

Philosophy, Politics, and Economics

Philosophy, Politics, and Economics confronts enduring puzzles at the heart of social life: What does it take to build and sustain a free, prosperous, and fair society? When do markets create value, and when do they undermine justice? How can diverse communities cooperate amid polarization and mistrust? What are the moral limits of technology, wealth, and power?

Rooted in Brown's historic commitment to interdisciplinary learning and open inquiry, the PPE concentration invites students into a sustained engagement with the values, institutions, and incentives that shape society. While disciplinary expertise remains essential, many of the most important questions today require frameworks that cross disciplinary boundaries. Rigorous social-scientific inquiry must grapple with difficult normative questions, just as normative theory must be informed by well-established empirical knowledge.

Across the curriculum, PPE emphasizes the interplay between individual agency and social structure, the relationship between positive and normative analysis, and the links between institutional design and ethical evaluation. The concentration emphasizes building strong analytic skills, including training in formal logic, mathematical modeling, and cutting-edge empirical approaches.

Students explore questions about cooperation, coordination, markets, efficiency, justice, fairness, democracy, freedom, equality, and deliberation through the combined lenses of all three disciplines. This integrative approach equips graduates with knowledge and skills to address issues ranging from theories of justice to the logic of collective action to the foundations of the wealth of nations.

ECON 0110	Principles of Economics ¹	1
One Calculus Course ²		1
MATH 0090	Single Variable Calculus, Part I	
or ECON 0170	Essential Mathematics for Economics	
Core PPE Courses		
PHIL 0555	Choice, Commerce, and Conflict: An Introduction to PPE	1
One course from the following.		1
PHIL 0590	Do the Right Thing: Value Theory for PPE (Philosophy, Politics and Economics)	
or POLS 1496	Institutions, Incentives, and Ideas: Advanced Topics in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics	
Core Disciplinary Courses		
One intermediate microeconomics course.		1
ECON 1110	Intermediate Microeconomics	
or ECON 1130	Intermediate Microeconomics (Mathematical)	
ECON 1620	Introduction to Econometrics	1
One of the following Economics courses.		1
ECON 1090	Introduction to Game Theory	
ECON 1629	Applied Research Methods for Economists	
ECON 1630	Mathematical Econometrics I	
ECON 1870	Game Theory and Applications to Economics	
One of the following Philosophy courses.		1
PHIL 0040	Critical Reasoning	
PHIL 0640	Logic	
PHIL 1610	Decision Theory: Foundations and Applications	
PHIL 1630	Mathematical Logic	
PHIL 1635	Advanced Deductive Logic	
One moral or political philosophy course.		1

PHIL 0460	Contemporary Ethical Issues	
PHIL 0500	Moral Philosophy	
PHIL 0520	Global Justice	
PHIL 0550	Free Speech	
PHIL 1430	Moral Theories	
PHIL 1560	Philosophy of Law	
POLS 0110	Introduction to Political Thought	1
One of the following Political Science courses.		1
POLS 0010	Introduction to the American Political Process	
POLS 0200	Introduction to Comparative Politics	
POLS 0400	Introduction to International Politics	
Electives ³		
Two 1000-level Economics electives from the following.		2
ECON 1050	Environmental Economics and Policy	
ECON 1170	Welfare Economics and Social Choice Theory	
ECON 1200	History of Economic Thought	
ECON 1310	Labor Economics	
ECON 1340	Economics of Global Warming	
ECON 1355	Environmental Issues in Development Economics	
ECON 1360	Research Seminar in Health Economics	
ECON 1385	Intergenerational Poverty in America	
ECON 1390	Inequality of Income, Wealth, and Health in the United States	
ECON 1410	Urban Economics	
ECON 1420	Industrial Organization	
ECON 1430	The Economics of Social Policy	
ECON 1440	The Economic Analysis of Political Behavior	
ECON 1470	Bargaining Theory and Applications	
ECON 1480	Public Economics	
ECON 1490	Theory of Market Design	
ECON 1520	Culture, History and Comparative Development	
ECON 1530	Health, Hunger and the Household in Developing Countries	
ECON 1560	Economic Growth	
ECON 1570	The Economics of Latin Americans	
ECON 1600	Education, the Economy and School Reform	
ECON 1690	Latin American Economic History	
ECON 1805	Experimental and Behavioral Economics	
ECON 1820	Theory of Behavioral Economics	
ECON 1850	Theory of Economic Growth	
Three additional PHIL department electives selected in consultation with the PPE concentration advisor. At least two must be numbered 0990 or above.		3
Two 1000-level Political Science electives from the following.		2
POLS 1020	Politics of the Illicit Global Economy	
POLS 1075	Ancients and Moderns	
POLS 1085	Injustice	
POLS 1210	Latin American Politics	
POLS 1225	Nuclear Weapons	
POLS 1240	Politics, Markets and States in Developing Countries	
POLS 1290	The Rise of China	
POLS 1420	Money and Power in the International Political Economy	
POLS 1435	Politics of Climate Change	

