PUBLIC POLICY COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS

Requirements

Students may take a minor comprehensive exam in public policy and may only take a major comprehensive exam in public policy by petition to the full Public Policy field committee.

Prior to taking a comprehensive exam in public policy, all students must have taken and passed PS625: Graduate Seminar in Public Policy as well at least 1 of the following classes:

- PS520: International Organization (Mitchell)
- PS565: LGBT Rights in the Courts (Gash)
- PS 566: Legalizing Civil Rights in Post-Warren Era (Gash)
- PS577: International Environmental Politics (Mitchell)
- PS595: US Political Economy (Berk)
- PS5xx: Immigration Politics and Policy (Tichenor)

Students taking a comprehensive exam in public policy are expected to have read the public policy literature as defined by the Public Policy Core Reading List. All students must demonstrate their mastery of that Core Reading List as well as additions to that list that reflect the student’s particular interests, developed in consultation with the full Public Policy field committee.

Those taking a MAJOR exam must master additional readings covering BOTH a key theoretical subfield within Public Policy AND a substantive area of expertise. Students taking a major exam will answer three (3) questions.
Those taking a MINOR exam must master additional readings covering EITHER a key theoretical subfield within Public Policy OR a substantive area of expertise. Students taking a minor exam will answer two (2) questions.

The Public Policy Committee offers a reading list for the “pre-specified” subtheme of “Law and Public Policy” (see below). The reading list for this subtheme can serve as either a theoretical subfield OR a substantive area of expertise.

The Core Reading List will be posted on the Department of Political Science website. This list is intended to serve as a starting point for student preparation for the core theme. In addition, an archive of reading lists for theoretical subfields and substantive areas will be maintained as students who take the comp exam develop them in consultation with the committee. Again, these lists are intended to serve as starting points for student preparation for the corresponding theme.

For all comprehensive exams, questions will be solicited from all current faculty on the Public Policy Field Committee. Students taking a major comprehensive exam will have the option to contribute a question focused on a substantive area of expertise. The question will be placed on the exam if approved by the committee. That question must be submitted at the time the comprehensive exam contract is written, and under no circumstances after the Friday of week 1 of the term in which the exam will be taken. This option is designed to foster a focused dialogue within the committee and between faculty and student prior to the exam.

The completed examination will be evaluated by three Field Committee members to be determined by the Field Committee chair in consultation with all members of the Field Committee.
As part of writing a contract with their committee, the student will develop a list of readings for either a theoretical subfield or a substantive area, or both. That list or those lists should reflect both the field committee’s and the student’s assessment of important new works in the field covered by the theme. The committee expects students to make reference to all appropriate and relevant work in the field, whether or not those works were included in the students contracted reading list. Good comprehensive exam answers demonstrate empirical knowledge of important cases as well as the student’s ability to explore and understand the application of a theory to a particular empirical context.

**Structure of the Exam**

Those taking a MAJOR exam must do (a), (b), and (c) below.

Those taking a MINOR exam must do (a) and either (b) or (c) below.

(a) Core: answer 1 of 2 (or more) questions provided by the committee which will cover the full breadth of the Core Reading List.

(b) Theoretical subfield: answer 1 of 2 (or more) questions provided by the committee that may cover the full breadth of the Theoretical Subfield Additional Readings. The list of additional readings will be developed through a consultation between the student and the committee chair and members. This list will include no less than 20 readings (books, articles, chapters) designed to help the student develop a theoretically-informed mastery of a key theoretical field within public policy (e.g., agenda setting, bureaucracy, regulation, political economy, implementation, decision making, and policy evaluation).

(c) Substantive area: answer 1 of 2 (or more) questions provided by the committee that may cover the full breadth of the Substantive Area Additional Readings. The list of additional readings will be developed through a consultation between the student and the committee chair
and members. This list will include no less than 20 readings (books, articles, chapters) designed
to help the student develop a theoretically-informed and sophisticated knowledge of a particular
substantive area of expertise (e.g., health care, poverty, environment, business regulation,
immigration, science and technology policy).
Public Policy Comprehensive Exams

Public Policy Core Reading List


Law and Public Policy

Atiyah and Summers. Form and Substance in Anglo-American Law

Baum, The Supreme Court in American Politics Burke, Lawyers Lawsuits and Litigants


Ely, Democracy and Distrust

Epp, The Rights Revolution

Feeley and Rubin, Judicial Policy Making and the Modern State


Friedman, American Law in the 20th Century


Ginsburg, Judicial Review in New Democracies

Glendon, Rights Talk: The Impoverishment of Political Discourse.


Horowitz, The Courts and Social Policy.


Keck, Beyond Backlash: Assessing the Impact of Judicial Decisions on LGBT Rights


McCann, Rights at Work


McCloskey and Levinson, American Supreme Court

Melnick, Between the Lines

Miller and Barnes, Making Policy, Making Law


Rosenberg, The Hollow Hope

Scheingold, Stuart, The Politics of Rights,

Shapiro, Courts

Silverstein, Law’s Allure: How Law Shapes, Constrains, Saves and Kills Politics

Skrentny, Minority Rights Revolution

Teles, The Rise of the Conservative Legal Movement