two sub-fields over two separate days.

**Please note**, students should review the most recent syllabi of the respective field seminars and, if necessary, consult with the instructor for that course. The required readings in these seminars are an important starting point for reviewing the literature. The readings listed below constitute the other major source for reviewing the literature. In addition, relevant writings by faculty in the Department might also be consulted. This list will be updated periodically.

### METHODS

1. Adcock, Robert and David Collier. 2001. “Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research,” American Political Science Review 95 (3): pp. 529-546.
2. Angrist, Joshua D., and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. *Mostly harmless econometrics: An empiricist's companion*. Princeton university press, 2008.
3. Barabási, A.L., 2016. *Network science*. Cambridge university press.
4. Berg, Bruce L. 2006. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. 6th ed. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
5. Bennett, Andrew, and Jeffrey T. Checkel, eds. *Process tracing*. Cambridge University Press, 2015.
6. Brady, Henry and David Collier, editors. 2004. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
7. Carlson, James M. and Hyde, Mark S. 2003. *Doing Empirical Research*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. (or Johnson & Reynolds *et al.*)
8. Cramer, Duncan and Howitt, Dennis. 2004. *The Sage Dictionary of Statistics*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
9. Dunning, Thad. *Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences. A Design-Based Approach.* New York: Cambridge University Press (2012)
10. Easley, David, and Jon Kleinberg. *Networks, crowds, and markets*. Vol. 8. Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 2010.
11. Emerson, R.M., Fretz, R.I. and Shaw, L.L. (1995) Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
12. Fairclough, Norman and Isabela Ietcu Fairclough. *Political Discourse Analysis*. New York: Routledge (2012).
13. Geddes, Barbara. 2003. *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
14. George, Alexander and Andrew Bennett. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press (2004), Chapter 4.
15. Gerber, A.S. and Green, D.P., 2012. *Field experiments: Design, analysis, and interpretation*. WW Norton.
16. Gerring, John. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press (2007)
17. Goodin, Robert E. and Klingermann, Hans-Dieter, eds. 1996. *A New Handbook of Political Science*. New York: Oxford University Press.
18. Imai, Kosuke. *Quantitative social science: An introduction*. Princeton University Press, 2017.
19. James, Gareth, et al. *An introduction to statistical learning*. Vol. 112. New York: springer, 2013.
20. Johnson, Janet B. and Reynolds, H. T. 2004. *Political Science Research Methods*. 5th ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press. (or Carlson & Hyde)
21. Jones, Gerald E. 2000. *How to Lie with Charts*. Lincoln, NE: Authors Choice Press.
22. Kapiszewski, Diana, Lauren M. MacLean and Benjamin L. Read. *Field Research in Political Science.*

New York, NY: Cambridge University Press (2014).

1. King, Gary; Keohane, Robert O. and Verba, Sidney. 1994. *Designing Social Science Inquiry: Scientific Research Inference in Qualitative Research.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
2. Kreps, David M. *Game theory and economic modelling*. Oxford University Press, 1990.
3. Krippendorff, Karl. *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (2013).
4. Lander, Jared P. *R for everyone: advanced analytics and graphics*. Pearson Education, 2014.
5. Lazer, D. and Radford, J., 2017. Data ex machina: introduction to big data. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *43*, pp.19-39.
6. Lieberman, Evan. 2005. “Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research,” American Political Science Review 99, 3: 435-452
7. Lynch, Scott M. *Introduction to applied Bayesian statistics and estimation for social scientists*. Springer Science & Business Media, 2007.
8. MacLean, Lauren Morris. *Informal Institutions and Citizenship in Rural Africa*. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010
9. Mahoney, James and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. New York: Cambridge University Press (2003)
10. Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
11. Morgan, Stephen L., and Christopher Winship. *Counterfactuals and causal inference*. Cambridge University Press, 2015.
12. Mosley, Layna, ed. *Interview Research in Political Science*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press (2013).
13. Mutz, Diana C. *Population-Based Survey Experiments*. Princeton: Princeton University Press (2011)
14. Nardi, Peter M. 2003. *Doing Survey Research*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
15. Pearl, Judea, Madelyn Glymour, and Nicholas P. Jewell. *Causal inference in statistics: A primer*. John Wiley & Sons, 2016.
16. Perecman, Ellen and Sara Curran, eds. *A Handbook for Social Science Field Research: Essays & Bibliographic Sources on Research Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (2006).
17. Pollock, Philip. 2005. *The Essentials of Political Analysis*. 2nd ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
18. Przeworski, Adam and Teune, Henry. 1982. *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*. Malibar, FL: Krieger.
19. Ragin, Charles C. 1992. *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies.* Berkley: University of California Press.
20. Rochefort, David A., ed. 2006. *Quantitative Methods in Practice: Readings from PS*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
21. Rubin, Herbert J. and Irene S. Rubin. *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (2012).
22. Salganik, M.J., 2017. *Bit by bit: social research in the digital age*. Princeton University Press.
23. Salkind, Neil. 2006. *Exploring Research*. 6th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
24. Sartori, Giovanni. 1970. “Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics,” American Political Science Review: 1033-1053
25. Schatz, Edward, ed. *Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (2010)
26. Shadish, W., T. Cook and D. Campbell. (2002). *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference.* Wadsworth Cenage Learning
27. Shoemaker, Pamela J.; Tankard, James W., and Lasorsa, Dominic L. 2003. *How to Build Social Science Theories*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
28. Dawn Teele, ed. *Field Experiments and Their Critics: Essays on the Uses and Abuses of Experimentation in the Social Sciences*. New Haven: Yale University Press (2014)
29. Vogt, W. Paul. 2005. *Dictionary of Statistics and Methodology: A Nontechnical Guide for the Social Sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
30. Yanow, Dvora and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, eds. *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Methods and the Interpretive Turn,* 2nd ed. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe (2014).
31. Yin, Robert K. 2002. *Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

# AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

### American Political Thought and Development (Political Theory, Framing, Constitutional Development, Federalism)

1. Beer, Samuel H. 1993. *To Make a Nation: The Rediscovery of American Federalism.* Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
2. Dahl, Robert. 1956. *A Preface to Democratic Theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
3. *Federalist Papers*
4. Kersch, Ken. 2004. *Constructing Civil Liberties: Discontinuities in the Development of American Constitutional Law.* Cambridge University Press.
5. Peterson, Paul E., Barry Rabe, and Kenneth Wong. 1986. *When Federalism Works.* Washington, DC: Brookings.
6. Rakove, Jack. 1996. *Original Meanings: Politics and Ideas in the Making of the Constitution*. Vintage.
7. Rosenthal, Alan. 2008. *Engines of Democracy: Politics and Policymaking in State Legislatures*. CQ Press.
8. Walker, David. 1995. *The Rebirth of Federalism*. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House.
9. Whittington, Keith. 1999. *Constitutional Construction: Divided Powers and Constitutional Meaning*. Harvard University Press.

### American Political Institutions (Congress, Presidency, Courts, Bureaucracy, Parties, Interest Groups, Media)

1. Aldrich, John. 1995. *Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
2. Arnold, Douglas. 1990. *The Logic of Congressional Action*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
3. Bailey, Michael A. and Forrest Maltzman, 2011. *The Constrained Court: Law, Politics, and the Decisions Justices Make.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011.
4. Burns, Samuel H. 2009. *Packing the Court: The Rise of Judicial Power and the Coming Crisis of the Supreme Court.* Penguin.
5. Canon, Bradley and Charles Johnson. 1999. *Judicial Policies: Implementation and Impact,* 2d ed. CQ Press.
6. Cohen, Marty, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller, 2008. *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform.* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
7. Cox, Gary W. and Mathew McCubbins. 1993. *Legislative Leviathan: Party Government in the House.*