POLS 1440	Security, Governance and Development in Africa	
POLS 1445	Contemporary African Politics	
POLS 1455	Crime, Punishment, and Politics	
POLS 1460	International Political Economy	
POLS 1496	Institutions, Incentives, and Ideas: Advanced Topics in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics	
POLS 1770	Education, Inequality, and American Democracy	
POLS 1820H	Contraband Capitalism: States and Illegal Global Markets	
POLS 1820X	Democratic Erosion	
POLS 1822I	Geopolitics of Oil and Energy	
POLS 1822Q	Identity Politics in Global Perspective	
POLS 1823J	Freedom, Work, Leisure	
POLS 1824D	Power and Prosperity in Urban America	
POLS 1824K	The American Welfare State in Comparative Perspective	
POLS 1824Z	Ancients and Moderns: Quarrels and Continuities	
POLS 1825J	The Politics of Futurity	
POLS 1825S	Latino Politics in the United States	
POLS 1825W	Monuments, Citizenship, and Belonging	
POLS 2065	Public Bureaucracy (by permission for advanced undergraduates)	
Total Credits		18

- **Special Project in 1000-Level Course:** Students may undertake a special project in connection with a 1000-level concentration course or a 1000-level course approved by the DUS. Examples include a more-in-depth final paper than is otherwise required or a presentation of some of the material to the class, though students are encouraged to make creative proposals, as well. The specific project should be discussed with, and must be approved by, the instructor of the relevant course.

Students with an outstanding academic record in PPE may apply for the Honors program. Honors will require an A in more than half of concentration courses. It also involves writing a year-long thesis in close conjunction with a faculty member. Students apply in their 6th semester (normally, spring of their junior year). Students must complete ECON 1620, the methods requirement, prior to applying to the Honors program.

¹ Or equivalent AP, IB, or A-Level scores. See exam course equivalencies (<https://college.brown.edu/design-your-education/review-academic-policies/exam-scores>).

² Or equivalent AP, IB, A-Level scores, or other advanced calculus course. See exam course equivalencies (<https://college.brown.edu/design-your-education/review-academic-policies/exam-scores>).

³ In exceptional cases, students can petition course substitution for courses not included in the current list of electives in consultation with their concentration advisor and/or the DUS, provided the course can be shown to align with the goals of the PPE concentration.

Transfers and Course Overlaps

Subject to approval, students may transfer a total of four courses toward the concentration requirement. Transfer credits may be obtained from prior coursework at another university, study abroad, or study away.

The maximum allowable course overlap with another concentration is two courses.

Capstone Requirement

All students must satisfy the capstone requirement. The capstone will normally be completed in a student's senior year, and it should make use of a significant portion of what the student has learned in their undergraduate education across philosophy, politics, and economics.

There are three options for the capstone project:

- **Senior Thesis:** Students enroll in two thesis courses to produce a substantial paper, typically about 40-60 pages, that is researched and written over the course of the senior year under the supervision of a faculty advisor. Students can use one of the two senior thesis courses to satisfy one elective requirement.
- **Independent Study:** A one-semester independent study course under the direction of a faculty advisor, leading to a substantial research paper, typically 15-25 pages. In consultation with the Director of Undergraduate Studies, the independent study may also result in a substantive non-traditional deliverable. The independent study course can be applied towards one concentration elective.