

# POLITICAL SCIENCE, PHD

The Johns Hopkins University Department of Political Science is known for its strength in theory and in innovative and trans-disciplinary approaches to uncovering new knowledge, and the program of doctoral study draws on these strengths to provide rigorous training. Our program is designed for highly qualified, intellectually curious, and creative graduate students who can benefit by learning from and contributing to this community of scholars.

Doctoral students develop in-depth knowledge of a major field and a minor field (or two major fields), chosen from American politics, comparative politics, international relations, law and politics, and political theory. In addition, doctoral students may complete a certificate in comparative racial politics.

Students have opportunities to work closely with faculty and to pursue independent research, and faculty and doctoral students benefit from strong connections with colleagues in other social science and humanities disciplines and opportunities to collaborate with them.

The preparation of the next generation of scholars in the field of political science is a key part of the Johns Hopkins political science department faculty's commitment to research and advancing the understanding of politics. The doctoral program reflects the distinctive strengths of the department's cross-cutting intellectual orientations (encompassing the themes of power and inequality, identities and allegiances, agency and structure, and borders and flows), realized in faculty and PhD student research and teaching.

The department and Krieger School of Arts and Sciences provide opportunities for developing teaching and other career-related skills.

## Interested in Pursuing an MA?

Our sister schools offer a variety of degree programs.

- Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Study (<https://sais.jhu.edu/>)
- Johns Hopkins Advanced Academic Programs (<http://advanced.jhu.edu/>)

## Graduate Handbook

This handbook ([https://livejohnshopkins-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/cphill32\\_jh\\_edu/EQvr65YBgOVDoHgOo9NRbvUBXyzpHx\\_x0bKneyCKoUGixA/?e=hAwGxA](https://livejohnshopkins-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/cphill32_jh_edu/EQvr65YBgOVDoHgOo9NRbvUBXyzpHx_x0bKneyCKoUGixA/?e=hAwGxA)) informs graduate students in the Department of Political Science about the formal policies and informal procedures of the Department and the University. The handbook details the requirements for obtaining the PhD, and outlines common practices in the department.

## Admission Requirements

The deadline for application for admission to graduate study and the award of financial assistance is December 15 (most years). Decisions are made exclusively in late February or early March and announced by March 15.

A bachelor's degree (or equivalent) and a Graduate Record Examination (GRE) score is required. Each applicant must have three letters of recommendation. International applicants with post-secondary degrees from the United States and/or select countries are exempt from providing English language exam scores (ex. TOEFL, IELTS) with their application

package. Applicants must have completed at least two years of full-time study at such institutions. These applicants should complete the waiver request inside the online application. Please note language of instruction in English is not sufficient unless the university is located in the United States or on the list of countries below.

More information on applying can be found at <http://grad.jhu.edu/apply/application-process/>

All applications should be submitted online.

We recognize that it can be financially burdensome to relocate to a new city to attend a Ph.D. program. Students who are accepted to Ph.D. programs at JHU can apply to receive a \$1,500 need-based grant to offset the costs of relocating to JHU. These grants provide funding to a portion of incoming students who, without this money, may otherwise not be able to relocate to JHU for their Ph.D. program. This is not a merit-based grant. Applications will be evaluated solely based on financial need.

Please find a list of Frequently Asked Questions here ([https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JqCTkJOWutqqPo0C2pCBRXB5UpEYbrQL8\\_9LtXdITUE/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JqCTkJOWutqqPo0C2pCBRXB5UpEYbrQL8_9LtXdITUE/edit?usp=sharing)).

Apply Now (<https://krieger.jhu.edu/graduate-admissions/apply/>)

## Financial Support

The department ordinarily provides financial aid to all students admitted to the graduate program unless they hold fellowships from sources outside the university. Departmental fellowships cover full tuition and an annual stipend. Assuming satisfactory progress toward the PhD, students can normally expect to receive funding for five years. All students receiving financial aid are expected to serve as teaching assistants for one semester of each academic year beginning their second year at the university.

## Graduate Handbook

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Please click here (<https://provost.jhu.edu/education/graduate-and-professional-education/phd-union/collective-bargaining-agreement/>) for more information about the Collective Bargaining Agreement between TRU-UE and Johns Hopkins University.