Berkeley: University of California Press*.*

1. Drutman, Lee. 2015. *The Business of America is Lobbying: How Corporations Became Politicized and Politics Became More Corporate. New York: Oxford University Press.*
2. Edwards, George. 1989. *At the Margins: Presidential Leadership of Congress.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
3. Epstein, Lee and Jack Knight. 1998. *The Choices Justices Make.* Washington, DC: CQ Press.
4. Fenno, Richard. 1978*. Home Style: House Members in their Districts.* Boston: Little, Brown.
5. Fiorina, Morris. 1989. *Congress: Keystone of the Washington Establishment*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
6. Gormley, William T., Jr. and Steven Balla. 2012. *Bureaucracy and Democracy: Accountability and Performance, 2d ed.* Washington, DC: CQ Press*.*
7. Howell, William G. 2013. *Thinking about the Presidency. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.*
8. Kernell, Samuel. 1997. *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership, 3rd ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press.*
9. Light, Paul. 1997. *The Tides of Reform*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
10. Maisel, L. Sandy and Jeffrey M. Berry. *The Oxford Handbook of American Political Parties and Interest Groups.* Oxford University Press.
11. Mayhew, David. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
12. Meier, Ken. 1985. Regulation: Politics, Bureaucracy, and Economics. New York: St. Martins Press.
13. Milkis, Sidney M. 1993. *The Presidents and the Parties: the Transformation of the American Party System Since the New Deal.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
14. Neustadt, Richard. 1990. *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*.4th ed. New York: The Free Press.
15. O’Brien, David M. 2008. *Storm Center: The Supreme Court in American Politics*. Norton.
16. Prior, Marcus. 2007. *Post-Broadcast Democracy How Media Choice Increases Inequality in Political Involvement and Polarizes Elections*. Cambridge University Press.
17. Rosenberg, Gerald N. 1991. *The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring About Social Change?* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
18. Schattschneider, Elmer E. 1960. *The Semisovereign People: A Realist’s View of Democracy in America.* Hinsdale, IL: Dryden Press.
19. Schlozman, Kay Lehman, Sidney Verba, and Henry E. Brady. 2012. *The Unheavenly Chorus: Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of American Democracy.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
20. Segal, Jeffrey and Harold Spaeth. 1993. *The Supreme Court and the Attitudinal Model*. Cambridge University Press.
21. Sinclair, Barbara. 2016. *Unorthodox Lawmaking: New Legislative Processes in the U.S. Congress*, 5th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press.
22. Skowronek, Stephen. 1993. *The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to George Bush.* Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
23. Sparrow, Bartholomew H. 1999. *Uncertain Guardians: The News Media as a Political institution.*

Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

1. Sundquist, James L. 1983. *The Dynamics of the Party System.* Washington, DC: Brookings.
2. Weaver, R. Kent and Rockman, Bert A. 1993. *Do Institutions Matter? Government Capabilities in the United States and Abroad*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.
3. Whittington, Keith. 2007. *The Political Foundations of Judicial Supremacy: The Presidency, the Supreme Court and Constitutional Leadership in U.S. History.* Princeton University Press.
4. Wilson, James Q. 1989. *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*. New York: Basic Books.

### American Political Processes and Behavior (Campaigns, Elections, Voting, Polarization, Public Opinion, Public Policy)

1. Brader, Ted. 2006. *Campaigning for Hearts and Minds*. University of Chicago Press.
2. Binder, Sarah A. 2003. *Stalemate: Causes and Consequences of Legislative Gridlock*.Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2003.
3. Canes-Wrone, Brandice. 2006. *Who Leads Whom? Presidents, Policy, and the Public*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
4. Campbell, Angus, Philip Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald Stokes. 1976. *The American Voter.*

Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

1. Carmines, Edward and Stimson, James. 1989. *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
2. Conland, Timothy, Paul Posner, and David Beam. 2014. *Pathways of Power: The Dynamics of National Policymaking*. Georgetown University Press.
3. Converse, Philip. 1964. “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics” in David Apter, ed. *Ideology and Discontent*. New York: Free Press.
4. Erikson, Robert S., M. MacKuen, and J. Stimson. 2002. *The Macro Polity*, Cambridge University Press.
5. Fiorina, Morris. 1981. *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.*
6. Green, Donald, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler. 2002. *Partisan Hearts and Minds.* New Haven: Yale University Press.
7. Grossman, M. and D. Hopkins. *Asymmetric Politics: Ideological Republicans and Group-Interest Democrats.* Oxford University Press.
8. Hillygus, D. Sunshine and Todd Shields. 2008. *The Persuadable Voter: Wedge Issues in Presidential Campaigns.* Princeton University Press.
9. Levandusky, Matthew. 2009*. The Partisan Sort: How Liberals Became Democrats and Conservatives Became Republicans.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
10. Lodge, M., and C. S. Taber. 2013. *The Rationalizing Voter.* New York: Cambridge University Press.
11. Marcus, G.E., W.R. Neuman, and M. MacKuen. 2000. *Affective Intelligence and Political Judgement*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
12. Mayhew, David. 2002. *Electoral Realignments: A Critique of an American Genre.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
13. Mayhew, David. 2005. *Divided We Govern: Party Control, Lawmaking, and Investigations, 1946- 2002*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
14. Orren, Karen and Stephen Skowronek, 2017. *The Policy State: An American Predicament. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.*
15. Page, Benjamin I. and Robert Shapiro. 1992. *The Rational Public. Chicago:* University of Chicago Press.
16. Samuel L. Popkin. 1994. *The Reasoning Voter*. University of Chicago Press.
17. Putnam, Robert. *2000. Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community.* Simon and Schuster*.*
18. Steven J. Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen. 1993. *Mobilization, Participation, and American Democracy.* Allyn and Bacon.
19. Stimson, James A. 2015*. Tides of Consent: How Public Opinion Shapes American Politics, 2d ed.* New York: Cambridge University Press.
20. Thurber, James A. and Antoine Yoshinaka. 2015. *American Gridlock: The Sources, Character and Impact of Political Polarization.* Cambridge University Press.
21. Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
22. Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion.* Cambridge University Press.

# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

### A: The State and Institutions

Institutions

1. Max Weber, “Economy and Society.” Chapter 11 “Bureaucracy,” pp. 956-994 (skip section 3).
2. Peter A. Hall and Rosemary Taylor, “Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms,” Political Studies, 44 (December 1996).
3. Gretchen Helmke and Steven Levitsky, “Informal Institutions and Comparative Politics: A Research Agenda.” Perspectives on Politics 2, No. 4 (2004): 725-740.
4. James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen, “A Theory of Gradual Institutional Change,” in Mahoney and Thelen, eds. Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency, and Power (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 1-37.
5. Greif, Avner, and David Laitin. 2004. "A theory of endogenous institutional change." American Political Science Review 98 (4):633-652.

The State and State Strength

1. Theda Skocpol, “Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research.” In Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds. Bringing the State Back In (Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 3-37.
2. Barbara Geddes, Politicians Dilemma (University of California Press, 1994), pp. 1-19.
3. Stephen Krasner, “Approaches to the State,” Comparative Politics (January 1984), pp. 223-246
4. Herbst, Jeffrey. 2000. States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1-4 (pp.12-136).
5. Centeno, Miguel Angel. 2003. Blood and Debt: War and the Nation-State in Latin America. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press. Chapters 1-3, 6.
6. Miguel Centeno “Blood and Debt: War and Taxation in Nineteenth Century Latin America,” American Journal of Sociology 102 (6) 1997, pp. 1565-1605.
7. Tilly, Charles. 1985. "War-making and state-making as organized crime." In Bringing the State Back In, edited by Peter B Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
8. Jeffrey Herbst, States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 12-31.

State Collapse and Revolution

1. Huntington, Samuel. 1996 [1968]. Political Order in Changing Societies. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Chapters 1, 4, 5.
2. Skocpol, Theda. 1979. States and Social Revolutions. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1-3.
3. Kuran, Timur. 1991. "Now out of never: The element of surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989." World Politics 44 (1):7-48.

B: The Regime

Democracy

1. Dahl, Robert. 1972. Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Chapter 1, 3, 4, and 5.
2. Schmitter, Philippe C., and Terry L Karl. 1991. "What democracy is... and is not." Journal of Democracy 2 (3):75-88.
3. Linz, Juan J, and Alfred C Stepan. 1996. Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. Chapters 1, 2.
4. Lipset, Seymour M. 1960. Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics: Doubleday Anchor. Chapters 2, 3.
5. Moore, Barrington. 1966. Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World. Boston: Beacon Press. Chapters 1, 2, 6, 7.
6. Almond, Gabriel A, and Sidney Verba. 1963. The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1, 12, 13.
7. Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2000. Forging Democracy from Below. Insurgent Transitions in South Africa and El Salvador: Cambridge University Press.
8. Acemoglu, Daron, and James Robinson. 2006. Economic Origins of Democracy and Dictatorship. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1-3, 6, 8, 11.
9. Weingast, Barry. 1997. "The political foundations of democracy and the rule of law." American Political Science Review 91 (2):245-263.
10. Przeworski, Adam, and Fernando Limongi. 1997. "Modernization: Theories and facts." World Politics 49 (2):155-183.
11. Boix, Carles, and Susan Stokes. 2003. "Endogenous democratization." World Politics 55 (4):517-549.
12. Boix, Carles. 2003. Democracy and Redistribution. New York: Cambridge University Press. Introduction, Chapter 1.

