

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
Department of Political Science

POLITICAL THEORY COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION PROCESS
(2018 revision)

Exam Schedule

Comprehensive examinations in political theory will be offered annually in June; any retakes of the exam will be scheduled for September. To take the exam, a student must declare an intention to do so well in advance. Please consult the Department's "Graduate Degree Requirements" for details.

Reading List

The exam will cover a set of readings that is listed on the Department's website.

Structure of the Exam

The exam will be two days in length; students will answer one question per day. At the start of each day, students will be given a list of two or more questions, typically by e-mail, from which they will choose one question to answer. Students must return their answers to the exam administrator eight hours after they receive their questions. Delivery by e-mail attachment is acceptable. Answers should be typewritten, double-spaced, in 12 point or larger type; each answer should be between 2000 and 3500 words in length.

Evaluation

At each offering of the exam, at least two faculty in political theory will be responsible for writing questions and evaluating answers. Each essay will be read and evaluated by at least two faculty members. Students will be notified of the results within one month of taking the exam. "Pass" and "not pass" are the only evaluation options. In accordance with departmental policy, students who do not pass the exam the first time shall have the opportunity to retake the exam at a subsequent offering. If a student fails to pass the examination twice, his or her retention in the Ph.D. program will be under review.

Advising

We encourage students to talk to faculty members about strategies for exam preparation. We're happy to help.