Department of Political Science
Ph.D. Reading List
Political Theory

This reading list is divided into two principal sections—the Canon and Contemporary and Democratic Theory. Exams will include questions drawn from both sections. The first day of the exam will cover the canon and the second will cover contemporary and democratic theory.

Canon
You are responsible for all works in the Canon Core. In addition, be prepared to discuss recent commentary on at least two works in the Canon Core. Finally, you are responsible for at least two items (i.e., texts, not authors) in each of the historical categories within the Canon Supplemental section. Submit a final list of the six supplemental items you have prepared, along with a brief thematic rationale for your choices, by the time you apply to take your exam. You should begin choosing items from the supplemental list in consultation with the members of the Theory Field Committee at least several months in advance of taking the exam. Field Committee members can help you choose items based on your research interests and/or on substantive topics.

Read the entire text unless selections are specified.

Canon Core:
Aristotle. Politics (Books I-i-viii; xii-xiii; II i-v; III [entire]; IV [entire]; V i-ix; VI, i-vii).
The Federalist, numbers 1, 9, 10, 15, 39, 45, 47-8, 51, 56-7, 62-3, 68, 70, 78, 84.
Hobbes. Leviathan (Parts One and Two; Review and Conclusion).
Machiavelli. Discourses on Livy (Book I, Introduction, Chs. 1, 2, 4, 9, 16, 58; Book II, Introduction, Chs. 1, 2, 29; Book III, Ch. 1, 9, 43, 49), The Prince.
Mill. Considerations on Representative Government (Chs. 1-3, 5, 7-12, 16-17), On Liberty, Utilitarianism.
Nietzsche. On the Genealogy of Morals.
Plato. Apology, Crito, Republic (Stephanus number 327a to 376c; 412b to 434b; 441c to 444e; 471c to 521c).
Canon Supplemental:

Ancient:
- Aeschylus. *The Oresteia*.
- Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics* (Books I and II [entire], III i-v, V i-vi, VIII i-vi)
- Epictetus. *Encheiridion*.
- Homer. *The Iliad*.
- Marcus Aurelius. *Meditations*.
- Plato. *Gorgias, Laws, Protagoras*.
- Sophocles. *Antigone, Oedipus Rex*.
- Thucydides. *The History of the Peloponnesian War*.
- Vergil. *The Aeneid*.

Medieval and Early Modern:
- Christine de Pisan. *City of Women*.

18th -20th centuries:
- Anti-Federalists. Primary sources or good secondary source such as Herbert J. Storing, *What the Anti-Federalists Were For* (Chicago).
- Bentham. Selections from Parekh (ed). *Bentham’s Political Thought*.
- Constant. Selections from *Political Writings* (Cambridge).
- Freud. *Civilization and its Discontents*.
- Hegel. *Philosophy of Right, Philosophy of History*.
- Kropotkin. *Mutual Aid*.
- Nietzsche. *Beyond Good and Evil, The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*.
- Paine. *Common Sense*.
- Thoreau. *Civil Disobedience*.
- Tocqueville. *Democracy in America*.
- Wollstonecraft. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.
Contemporary and Democratic Theory
You are responsible for all works in the Contemporary and Democratic Theory Core. You are responsible for at least six works from the two supplemental categories with a minimum of two works from the democratic theory supplemental list and two works from the contemporary theory supplemental list. Submit a final list of the supplemental items you have prepared, along with a brief thematic rationale for your choices, by the time you apply to take your exam. You should begin choosing items from the supplemental lists in consultation with the members of the Theory Field Committee at least several months in advance of taking the exam. Field Committee members can help you choose items based on your research interests and/or on substantive topics (e.g., liberal, participatory, deliberative, agonistic/radical, or feminist democratic theory; liberalism; critiques of liberalism; justice; post-structuralism; feminism; political economy and Marxian theory; philosophy of science.).

Read the entire text unless selections are specified.

Contemporary and Democratic Theory Core:

Habermas, Jürgen. *Between Facts and Norms* (Translator’s Introduction, Chapters 1, 3, 7 and 8), *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (“Discourse Ethics”).
Pateman, Carole. *Participation and Democratic Theory*.
Rawls, John. *A Theory of Justice* (Ch. I, sections 1-4; Ch. II, sections 11-17; Ch. III [entire]; Ch. IV, sections 33-35; 39-40; Ch. VII, sections 66-67; Ch. VIII, section 77; Ch. IX, sections 78-79, 82, 85-86), *Political Liberalism* (Lectures I, IV, VI, IX).

Democratic Theory Supplemental:

Benhabib, Seyla (ed). *Democracy and Difference*.
Guilhot, Nicolas. *The Democracy Makers*.
Gutmann, Amy and Dennis Thompson. *Democracy and Disagreement*.
Kymlicka, Will. *Multicultural Citizenship*.
Macpherson, C.B. *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy*.
Mansbridge, Jane. *Beyond Adversary Democracy*.
Mouffe, Chantal. *The Return of the Political, The Democratic Paradox*. 

Pitkin, Hanna. *The Concept of Representation*.


Sandel, Michael. *Democracy’s Discontent*.

Schattschneider, E.E. *The Semi-Sovereign People*.

Smith, Anna Marie. *Laclau and Mouffe: The Radical Democratic Imaginary*.


Contemporary Theory Supplemental:


Avineri, Shlomo. *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*.


Butler, Judith. *Excitable Speech, Bodies That Matter, Gender Trouble*.

Cohen, G.A. *Karl Marx’s Theory of History*.


Elshatyn, Jean. *Public Man, Private Woman*.

Elster, Jon (ed). *Rational Choice*.


Fraser, Nancy. *Justice Interruptus*.

Gilligan, Carol. *In a Different Voice*.


Hayek, Friedrich. *The Road to Serfdom*.


King, M.L. “Letter from Birmingham City Jail.”

Kuhn, Thomas. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.

MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue*.

Macpherson, C.B. *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*.

Martin, Michael. “Taylor on Interpretation and the Sciences of Man,” in Michael Martin and Lee C. McIntyre (eds), *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science*.

Nicholson, Linda (ed). *Feminism/Postmodernism*.

Nozick, Robert. *Anarchy, State and Utopia*.

Okin, Susan. *Women in Western Political Thought, Justice, Gender, and the Family*.


Sandel, Michael. *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*.

Schmitt, Karl. “The Concept of the Political.”

Strauss, Leo. *Natural Right and History*.
Sunstein, Cass (ed). *Feminism & Political Theory.*
Walzer, Michael. *Spheres of Justice.
Young, Iris. *Justice and the Politics of Difference.*

**Commentary**

Each of the works listed below can guide you to important, recent interpretations of the history of political thought; some offer such interpretations themselves. While none of these specific works is required (see above, however), use them for general reference as well as to familiarize yourself with different interpretations of those theorists of greatest interest to you. Please keep in mind that these sources offer particular interpretations by a variety of authors and do not necessarily reflect any sort of interpretive consensus within the field.

*A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy* (Blackwell).
*The Oxford Classical Dictionary.*
*The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory.*
Strauss, Leo and Joseph Cropsey. *The History of Political Philosophy.*

Updated Fall 2012