

SUGGESTED PRELIMINARY READING FOR PPE

Your first-year course is in two formally-examined parts: political theory and empirical politics, and a third part – methods of political analysis. The first two will be taught by a combination of college-provided tutorials, and departmental lectures and formally examined in the Preliminary examination at the end of the first year. The third part will be taught through lectures and laboratory sessions in the Department of Politics and International Relations, and assessed through a 2,500-word essay to be submitted at the start of your third term.

A. For **political theory**, we suggest you read at least some of the basic texts studied in this part of the course:

- J. J. Rousseau, *The Social Contract*
- J. S. Mill, *On Liberty*
- K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*
- F. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Chapter 1, 'On Violence', and Conclusion)

B. For **empirical politics** the following text provides a useful introduction :

- William Roberts Clark, Matt Golder, and Sonia Golder, *Principles of Comparative Government*, 2009, Washington.

There is no need to read the whole book. Please read Chapter 1 to understand what the authors mean by 'institutional design,' and Chapter 11 'Parliamentary, Presidential, and Mixed Democracies' (pp. 395-461) to apply this idea of 'design' to one of the major classificatory tools we use in distinguishing between democratic regimes.

We also suggest reading the following articles to understand political science as a discipline, and comparative politics as a subfield:

- Mair, Peter (1998) "Comparative Politics: An Overview", in *A New Handbook of Political Science*, Robert E Goodin and Hans-Dieter Klingemann (Eds.) Oxford University Press.
- Munck, Gerardo L. (2007). "The Past and Present of Comparative Politics" in *Passion, Craft, and Method in Comparative Politics*, Gerardo L. Munck, Richard Snyder, and Gabriel Almond (eds). John Hopkins University Press.

The following book is important in bridging the work you will do in college tutorials on empirical politics, and in departmental classes on methods of political analysis. The book's 'models of democracy' are different from the distinction between the parliamentary and presidential models above. Lijphart's conclusions have been much disputed, but the interest of the book for you lies more in the methodological tools used (explored in first-year classes) than in whether its conclusions are right. Again you will not have time to plough through the entire book; focus on chapters 1-3, 7, 8, and 15-17.

- Arendt Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, second ed. 2012, New Haven and London.

Finally, at the core of the study of politics are concepts such as power and the state. But what does this mean, particularly if we are looking beyond coercive force? What roles do knowledge and language play? These two pieces by Rose and Miller (1992) and Skocpol (1985) are challenging; however, they provide a window into scholarly debates on fundamental questions about the state and its exercise of power. The chapter by Skocpol is part of an influential volume from the 1980s that sought to 'bring the state back in' to the study of political science. In their highly regarded article, Rose and Miller critique the approach promoted by Skocpol and other historical sociologists a decade earlier and instead propose a totally different way to think about states and power. The two texts do not only serve as examples of how conceptual and empirical debates can unfold within political science, but they also show how we can develop a critical perspective on power within industrial democracies.

Many of the concepts and authors referred to in the two texts will be new to you. But do not worry, you will encounter most of them again at a later stage of your degree. Also, you will not be asked to recount all the details of these texts. Instead, please reflect on how the two approaches to state and power differ and where they overlap, how the authors build and justify their concepts/theories, and how they structure their main arguments. What issues do their approaches raise? Do you agree with one/both/neither of the articles? Do you think they are missing something? Reflecting on the texts from this perspective is good practice for the kind of thinking you will be asked to do in your tutorials.

- Rose, N., & Miller, P. (1992). Political power beyond the State: Problematics of Government. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 43(2), 173–205.
- Skocpol, T. (1985). Bringing the State Back in: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research. In: *Bringing the State Back in*, ed. by P. B. Evans, D. Rueschemeyer, & T. Skocpol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 3–37.

C. For the **methods component** there are two main textbooks:

- Kellstedt, Paul M. and Guy D. Whitten (2008) *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This book provides an introduction to the scientific study of politics. It is designed to make you familiar with the basic tools needed to be a critical consumer of scholarly research in political science. The book begins with a discussion of what it means to take a scientific approach to the study of politics and how to develop a research design, Chapters 1-4, please focus on these chapters in your preparation. The more technical part of the books focussing on analytical techniques will be covered in-depth during the lectures and data labs.

- Shively, Phillips W. (2012) *The Craft of Political Research* (9th edition). Pearson Classics in Political Science. Pearson Higher Education.

This book is a supplement to Kellstedt and Whitten and please review Chapters 1-2 that cover the development of research puzzles and designs in political science research.

D. Essay writing

At the core of your tutorial experience is the analytical essay. The key to a strong PPE essay is the presentation and defence of a clear argument. Please read this guide to writing essays (or watch the videos!) prior to your arrival: <https://www.timsquirrel.com/blog/how-to-write-undergraduate-essays>

While there are lots of additional resources on argumentation - see Toulmin's (1968) work, for example - this link from Purdue University provides an excellent summary of argumentative essay

writing: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/argument_papers/index.html