ETHICS, POLITICS, AND ECONOMICS

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In an era of global interdependence and rapid technological change, we need to think practically about the institutional dynamics of power and governance. We have to understand the technical complexities of economic and statistical analysis at the same time that we think critically about basic moral and political choices. Constructive responses to such problems as coping with natural and social hazards, allocation of limited social resources (e.g., medical care), or morally sensitive political issues (e.g., affirmative action and war crimes) require close knowledge of their political, economic, and social dimensions, and a capacity to think rigorously about the basic questions they raise.

The major in Ethics, Politics, and Economics joins the analytic rigor of the social sciences and the enduring normative questions of philosophy to promote an integrative and critical understanding of the institutions, practices, and policies that shape the contemporary world.

PREREQUISITES

Students in the Class of 2023 and previous classes may register for the major upon completion of six out of the eight prerequisites by submitting their academic record to the EPE registrar.

Students in the Class of 2024 and subsequent classes may register for the major upon completion of eight prerequisites by their fifth term of enrollment. Students should submit their academic record to the EPE registrar.

Courses prerequisite to registering as an Ethics, Politics, and Economics major include one course from each of the following categories:

1. An Ethics course, either PHIL 175 or Directed Studies*

2. A course in other perspectives, from the following departments: Anthropology; Ethnicity, Race, and Migration; History; Sociology; Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; or Directed Studies*

3. Political Philosophy, choosing from PHIL 178, PLSC 114, PLSC 118, or Directed Studies*

*Students completing two terms of Directed Studies fulfill the first three prerequisite requirements.

4. A Political Science introductory course in one of the following Political Science department’s fields: international relations, comparative politics, and American government (not in the Political Science fields of political philosophy or analytical political theory)

5. ECON 110 or ECON 115

6. ECON 111 or ECON 116

7. Econometrics, one of ECON 117, 123, 135, GLBL 121, S&DS 230, or S&DS 238

8. Game Theory, one of EP&E 220, 231, 295, 297, or ECON 159

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

Students in the Class of 2023 and previous classes With the approval of the director of undergraduate studies (DUS), the following changes to the requirements of the major may be fulfilled by students who declared their major under previous requirements.

Students in the Class of 2024 and subsequent classes must take fifteen term courses, including 3 core courses in two of three core areas, one of which must be EP&E 215; three concentration area courses (including the senior requirement) which comprise a student’s individual area of concentration; and ECON 121 or 125. The concentration is developed in consultation with the DUS and should culminate in a senior essay written in the area defined by the concentration.

Core courses The major requires that students take three core courses, EP&E 215, and two additional core courses from the major’s three core areas, one of which must be an advanced seminar anchored in at least two of the major’s three core areas of ethics, politics, or economics. The DUS can offer guidance regarding appropriate courses to fulfill this requirement.

The Ethics core draws from courses on normative thinking from philosophy and political science (theory only), or from EP&E courses with Philosophy or Political Science listed as secondary departments.

The Politics core includes courses offered by Political Science as the primary department, or EP&E courses with Political Science listed as the secondary department.

The Economics core comprises courses offered by Economics as the primary department, or Political Science courses cross-listed with Economics.

Areas of concentration Each student defines an area of concentration in consultation with the DUS. The concentration enables students to frame an important problem and shape a systematic course of inquiry, employing analytical methods and substantive theories drawn
from the three fields. Students should not only recognize the accomplishments of varied interdisciplinary efforts, but also attempt to represent and in some cases further develop those accomplishments in their own work.

For many students, the concentration treats a contemporary problem with a substantial policy dimension (domestic or international), but some students may wish to emphasize philosophical and methodological issues. Areas of concentration must consist of three courses appropriate to the theme, including the seminar or independent study course in which the senior essay is written (see “Senior Requirement” below). In designing the area of concentration, students are encouraged to include seminars from other departments and programs. The DUS will also require students to show adequate competence in data analysis when the area of concentration requires it.

The following are examples of possible areas of concentration: distributive justice, government regulation of market economies, environmental policy, philosophy of law, gender relations, democracy and multiculturalism, contemporary approaches to public policy, war and coercion, war crimes and crimes against humanity, medical ethics, international political economy, philosophy of the social sciences, social theory and ethics, cultural analysis and political thought, and civil society and its normative implications. However, students may wish to frame their own concentration more precisely.