## Program Requirements

The requirements for the PhD in political science are divided between those that must be satisfied by all candidates for that degree and those particular to the student's major and minor fields.

## Department-wide Requirements

All candidates for the PhD must satisfy the following requirements:

### Course Requirements

- To fulfill the requirements for the PhD in Political Science students must complete 11 courses at the 600-level with a grade of B or better.

- Of these 11 courses, eight must be graduate-level (600-level) courses taken in the Political Science Department.
- No more than two of these eight courses (600-level) may be Independent Studies.
- If a graduate student is interested in taking an undergraduate-level course, the student must make arrangements to take a graduate-level Independent Study with the professor teaching that course. (NB: As noted above, a student may take no more than two Independent Studies for credit toward fulfilling the requirements of the PhD).
- A graduate student may take no more than one graduate-level course at another division of Johns Hopkins University (i.e. SAIS, Public Health, etc.) for credit toward fulfilling the requirements of the PhD in Political Science.

## Comprehensive Examination Requirement

Students are required, at a minimum, to take comprehensive exams in one major field and one minor field. Students may also elect to take two major exams or a major exam and two minor exams (one of which may be outside the Department of Political Science).

Faculty members in the field write and evaluate the exams and determine the format. Major field comprehensive exams take place over two days (8 hours per day); minor field exams take place over one day. The fields within the department are American Politics, Political Theory, Comparative Politics and International Relations.

Students choosing a second minor outside the Political Science Department must devise a coherent program of study in that discipline, in consultation with their Political Science faculty advisor and with faculty from the other department. Students choosing an external minor must complete a minimum of three courses at the 600 level in the external minor's discipline, earning a grade of B or better. They must also pass a comprehensive examination prepared and evaluated by faculty from that department in consultation with faculty of the Department of Political Science.

## Dissertation

The dissertation is the capstone of doctoral education, and it must be a substantial work of independent scholarship that contributes to knowledge in the student's field of study. Students must identify a tenure-track or tenured member of the Political Science faculty who is willing to supervise the preparation of their dissertation. A dissertation prospectus must be submitted to two professors (one of whom must be the dissertation advisor) and that prospectus must be accepted by them both.

## Defense

Students must pass a final examination that takes the form of a defense of the doctoral dissertation that is conducted under the rules of the Graduate Board of Johns Hopkins University.

Note: Exceptions may be made to some of these requirements but only with the approval of the graduate student's advisor and the Political Science Department's Director of Graduate Studies.

## Field-specific Requirements

Field-specific basic expectations, procedures, and requirements are stated below. These are implemented, interpreted, and adjusted in the light of the intellectual orientations and objectives of individual students. It is important that students work closely with their advisors and with the

faculty in their major and minor fields in constructing and pursuing their programs of study.

## American Politics

Students majoring and minoring in American Politics will work with at least two faculty members to develop a plan of study that includes recommended course work and other preparation needed to pass a comprehensive exam. Students completing a major are expected to demonstrate a breadth of knowledge sufficient for framing a dissertation in the relevant disciplinary literature and teaching undergraduate courses in the field; students who pursue a minor may focus more narrowly on an area of study in which they demonstrate fluency. These may include, but are not limited to, the following areas of faculty interest:

- American Political Institutions (Congress, Courts, and the Executive)
- Urban Politics
- American Political Development
- Race and Politics
- Political Behavior and Public Opinion
- Public Policy
- American Political Thought
- Political Parties and Elections

In addition, students majoring in the field are strongly encouraged to take AS.190.602, Introduction to Quantitative Political Science, as part of their course of study.

The comprehensive examination in American politics is intended to evaluate Ph.D. students' expertise in and ability to maneuver through and engage with the scholarly literature in American politics. The goal of the exam is neither to encourage memorization of important works nor to assess students' deep knowledge of particular readings. Rather, its aim is to evaluate students' general command of major trends, schools of thought, approaches, and methods in political science scholarship on American politics; their facility in recognizing patterns, connections, and contradictions across areas of the literature; and their ability to apply critical judgment to the literature and its applicability to new and emerging questions in American politics. Familiarity with the arguments and evidence found in many major works in the field (as represented in the list below) will prepare students well for comps and will enable the subfield faculty to certify students as experts in American politics, qualified to teach and conduct research in the field at an advanced level.

