

SUGGESTED PRELIMINARY READING FOR POLITICS (PPE)

The purpose of this reading list is to help you to get acquainted with some introductory texts for the study of politics before you start your formal course. We suggest that you read at least part of the texts listed below and –crucially- think about what you have read. Please note that the texts listed below will not necessarily be covered in full in tutorials or lectures. However, getting acquainted with the texts below will help you get up to speed quickly with the first year Politics course.

Your first-year course consists of three parts. The first two, political theory and empirical politics, are taught by a combination of college-provided tutorials and departmental lectures, and will be formally examined in the Preliminary Examination at the end of the first year. The third part, methods of political analysis, is taught exclusively through lectures and laboratory sessions in the Department of Politics and International Relations, and will be assessed through a 2,000-word essay to be submitted at the beginning of your third term.

Political Theory

For political theory, we suggest you read at least some of the basic texts studied in this part of the course before you arrive in October:

J. J. Rousseau, *The Social Contract*;

J.J. Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*

J. S. Mill, *On Liberty*

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*

Volume 1: Author's Introduction; Part 1, chapters 3-5; Part 2, chapters 6-9.

Volume 2: Part 2, chapters 1-8; Part 4, chapters 1-8

David McLellan, (ed.), *Karl Marx: Selected Writings* (2nd ed), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000. (Readings 14, 18, 37, 39)

Empirical and comparative politics

For empirical politics we suggest that you familiarize yourself with two main books, and that you read some basic texts on the most important contemporary democracies:

Main books:

William Roberts Clark, Matt Golder, and Sonia Golder, *Principles of Comparative Government*, Washington, 2nd ed., 2013.

Don't try to read the whole book. Read Chapter 1 to understand what the authors mean by "institutional design"; chapter 4 on the state (pp. 87-125), chapters 5-6 on democracy (pp. 143-209); chapter 12, "Parliamentary, Presidential, and Semi-Presidential Democracies: Making and Breaking a Government" (pp. 457-525); and chapter 14 on party cleavages (pp. 603-668).

Arendt Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, (2nd ed.) New Haven and London, 2012.

This book is important for connecting the work that you will do in college tutorials on empirical politics with the departmental lectures and classes on methods of political analysis. The "models of democracy" discussed in the book are different from the distinction between parliamentary and presidential democracies mentioned above. Lijphart's conclusions have been much disputed, but the interest of the book for you lies more in the methodological tools used than in its substantive conclusions. If you do not have the time to read the entire book; focus on chapters 1-3, 7, 8, and 15-17.

Country textbooks and contemporary commentaries:

Studying empirical politics is largely about identifying the key roles that institutions play in democratic and non-democratic government, and the key patterns of behaviour shown by different actors: elites, individual citizens, or whole groups or populations. Analysis of this kind is best done comparatively. Our first year lecture series is thematic, not country-based, but we illustrate general themes with examples from particular countries. So before you can compare, you need some understanding of how institutions and patterns of behaviour have evolved in particular countries.

Which countries? In principle, the course is supposed to have a global reach. A good comparative politics undergraduate textbook that offers an up-to-date coverage of the politics of several countries is:

Kopstein, J., Lichbach, M. and S. Hanson (eds.), *Comparative Politics: Interests, Identities, and Institutions in a Changing Global Order*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014 (4th ed.).

This textbook provides a very accessible but rigorous introduction to the “why’s” and “how’s” of comparative politics. You should feel free to read the first chapter on “What is Comparative Politics?” if you want a slightly different perspective from the Clark *et al.* textbook mentioned above. Then you can choose among the chapters that cover the politics of specific countries (and of the EU), and that constitute the bulk of the textbook. Before you delve into the country chapters, have a look at chapter 2, which offers a general framework to interpret the country-specific information reported in the textbook.

In practice though, while we shall go beyond advanced democracies, we start there. The texts below are *suggested* readings in case you wanted to deepen your knowledge of the politics of the UK, USA, Germany and France. These basic country-based textbooks which are useful not least as a source to refer to as you study the books by Clark *et al* and Lijphart mentioned above. (Note that these textbooks have gone through different editions. If you cannot find the latest edition, a recent one typically contains most of the basic information that you are looking for.)

Wright, V. and A. Knapp, *The Government and Politics of France*, New York, Routledge, (5th ed.) 2006

Langenbacher, E. and D. Conradt, *The German Polity*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, (7th ed) 2017

Heffernan, R., C. Hay, M. Russell, and P. Cowley, (eds) *Developments in British Politics 10*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016

Bowles, N. and R. McMahon, *Government and Politics of the United States*, Palgrave Macmillan, (3rd ed) 2014

Methods of Political Analysis

For the methods component of the course we suggest that you consult two main textbooks:

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

This book provides an introduction to the empirical study of politics through the analysis of quantitative data, and to the basics of research design. It is designed to make you familiar with the basic tools needed to be a critical consumer of scholarly research in political science. Please focus on chapters 1-4 in your preparation. The more technical part of the books focuses on analytical techniques that will be covered in-depth during the lectures and data labs.

Shively, Phillips W. *The Craft of Political Research* (10th edition). New York, Routledge, 2017

This book is a complement to Kellstedt and Whitten. Please review Chapters 1-2, on the development of research puzzles and designs in political science research.

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