PHILOSOPHY, POLITICS, ECONOMICS (PPE)

PPE 1001 Introduction to PPE: Ethics and Economics of Wealth Creation
This interdisciplinary course provides an overview of how markets work, and under what conditions they create wealth and prosperity. We will also consider when markets fail to create wealth or function well. Along the way, we will think about the role of political institutions in structuring market exchange and allocating resources. (For Penn PPE majors, this class will satisfy the philosophy foundation, or a thematic concentration class for Choice and Behavior or Distributive Justice). Not Offered Every Year
1 Course Unit

PPE 2355 Introduction to Political Psychology
This course will explore psychological approaches to understanding political beliefs, attitudes, and actions at the levels of both individual citizens and national leaders. It will also explore the possibility that psychological science itself is not immune to the political debates swirling around it. Specific topics will include: the workings of belief systems (and their power to shape what we “see”), cognitive biases (and their power to cause miscalculations), sacred values and their role in stabilizing belief systems and social interaction, personality and ideology (the linkages between the personal and the political), and clashing conceptions of morality and distributive and corrective justice (striking variations among people in what they consider to be fair). We shall also explore some topics that have sparked controversy in the psychological research literature and that tend to polarize opinion along political lines, including work on intelligence and unconscious bias.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: PSYC 2355
1 Course Unit

PPE 3001 Strategic Reasoning
This course is about strategically interdependent decisions. In such situations, the outcome of your actions depends also on the actions of others. When making your choice, you have to think what the others will choose, who in turn are thinking what you will be choosing, and so on. Game Theory offers several concepts and insights for understanding such situations, and for making better strategic choices. This course will introduce and develop some basic ideas from game theory, using illustrations, applications, and cases drawn from business, economics, politics, sports, and even fiction and movies. Some interactive games will be played in class. There will be little formal theory, and the only pre-requisites are some high-school algebra and having taken Econ 1. However, general numeracy (facility interpreting and doing numerical graphs, tables, and arithmetic calculations) is very important. This course will also be accepted by the Economics department as an Econ course, to be counted toward the minor in Economics (or as an Econ elective).
Fall
Also Offered As: ECON 0120
1 Course Unit

PPE 3002 Public Policy Process
This course introduces students to the theories and practice of the policy-making process. There are four primary learning objectives. First, understanding how the structure of political institutions matter for the policies that they produce. Second, recognizing the constraints that policy makers face when making decisions on behalf of the public. Third, identifying the strategies that can be used to overcome these constraints. Fourth, knowing the toolbox that is available to participants in the policy-making process to help get their preferred strategies implemented. While our focus will primarily be on American political institutions, many of the ideas and topics discussed in the class apply broadly to other democratic systems of government.
Spring
Also Offered As: PSCI 1200
1 Course Unit

PPE 3003 Behavioral Economics and Psychology
Our understanding of markets, governments, and societies rests on our understanding of choice behavior, and the psychological forces that govern it. This course will introduce you to the study of choice, and will examine in detail what we know about how people make choices, and how we can influence these choices. It will utilize insights from psychology and economics, and will apply these insights to domains including risky decision making, intertemporal decision making, and social decision making.
Fall
Also Offered As: PSYC 2750
1 Course Unit

PPE 3950 Center for Social Norms & Behavioral Dynamics Research Seminar
This “research seminar” takes its model from the Penn Independent Study and pairs interested students with researchers at the Center for Social Norms & Behavioral Dynamics sited here at Penn. SNOBED fellows work with organizations across the world to identify, measure, and influence norms and behaviors at scale. PPE majors will be paired with SNOBED-affiliated researchers and faculty and work as junior research fellows, learning fundamental approaches and the basics of research methods in the day-to-day environment of an active research center with mentors working on cutting edge research. Examples of current projects include: research on poverty in the US funded by the Templeton Foundation; on toilet use and sanitation in India funded by the Gates Foundation; and on corruption in Nigeria and Colombia funded by Chatham House and USAID.
Fall or Spring
1 Course Unit

PPE 3999 Independent Study
Student arranges with a faculty member to pursue a research project on a suitable topic. For more information about research and setting up independent studies, visit: https://ppe.sas.upenn.edu/study/curriculum/independent-studies
Fall or Spring
1 Course Unit

PPE 4000 Research in Philosophy, Politics & Economics
Led by fellows in the Philosophy, Politics and Economics program, this course teaches students how to conduct research in PPE with an emphasis on creating a well-formed research question, determining what kinds of data or scholarly research bears on that question, and how to carry out an interdisciplinary, research-driven project on that question.
Fall or Spring
1 Course Unit
PPE 4001 Experiments in Behavioral Ethics
In reality, our understanding of different mechanisms and (economic) relationships is hampered by the lack of data. More often than not, either the observation itself is difficult or the data is not reliable. Over the last decades, economic experiments have become a vital part of the scientific discourse, facilitating our understanding of the world we live in (much like in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, or the like). Economic experiments allow exploring economic behavior under controlled conditions by generating observations under different experimental designs and controlled conditions. Pioneering this field of research, Daniel Kahneman and Vernon Smith were awarded the Nobel memorial prize in recognition of their work on behavioral and experimental economics. In this course, we provide you with the methodology of how to develop a research idea and a proper experimental design that allows to explore this idea. Essentially, you will learn how to think about ideas, generate predictions, and how to use economic experiments to test them.
1 Course Unit