A further goal of the exam is to enable students to build the skills not just to *know* the literature but also to *use* it to identify novel problems and new questions and to motivate their own research. We recognize that the literature in American politics is vast, growing, and increasingly specialized and that none of us can command it all. The ability to read, digest, and characterize unfamiliar areas of the literature accurately, comprehensively, and critically is an essential research skill. Think of the exam, then, not as an empty exercise in scholasticism but as practice for a skill that you will use frequently during your research and teaching career.

## Format of the Exam

The comprehensive exam in American politics is a two-day, take-home, open-book (and open-note) essay exam: the first day for both majors and minors and the second day for majors only. The first day will consist of general questions covering the major areas of focus in the American politics literature, encompassing topics that generally fall under both the "institutions" and "behavior" rubrics. Students taking *both* the major

and minor exams in American politics will receive the same first-day exams. For students taking the minor exam, the first day will conclude the exam. Only students taking the major exam will receive the second-day questions, which will cover a range of more specialized topics in American politics (that will generally be connected to graduate seminars that have been offered in the department in the preceding two years).

On each day of the exam, students will answer three essay questions. There will be some choice of questions on each day. The exam will be administered by the department, which will set the dates and times of the exam and the rules and procedures that govern it.

The exam is written and graded collectively by the American politics faculty in the department. Each student's exam will be read by at least two faculty members, although the exam will receive a single consensus grade (pass or fail), and students will have the opportunity to receive feedback on their performance if they wish.

## Preparing for the Exam

Preparing effectively for comps and developing expertise in American politics entails two different but complementary tasks, and we recommend that students taking the American politics comp do both. One is deep engagement with classic writings and ideas. (Note that "classic" need not mean "old"; plenty of recent works have had deep impacts on the field that are likely to endure, while many older writings have outlived their usefulness.) Often the short-term incentives to read the classics can seem weak, especially for students who also face pressures to acquire methodological training and publish before finishing their Ph.D. But the lack of serious engagement with the best and foundational accumulated knowledge in the field tends to yield less effective teaching and shallower research. Above all, think about what it means for a book or an article to be judged a classic: how the author(s) conceived and posed a research question, conducted hard empirical work to arrive at an answer, wrote a persuasive argument, and made an original and lasting contribution.

A second strategy is to gain familiarity with the best current research in the field of American politics. A good way to do this is to read through the most recent five years or so of American politics research in the subfield's leading journals: the *APSR* and the *AJPS*, certainly, as well as other journals such as *Perspectives on Politics*, the *Journal of Politics*, *Studies in American Political Development*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, and other important specialized journals. Scanning and selectively reading the book reviews in *Perspectives on Politics* is another way to keep abreast of the most important and potentially influential current research in the field.

The faculty will circulate the subfield faculty's most recent compilation of readings intended to provide students with an overview of the major theories, ideas, approaches, and findings in the field of American politics. As we have suggested, the list emphasizes both foundational texts and contemporary extensions and challenges. No single set of readings provides a comprehensive view of any topic, nor is this list of topics complete or presented in any particular order. Similarly, readings within each topic are not necessarily in any order. Moreover, many readings could fit equally well in multiple topic categories, and students are encouraged to notice and consider connections across topics and among readings that appear in different categories.

Finally, we urge students to actually read the material themselves, and not to rely on notes or summaries from others (although we encourage collaborative preparation through study groups when possible). Much of the point of reading high-quality books and articles is to spark ideas, connections, puzzles, comparisons, and critiques

of your own; what strikes you as interesting and important may not (and perhaps *should* not) be the same as what strikes others as important, or what a boiled-down summary can convey. Read actively and independently, not simply to check off items on a list, and as far as possible discuss (and even argue about) your reading with colleagues, both other students and faculty members. Notice not just *what* authors say but *how* they pursue their inquiries and arrive at their conclusions. Your ultimate goal should be not just to master a body of knowledge but also to hone your view of the field of American politics and situate your own research within it.