Credit/D/Fail Students admitted to the major may take one of their Ethics, Politics, and Economics courses Credit/D/Fail. Such courses count as non-A grades in calculations for Distinction in the Major.

SENIOR REQUIREMENT
A senior essay is required for the major and should constitute an intellectual culmination of the student’s work in Ethics, Politics, and Economics. The essay should fall within the student’s area of concentration and may be written within a relevant seminar, with the consent of the instructor and approval of the DUS. If no appropriate seminar is offered in which the essay might be written, the student may instead enroll in EP&E 491 with approval of the DUS and a faculty member who will supervise the essay. Students who wish to undertake a more substantial yearlong essay may enroll in EP&E 492, 493.

The senior essay reflects more extensive research than an ordinary Yale College seminar paper and employs a method of research appropriate to its topic. Some papers might be written entirely from library sources; others may employ field interviews and direct observation; still others may require statistical or econometric analysis. The student should consult frequently with the seminar instructor or adviser, offering partial and preliminary drafts for criticism. Students are encouraged to incorporate analysis using the tools of all three of the major’s fields.

Senior essays written in the fall term are due in late November. Senior essays written in the spring term and yearlong essays are due in mid-April. One-term essays are normally expected to be 40–50 pages in length; yearlong essays are normally expected to be 80–100 pages in length.

ADVISING

Graduate work Some graduate and professional school courses are open to qualified undergraduates and may be of interest to EP&E majors (e.g., courses in the Schools of Nursing, Forestry and Environmental Studies, Management, and Public Health). Permission to enroll is required from the instructor as well as the appropriate representative of the graduate or professional program. Note that not all professional school courses yield a full course credit in Yale College. See Academic Regulations, section K, Special Arrangements, “Courses in the Yale Graduate and Professional Schools.”

Roadmap See visual roadmap of the requirements.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

Prerequisites 8 introductory courses as indicated
Number of courses 15 (incl prereqs and senior req)
Specific courses required EP&E 215; ECON 121 or ECON 125
Distribution of courses 3 core courses in 2 of 3 core areas (incl EP&E 215 and 1 adv sem); 3 courses including the senior req course in area of concentration defined by student in consultation with DUS
Senior requirement Senior essay in area of concentration (in an adv sem or in EP&E 491 or in EP&E 492 and 493)

The problems confronting society now and in the future require an analytical and practical capacity to bring together expertise from several disciplines. In an era of global interdependence and rapid technological change, we must think practically about the institutional dynamics of power and governance. We need to understand the technical complexities of economic and statistical analysis as we think critically about basic moral and political choices. Constructive responses to such problems as coping with natural and social hazards, allocation of limited social resources (e.g., medical care), or morally sensitive political issues (e.g., affirmative action) require close knowledge of their political, economic, and ethical dimensions, and a capacity to think rigorously about the questions they raise.

The major in Ethics, Politics, and Economics studies individual, societal, and international issues, joining the social sciences with philosophy to promote an understanding of the institutions, policies, and people that shape the world.

Courses prerequisite to registering as an Ethics, Politics, and Economics major include one course from each of the following categories:

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Further information can be found on the program website.

FACULTY ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROGRAM OF ETHICS, POLITICS, AND ECONOMICS

Professors  Seyla Benhabib (Political Science, Philosophy), Dirk Bergemann (Economics), Donald Brown (Economics), David Cameron (Political Science), Stephen Darwall (Philosophy), Ron Eyerman (Sociology), Bryan Garsten (Political Science), Jacob Hacker (Political Science), Shelly Kagan (Philosophy), Joseph LaPalombara (Emeritus) (Political Science), Giovanni Maggi (Economics), William Nordhaus (Economics), Thomas Pogge (Philosophy), Douglas Rae (Political Science), John Roemer (Political Science), Susan Rose-Ackerman (Political Science, Law School), Frances Rosenbluth (Director) (Political Science), Ian Shapiro (Political Science), Jason Stanley (Philosophy), Peter Swenson (Political Science), Steven Wilkinson (Political Science)

Senior Lecturer  Boris Kapustin (Political Science)

Lecturers  Elaine Dezenski (Global Studies), Michael Fotos (Political Science), Karen Goodrow (Political Science), Stephen Latham (Political Science)

View Courses