PPE 4500 PPE Capstone: Philosophy
A PPE Capstone seminar offered by faculty in Philosophy. As a PPE Capstone, this is an integrative senior seminar (open to others by departmental permission). For a detailed course description visit: https://ppe.sas.upenn.edu/study/curriculum/advanced-interdisciplinary-courses
Not Offered Every Year
1 Course Unit

PPE 4600 PPE Capstone: Political Science
A PPE capstone offered by faculty in Political Science. As a PPE Capstone, this is an integrative senior seminar (open to others by departmental permission). For a detailed course description visit: https://ppe.sas.upenn.edu/study/curriculum/advanced-interdisciplinary-courses
Not Offered Every Year
1 Course Unit

PPE 4601 PPE Capstone: Social Policy
Social policy is the study of human wellbeing and is concerned with the effects in areas of health care, criminal justice, inequality, and education, among others. As a PPE Capstone, this is an integrative senior seminar (open to others by departmental permission). For a detailed course description visit: https://ppe.sas.upenn.edu/study/curriculum/advanced-interdisciplinary-courses
Not Offered Every Year
1 Course Unit

PPE 4700 PPE Capstone: Economics
A PPE Capstone seminar offered by faculty in Economics. As a PPE Capstone, this is an integrative senior seminar (open to others by departmental permission). For a detailed course description visit: https://ppe.sas.upenn.edu/study/curriculum/advanced-interdisciplinary-courses
Not Offered Every Year
1 Course Unit

PPE 4701 PPE Capstone: Political Economy
Political Economy studies the relationships between individuals and society and between markets and the state. As a PPE Capstone, this is an integrative senior seminar (open to others by departmental permission). For a detailed course description visit: https://ppe.sas.upenn.edu/study/curriculum/advanced-interdisciplinary-courses
Not Offered Every Year
1 Course Unit

PPE 4800 PPE Capstone: Psychology
A PPE Capstone offered by faculty in Psychology. As a PPE Capstone, this is an integrative senior seminar (open to others by departmental permission). For a detailed course description visit: https://ppe.sas.upenn.edu/study/curriculum/advanced-interdisciplinary-courses
Not Offered Every Year
1 Course Unit

PPE 4801 PPE Capstone: Judgment and Decision Making
The interdisciplinary study of individual's and groups' judgments and decisions, including normative, descriptive, and prescriptive theories. As a PPE Capstone, this is an integrative senior seminar (open to others by departmental permission). For a detailed course description visit: https://ppe.sas.upenn.edu/study/curriculum/advanced-interdisciplinary-courses
Not Offered Every Year
1 Course Unit

PPE 4802 PPE Capstone: Obedience
Though almost half a century old, Milgram's 1961-1962 studies of “destructive obedience” continue to puzzle, fascinate, and alarm. The main reason for their continued grip on the field's attention (other than the boldness of the idea and elegance of execution) may be simply that they leave us with a portrait of human character that is radically different from the one that we personally wish to endorse or that the wider culture teaches us to accept. In this seminar, we will take an in-depth look at these famous studies (along with the more recent replications) and explore their various psychological, political and philosophical ramifications.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: PSYC 4780
1 Course Unit

PPE 4901 PPE Capstone: Modeling
Modeling provides a way to identify and analyze the salient features of complex problems or dynamic social situations. Using models can further provide a way to see what strategies may be rational over time. As a PPE Capstone, this is an integrative senior seminar (open to others by departmental permission). For a detailed course description visit: https://ppe.sas.upenn.edu/study/curriculum/advanced-interdisciplinary-courses
Not Offered Every Year
1 Course Unit

PPE 4902 PPE Capstone: Networks
Network Theory studies graphs as a representation of the structure of relationships between social entities. It can be used to examine how the behavior of individuals in a socio-economic system affects - and is affected by - the structure of connections of the system. As a PPE Capstone, this is an integrative senior seminar (open to others by departmental permission). For a detailed course description visit: https://ppe.sas.upenn.edu/study/curriculum/advanced-interdisciplinary-courses
Not Offered Every Year
1 Course Unit
PPE 4950 PPE Capstone: Research Methods
This course is aimed at understanding how to do research in the interdisciplinary methods of PPE. Whether it is a scientific paper, a thesis proposal, a research statement for grant or fellowship applications, or a report for a public or private employer engaged in any type of research, it is essential to know all the steps and the elements to make the final manuscript captivating and exhaustive. In this course, among other things, you will be learning (i) how to choose a topic of your interest, (ii) how to formulate specific research questions, and (iii) what tools you can use to turn your initial idea into a well-structured written production. This course is strongly encouraged for juniors intending to pursue the Senior Honors Thesis track in PPE and upperclassmen in PPE with serious research aspirations here at Penn and beyond. While the final project in this course will depend on the individual student’s purpose for taking this methods seminar, this course will fulfill the capstone requirement in the PPE major. Interested students must apply.
Spring
1 Course Unit

PPE 4998 Directed Honors Research
Student arranges with a Penn faculty member to do research and write a thesis on a suitable topic. For more information on honors visit: https://ppe.sas.upenn.edu/study/curriculum/honors-theses
Fall or Spring
1 Course Unit

PPE 4999 Advanced Research
This course may be taken by a PPE student for advanced research. Enrollment by permit only.
Not Offered Every Year
1 Course Unit