In reading and preparing for comps (and in graduate school generally), it is valuable to focus on the following questions:

- What is the research question?
- What is the argument?
- What evidence do(es) the author(s) provide to support key claims?
- What conclusions are reached?
- Are you convinced? Why or why not?
- How might the research be improved?
- How does the reading fit with other similar and adjacent works? Does it confirm, contradict, or confound other understandings of the topic?
- How does the reading contribute to and advance existing understandings of American politics?

## Comparative Politics

All students majoring and minoring in this Comparative Politics will become conversant with major substantive and methodological debates in the field, and be able to comment on the key theoretical literature in several of those debates. They will typically also develop knowledge of at least one world region. Students majoring or minoring in Comparative Politics are required to take AS.190.625 Theories of Comparative Politics and at least one seminar in quantitative or qualitative methods. Students are expected to master the material covered in these courses, as well as others with more specialized topics.

Students will take a comprehensive exam that will test their ability to engage with several areas of theoretical debate in Comparative Politics, and their ability to use comparative examples to support their arguments. Students may focus on (but are not limited to):

- Civil Society
- Institutional Theories
- Transnational Relations, Social Movements, and Contentious Politics
- Political Parties, Interest Groups, Representation, and Political Behavior
- Comparative Political Economy
- Comparative Racial Politics, Nationalism, and Migration and Citizenship
- The Political Economy of Development
- Economic and Political Transitions
- Ideas and Politics

All students majoring and minoring in comparative politics will become conversant with major substantive and methodological debates in the field, and be able to comment on the key theoretical literature in several of those debates.

Students will take a comprehensive exam that will test their ability to engage with several areas of theoretical debate in comparative politics,

and their ability to use comparative examples to support their arguments. Students will be provided with a Reading Starter Guide, which lists readings commonly drawn on by students in past exams.

## Requirements for the Major Exam

Students taking the major exam are expected to compile a reading list that includes at least **six fields**, including the general “Theories of Comparative Politics” field. They may use the Reading Starter Guide or parts of it; they may also choose to add/remove sections or specific readings as appropriate to their course of study. The modified reading list must be approved by the exam committee at least 6 weeks before the exam.

For the exam, students will choose four questions from a list of questions and write **four essays** over two eight-hour days. Essays should demonstrate knowledge of the literature on those questions.

Passing the exam requires a passing grade on the four essays. The grade is determined by a committee of three faculty who independently read the exam, deliberate, and collectively determine whether each essay passes or fails. There are two main readers who are responsible for approving the reading list, setting the exam, and assessing it, and a third who only assesses the exam.

## Requirements for the Minor Exam

Students taking the minor exam are expected to compile a reading list that includes at least **four fields**, including the general “Theories of Comparative Politics” field. They may use the Reading Starter Guide or parts of it; they may also choose to add/remove sections or specific readings as appropriate to their course of study. The modified reading list must be approved by the exam committee at least 6 weeks before the exam.

For the exam, students will choose two questions from a list of questions and write **two essays** over one eight-hour day. Essays should demonstrate knowledge of the literature on those questions.

Passing the exam requires a passing grade on both essays. The grade is determined by a committee of three faculty who independently read the exam, deliberate, and collectively determine whether each essay passes or fails. There are two main readers who are responsible for approving the reading list, setting the exam, and assessing it, and a third who only assesses the exam.

## CP Comps Reading Starter Guide

This list is a resource for students. It contains 6 sections. All students must do section 1 (Approaches to Comparative Politics) but may replace other sections below with specialized lists according to their interests, if needed. Over time, more sections may be added to this list.

### Contents

#### 1. Approaches to Comparative Politics

- Disciplinary Approaches/General
- Methodology and Research Design
- Methods Selections: Process Tracing, Multi-Methods, Ethnography, etc.
- Concepts and Case Selection

#### 2. States and State Formation

- Conceptualizing the State
- Early/Pioneer State Formation
- ‘Latecomer’ State Formation

#### 3. Regimes and Institutions

- Conceptualizing Regimes
- State and/or Society Centered Explanations of Regime Type
- Institutions and Institutional Change

#### 4. Political Economy and Policy-making

- General, political/democratic development
- Economic development and industrialization
- Late development and the developmental state
- Dependency theory
- Policy-making

#### 5. Political Identities

- Nationalism and Ethnic Politics
- Citizenship and Migration
- Comparative Racial Politics.

