Political Theory
(updated February 2014)

This reading list is meant to help students prepare for their comprehensive exams in political theory. Students need to demonstrate a thorough knowledge of four subfields of political theory on the comprehensive examination.

Alterations to these lists

With the permission of the theory field faculty, a student may devise one reading list of their own choosing, e.g., in feminism or democratic theory, which is not currently offered as such. In order to be approved, the list must be:

- comparable in magnitude and significance to the existing lists;
- internally coherent and comprehensive for the topic;
- useful in preparing the student for his/her professional development, including dissertation writing and teaching;

There must also be at least one faculty member willing to advise the student about his or list and to be on the comprehensive grading committee.

Students may also apply to the theory field to replace one author or text from each of the existing lists with another, if he or she can provide a sound justification for this substitution.

Students who wish to apply for permission to alter the list in either way must contact the theory field chair to initiate the process. Students writing at the start of the Fall semester must have their request for alterations submitted by the last week of the Spring semester in that calendar year; students writing at the start of the Spring semester must apply to have alterations approved by the first week of the Fall semester of that academic year; students writing at the end of the Spring semester must have their request submitted by the end of the Fall semester in that academic year.

Ancient

Plato: Apology; Crito; Republic

Aristophanes: The Clouds

Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics; Politics

Cicero: Republic; Laws I, II (1-23); On Duties

Thucydides: The History of the Peloponnesian Wars. Book I entire; Book II, sections 1-70; Book III, sections 1-85; Book IV, sections 1-41, 58-135; Book V, sections 1-28, 43-47, 84-116; Books VI and VII entire; Book VIII, sections 45-99.
**Medieval**

Augustine: *City of God*, Books 1, 2, 4-8, 11, 14, 19, 22 (ch. 1-7).

Aquinas: *Summa Theologica*, I-II, 49-52, 55-64, 90-108; II-II 47-80, 120.


**Early Modern 1500-1800**

Niccolò Machiavelli: *The Prince; Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy*

Thomas Hobbes: *Leviathan*, Parts I-II

John Locke: *Second Treatise of Government; A Letter Concerning Toleration*

Giambattista Vico: *The New Science*, Book I, Section 2-4; Book II, Section 3-6; Book IV; Book V; Conclusion.

Montesquieu: *The Spirit of the Laws* (Cohler translation, Cambridge)
Authors Preface, Foreword, Books 1-5, 9-12, 14-16, 19, 20-22, 24-25, 29


Mary Wollstonecraft: *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (Dedication, Introduction, Chapters 1-3, 6-7, 9-12)

Immanuel Kant: *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals; "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Perspective"; "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?"; "On the Common Saying: This May be True in Theory but It Does Not Hold in Practice"; "Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch"

**Later Modern 1800-1950**

G.W.F. Hegel: *Philosophy of Right*, Part III; *Philosophy of History* (Introduction only)
John Stuart Mill: *On Liberty; Utilitarianism; The Subjection of Women*

Karl Marx: *The Communist Manifesto*; “Alienated Labor” from the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*; "On The Jewish Question”

Friedrich Nietzsche: “On the advantages and disadvantages of history for life”; *Beyond Good and Evil*

Max Weber: “Science as a Vocation”; “Politics as a Vocation”


**Contemporary (1950-present)**

Isaiah Berlin: ‘Two concepts of liberty’

Leo Strauss: *An Introduction to Political Philosophy: 10 Essays by Leo Strauss*, Hilail Gildin ed.

Hannah Arendt: *The Human Condition; The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Part III


Jürgen Habermas: *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Parts 1-11; *Between Facts and Norms*

Yves Simon: *The Philosophy of Democratic Government*

Michael Oakeshott: *Rationalism in Politics* (title essay plus “Political Education,” “Tower of Babel,” “The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind”)


Alasdair MacIntyre: *After Virtue*

Catharine MacKinnon: *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State*, chs. 2-4, 7-8, 12-13

Susan Okin: *Justice, Gender, and the Family*, chs. 1, 2, 5, 7, 8

**American**

*Declaration of Independence* and *the U.S. Constitution*
The Federalist Papers: 1, 2, 6, 9, 10, 14-17, 23, 31, 35-37, 39, 46-47, 49, 51-53, 62-66, 70-72, 78, 85


The Portable Thomas Jefferson

The Anti-Federalist, ed. Herbert J. Storing (one volume, University of Chicago Press)

Mercy Otis Warren, "Observations on the New Constitution"

Sarah Grimké, Letters on the Equality of the Sexes

Tocqueville: Democracy in America (Lawrence translation or Mansfield / Winthrop translation); Author’s Introduction, Vol. I, Pt. I, Ch. 1-4, 5 (pp. 61-68, 87-98), 8 (pp. 151-70 only); Vol. I, Pt. II, Ch. 1, 2, 5 (pp. 189-202, 208-12; 220-30 only), 7-10 (pp. 395-400), conclusion to Vol. I (408-13); Vol. II, Pt. I, Ch. 1-6, 8, 10, 13-14, 17, 20; Pt. II, Ch. 1, 2, 4-5, 8-15, 17, 19-20; Pt. III, Ch. 1, 4, 7-12, 17-26; Pt. IV entire.

Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Declaration of Sentiments"

The Lincoln-Douglas Debates. Lincoln’s Speech at Springfield, June 16 1858 (“House Divided Speech”); First Joint Debate Ottawa August 21, 1858; Second Joint Debate Free Port, August 27, 1858; Seventh Joint Debate Alton, October 15, 1858

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Solitude of Self"

Herbert Croly, The Promise of American Life