Non-Democracy

1. Geddes, Barbara. 2003. Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Chapter 2, Appendix A.
2. Huntington, Samuel P., The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), pp. 13-108.
3. Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan A. Way. 2002. "Elections without democracy: The rise of competitive authoritarianism." Journal of Democracy 13 (2):51-65.
4. Elisabeth Wood, "An Insurgent Path to Democracy: Popular Mobilization, Economic Interests and Regime Transition in South Africa and El Salvador.” Comparative Political Studies 34, No. 8 (October 2001): 862-888.
5. Ross, Michael. 2001. "Does oil hinder democracy?" World Politics 53 (3):325-361.
6. Haber, Stephen, and Victor Menaldo. 2011. "Do natural resources fuel authoritarianism? A reappraisal of the resource curse." American Political Science Review 105 (1):1-26.
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8. Magaloni, Beatriz. 2008. "Credible Power-Sharing and the Longevity of Authoritarian Rule." Comparative Political Studies 41 (4/5):715-741.
9. Slater, Dan. 2010. Ordering Power: Contentious Politics and Authoritarian Leviathans in Southeast Asia: Cambridge University Press.
10. Michael McFaul. “The Fourth Wave of Democracy and Dictatorship: Noncooperative Transitions in the Postcommunist World.” World Politics 54, no.2 (January 2002): 212-244.

## B: The Nation

*Nationalism, Ethnicity, and the Politicization of Identity*

1. Gellner, Ernest. 2006 [1983]. Nations and Nationalism. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. Chapters 1-6.
2. Anderson, Benedict. 1983. Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. London and New York: Verso. Chapters 1-7.
3. Bates, Robert. 1982. "Modernization, Ethnic Competition, and the Rationality of Politics in Contemporary Africa." In State Versus Ethnic Claims, edited by Donald Rothchild and Victor A. Olorunsola. Westview Press.
4. Posner, Daniel. 2004. "The political salience of cultural difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are allies in Zambia and adversaries in Malawi." American Political Science Review 98 (4):529-545.

*Identity, Conflict, and Cooperation*

1. Fearon, James D., and David Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war." American Political Science Review 97 (1):75-90.
2. Wilkinson, Steven I. 2004. Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 2, 6.
3. Ashutosh Varshney, Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India (Yale University Press, 2002), READ chapter 1 (pp. 3-22); SKIM chapter 2, focusing on the outline of existing explanations (23-52).
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6. Habyarimana, James, Macartan Humphreys, Daniel Posner, and Jeremy Weinstein. 2007. “Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision?” American Political Science Review.
7. James Fearon and David Laitin, “Explaining Interethnic Cooperation,” American Political Science Review, 90, no. 4 (December 1996): 715-735.

Civil Society and Social Movements

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2. Sidney Tarrow, Power in Movement (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 9-27; 62-78.
3. John McCarthy and Mayer Zald, “Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: a Partial Theory” American Journal of Sociology 82 (1977), pp. 1212-41.
4. Herbert Kitschelt, “Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest,” British Journal of Political Science, 16 (1986), pp. 57-85.
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# COMPREHENSIVE EXAM SAMPLE QUESTIONS

The following questions are typical of those asked in each of the comprehensive exam areas. However, they are samples only. They do not necessarily cover every question or area you might be asked about in your examination.

### Sample Methods Questions

* 1. You have just agreed to teach a course on methods to graduate students in public policy at your local university. Once you’ve met the students, you find that they fall into two warring camps: one group is very quantitatively oriented and loves learning about the application of statistical techniques in policy research; the other group eschews this approach, favoring the methods and insights of qualitative research. How would you teach this course to bring these student factions to some kind of middle ground where both understand and appreciate the use of the other’s approach? In teaching this class, what would you tell students about the kinds of problems or questions that are best handled by each methodology? How would you demonstrate that there are research topics requiring quantitative as well as qualitative analysis for a full understanding of the policy dynamics involved?
  2. Congratulations! You have successfully passed your Ph.D. Comprehensive Exams at Northeastern University and you have decided that a “case study” approach is the most

appropriate design to use for your dissertation; however, you have been told by your dissertation advisor that you must use a comparative case study approach in this research, given your research question. You are planning to meet with your entire committee to explain your proposed research design. In preparing for this your advisor asks you to prepare a handout with a discussion of each of the following.

* + - What is the nature of your proposed research including the research question? (1 paragraph)
    - How and why might you use a “most similar systems” design? (Be certain to relate your response to the nature of your research question.)
    - How and why might you use a “most different systems” design? (Be certain to relate your response to the nature of your research question.)
    - What are the most important factors in deciding which approach to use between these two choices?
  1. Scholars in our discipline continue to debate the advantages and disadvantages of studies based on the case-study approach versus the so-called “large-*N*” studies.