#### 6. Contentious Politics and Violence

- Mobilization and social movements
- Civil wars
- Political violence, non-violence

## International Relations

All students majoring or minoring in International Relations will be required to have deep knowledge of the scholarship relevant to their area of research and to be conversant with the major theoretical, substantive, and methodological themes and debates of the field. It is strongly recommended that students take AS.190.676 Field Survey of International Relations (or a similar course) and a methods/epistemology course chosen in consultation with their faculty advisers.

Students majoring in International Relations will take an examination covering two subfields. The first subfield must be International Politics. The other subfield is to be determined in consultation with faculty teaching International Relations. Choices include but are not restricted to:

- International Law and Diplomacy
- International Relations Theory
- International Security Studies
- Science, Technology, and Art and International Relations
- Global Political Economy

IR PhD Students are expected to complete their Major Comprehensive Exam in May or August of their 2nd year. Subject to the procedures of other subfields, they are also expected to have completed with Minor Comprehensive Exam by this time as well. Ordinarily this will involve taking one exam in May of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year and one in exam in August before their 3<sup>rd</sup> year starts. PhD students in other subfields taking the IR Minor Exam may do so at any time in accordance with their subfield and departmental expectations.

IR PhD Students should defend their Prospectus by the end of May of their 3<sup>rd</sup> year.

Any exceptions to this schedule should have good cause and be agreed between the PhD student's advisor/first reader and the DGS.

### **Examiners:**

In consultation with their advisor, PhD students will ask two IR faculty members to be their examiners. Ordinarily, this will be the advisor and one other faculty member.

### **Format:**

Both major and minor exams will be coordinated with two examiners. Major exams will happen over two days and consist of two questions per day; the student will have eight hours each day to answer the questions. Each examiner will be responsible for one day's questions and will, in consultation with the student, develop a bespoke reading list on which the questions for that day will be based. Minor exams will happen over eight hours on one day and consist of two questions. Each examiner will be responsible for one question, and as with the major exam, these will be based on bespoke reading lists developed by the candidate in consultation with each examiner.

*Reading lists:* reading lists for exams are bespoke. That is, they are agreed upon on a case-by-case basis between student and examiner. Together, the lists should reflect both a broad survey of the literature (IR or global politics) as well as areas of concentration particular to the interests of the student. For Major exams, each reading list should have roughly 40-50 items for a total of 80-100 works. For Minor exams, each list should have 20-25 items for a total of 40-50 works.

*Review Questions:* Examiners will provide the student with a set of review questions prior to the exam. These questions will not be the exact questions asked on the exam, but they will serve as a reliable study guide for candidates, both in terms of the kind of questions that will be asked and of the substantive areas covered.

## **Political Theory**

Each student preparing for a comprehensive exam in political theory will, in consultation with the two members of the subfield's faculty who have agreed to serve as examiners, prepare a list of texts upon which they will be examined. The list should include works from the history of political thought and works of contemporary political theory. Examination questions will be composed in light of the texts included on the list.

An exam will require students to answer two or three questions, at the examiners' discretion, each day; a major exam (two days) will thus require students to answer four to six questions, and a minor exam (one day) will require students to answer two to three questions. The response to each question should be no less than seven pages (double-spaced, etc.) long. These responses should address the question asked directly, with original answers (no cutting and pasting), citing the texts used to answer the question, and demonstrating an ability to engage with their main ideas and concepts. A successful exam will consist of responses that demonstrate competence, facility, and fluency in important texts in the history of political thought, and knowledge of relevant debates and literatures in political theory today.

Students majoring in political theory will also take at least one minor field exam from American politics, law and politics, comparative politics, or international relations.

Students majoring in political theory will also take at least one minor field from American politics, law, and politics, comparative politics, or international relations.