Comparative politics, which covers the whole world and all of human history, is too vast a subfield to be mastered in one lifetime. One has to be selective. However, we have tried to provide the best guidance we can for your selectivity. We have chosen a small number of works as a set of core readings, and readings on methods. This is as close as anyone could get to a list of readings that are required in the eyes of our subfield. We update these lists at least every three years. Beyond these top works, there is very little consensus in the subfield about the specific works one should read. Therefore, beyond these core works, we require our students to specialize by choosing modular reading lists on more specific topics. These topic lists were compiled by subcommittees of our comparative faculty. These lists are updated separately, as needed. In addition, we expect students to develop some expertise on one geographic area, including more specific expertise on three countries within the chosen area. Appropriate readings for this part of the exam must be developed by each student in consultation with relevant faculty.

Students are advised to read carefully the Grading Standards for this comprehensive exam. These provide detailed guidance about the characteristics of good answers. Because the comp format varies a bit from one subfield to another, it is important for all students taking the Comparative Politics comp to consult the instructions, which can be found here.

You may select the reading lists relevant for you by clicking on the links below.

I. Core Readings
This section has two parts:

The Current Canon: Best-Known (if not Best-Loved) Works
and
Comparative Methods.

You must read all items on both parts and pass one question on these core readings.

II. Topics
There are separate, short reading lists on the nine topics below. You must prepare three of these, but will be asked questions on only two of them on the exam—one in Part II, the other in Part III. In Part II, you must demonstrate competence in the cross-regional or non-area-specific literature on one topic. You should not expect to be given a choice of topics.
If you choose one Political Economy list, you may not also choose the other. You may, with the field chair’s permission and faculty supervision, design your own topic to substitute for one of the nine above.

III. Area Studies
In Part III, you must demonstrate competence in applying the literature on one topic to your region of specialization. Again, you should not expect to have a choice of topics in this section. Therefore, you should be prepared to answer an area-specific question on any of your three topics. You will also be asked to specify three countries in your chosen area that you will know particularly well. You must consult with relevant faculty to draw up a reading list on one of the following geographic areas:

- **Western/Central Europe (European Union)**
- **Advanced Industrial Democracies**
- **Note on the overlaps between the above two areas**
- **Eastern Europe and Former Soviet Union**
- **Latin America**

- **Africa (Sub-Saharan)**
- **Middle East and North Africa**
- **East and Southeast Asia**
- **South and Central Asia**

So far the field has developed area-studies reading lists only for certain areas, and only for certain topics and countries. These lists will be developed or expanded as needed by the students taking the exam. Some of the lists prioritize works that apply research on each topic to each country. However, it also lists some works that should be read by all who select certain topics, regardless of their choice of countries, and some works that should be read by all who choose certain countries, regardless of their selection of topics. This list also includes some works that are recommended but not required. Note that complete references are provided in the second worksheet of each file.