1. What would you highlight as the advantages and disadvantages of the two approaches?
2. How do the two lend themselves, or not, to quantitative and qualitative analyses?
3. Are there ways the two approaches might be combined within a single research design? Finally, please discuss how these approaches have been applied in the policy area you are most interested in studying and with what results?

### Sample American Government Questions

1. In comparative terms, it is often claimed that American political parties are weaker than parties in most other countries, while American interest groups are stronger. Take either half of this claim and assess it. Are American parties especially weak/interest groups especially strong? If so, what features of American society and the American political system are responsible for this characteristic?
2. The development of public policy at the level of American national government is often portrayed as coming from a clash between Congress and the presidency. Select one of these two branches, and assess its power. What constitutional or other resources does it have? What obstacles does it face? How has its power changed over time?
3. Two key characteristics in American government are the separation of powers and federalism. In general, what impact does each have on public policymaking in the American context? How do such institutional factors figure into contemporary theoretical models of the policy process that focus on topics like agenda setting, policy innovation, and political economy? Use specific examples and make references to the literature where appropriate.

### Sample Comparative Politics Questions

1. Choose an important issue regarding a country in which you have a particular research interest. Please explain how at least three theoretical approaches to the study of comparative politics might help us to better understand that issue. Note limitations as well as possible distortions produced by these theories. (You are free also to argue that two of the theories you select are of little help in understanding the issue.)
2. Within Comparative Politics there are three primary approaches: Political Culture, Structure, and Rational Choice. Some contend that the three are mutually exclusive. Others suggest that they might be complementary. Take two of these three approaches and discuss how those two complement each other when it comes to comparative analysis. Back your argument with a discussion of some of the key figures / authors in the two areas you select.
3. Regardless of our research preferences we will always be confronted with scholars who write on our topic area from different theoretical and methodological approaches. As a student of comparative politics, how do you organize this seeming chaos? How do major research paradigms help or hurt in organizing the discipline and our personal research project in light of the rest of the discipline? Provide examples from the scholarly literature on Comparative Politics and/or Methodology when answering these questions.

### Sample International Relations Questions

1. Taking one major conflict involving international actors please write an analysis explaining how at least three international relations theories can help us understand that conflict. Also, please note limitations as well as possible distortions from using these theories. (You are free also to argue that two of the theories you select are of little help in understanding the conflict.)
2. Please write an essay explaining how international relations theory can help us understand one political system or political problem in your primary area of research. You should consider all *major* theoretical approaches you could employ, but you should focus primarily on a theory or theories you consider to be most helpful in understanding your substantive focus. Conclude your answer with a brief consideration of the following questions: What aspects, if any, of your subject area are *not* amenable to theoretical analysis, and how might the theoretical approach(s) you prefer distort one’s understanding of the subject? How might you prevent or counter such theoretical as well as ideological distortions in your analysis?
3. The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks spurred unprecedented interest in the study of terrorism. And yet, fundamental questions about today’s terrorism threat remain unsettled. Identify a debate within the study of terrorism, explain its significance to understanding terrorism, and assess the evidence.

### Sample Public Policy Questions

1. The literature on problem definition and agenda setting, taken as a whole, has become a major component in theories of the policy process and, even, on approaches to policy analysis. Using

the core literature, apply these concepts to a specific policy area of your choice, explaining how the dynamics of problem definition (for example, Stone’s notion of “causal stories”) and of agenda setting shape the nature of policy discourse, the probability of attention by policymakers, and, finally, policy outcomes. What are the limits to which these dynamics of problem definition agenda setting can explain policy processes and outcomes? That is, how much do other factors (e.g., institutional design, process rules) play a role in shaping the outcome in this particular instance? Cite literature where necessary and useful.

1. Policy analysis has been characterized as both an art and a science. Explain this characterization, citing both the scientific and artistic character of policy analysis. Do you agree? Explain.
2. Choose an area of public policy with which you have good familiarity and describe the latest major piece of legislation or regulatory initiative adopted within this domain. Next, briefly outline the alternative policy approaches that were set aside in favor of the actual policy established. Using concepts/frameworks/theories from the literature on problem definition and agenda setting, explain why the policymaking process on this issue developed and turned out as it did. Finally, what implications for program implementation (approach, challenges, likely effectiveness) follow from the fact that policymakers settled on this particular policy design while rejecting more or less ambitious alternatives?