The Political Economy major is designed to give students a grasp of the ways in which political and economic forces interact in shaping public policy. The major includes substantial study of the central analytical approaches in both Political Science and Economics and seeks to surmount the sometimes artificial barriers of specialization that may characterize either discipline taken by itself. Three of the required Political Economy courses undertake a conscious merging of the approaches in the two fields. These courses are designed by, and usually are taught jointly by, political scientists and economists. Political Economy 250 examines major theoretical texts in political economy and analyzes economic liberalism and critiques of economic liberalism in the context of current policy issues. Political Economy 401 examines contemporary issues in political economy in their domestic, comparative and international contexts. Political Economy 402 asks students to research and make proposals in policy areas of current importance. Background for the two senior courses is acquired through introductory courses in Economics and Political Science, a course in empirical methods, and elective courses in international, domestic and comparative economics, politics and policy.

Students in Political Economy 402 visit Washington, D.C. Sunday night through Wednesday of the first week of spring vacation to conduct interviews relating to their Political Economy 402 group projects. This is a course requirement and thus a requirement for the major.

MAJOR

The Political Economy major requires students to complete eleven (11) courses: two introductory courses each in Economics and Political Science; one empirical methods course; three core courses specific to the Political Economy Program; and three electives, one from each of three categories. In order to balance students’ educations, majors must take at least one elective in Economics and one elective in Political Science; the third elective may come from either Economics or Political Science. In light of the public policy orientation of the program, all majors are also required to complete one course with a substantial experiential education component which is related to the making or effect of public policy. The purpose of the experiential education requirement is for the student to get out into the world and interact with people in cases where the stakes are real, often involving some element of community service or participation in the political process or in the making of or analysis of public policy, in order to learn something about public policy that one cannot get from a purely academic experience. This requirement must be fulfilled prior to taking POEC 402. It can be fulfilled through a regular semester-length course (which might also serve as an elective in the major), a winter study course, a study abroad academic internship, a winter study internship, or a summer internship. The chair distributes a list of approved experiential courses to majors at the beginning of each academic year. For an internship to satisfy the requirement, its focus must be the making or effect of public policy. Approval of the chair is required to use an internship to fulfill this requirement.

Two Introductory Economics Courses
- ECON 110 Principles of Microeconomics
- ECON 120 Principles of Macroeconomics

Two Introductory Political Science Courses
For students in the class of 2019 and earlier:
- PSCI 201 Power, Politics, and Democracy in America
- or PSCI 203 Introduction to Political Theory

- PSCI 202 World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations
- or PSCI 204 Introduction to Comparative Politics: State, Nation, and Democracy

For students in the class of 2020 and later:
- PSCI 201 Power, Politics, and Democracy in America

- PSCI 202 World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations
- or PSCI 203 Introduction to Political Theory
- or PSCI 204 Introduction to Comparative Politics: State, Nation, and Democracy

One Empirical Methods Course
- POEC 253 Empirical Methods in Political Economy
- or ECON 255 Econometrics

Three Political Economy Program Courses
- POEC 250/ECON 299/PSCI 238 Economic Liberalism and Its Critics
- POEC 401 Contemporary Problems in Political Economy
- POEC 402 Political Economy of Public Policy Issues

Three Elective Courses
NOTE: students must take at least one elective in Economics and at least one elective in Political Science; the third elective may come from either Economics or Political Science.

Please see the online catalog for up-to-date information on which courses are being offered in the current year.
One Comparative Political Economy/General Public Policy Course

ECON 204/ENVI 234 Economics of Developing Countries
or ECON/ENVI 213 Introduction to Environmental and Natural Resources Economics
or ECON 222 Economics of the Arts and Culture
or ECON 225T Global Financial Crisis and African Economic Development
or ECON/ENVI 228T Water as a Scarce Resource
or ECON 232 Financial Markets, Institutions, and Policies
or ECON 233 Behavioral Economics and Public Policy
or ECON 235 Urban Centers and Urban Systems
or ECON 240T Colonialism and Underdevelopment in South Asia
or ECON 361/ECON 524 Political Economy and Economic Development
or ECON 363 Money and Banking
or ECON/ENVI 386/ECON 518 Environmental Policy and Natural Resource Policy
or ECON/ENVI 387/ECON 522 Economics of Climate Change
or ECON/ENVI 388/ECON 517 Urbanization and Development
or ECON 390T/ECON 536T Financial Crises: Causes and Cures
or ECON 453 Research in Labor Economics
or ECON 455 Research in Economic History
or ECON 465 Pollution and the Labor Market
or ECON 477 Economics of Environmental Behavior
or ECON 470 The Indian Economy: Development and Social Justice
or ECON 501 Development Economics I
or ECON 504 Public Economics
or ECON 505 Developing Country Macroeconomics
or ECON 510/ECON 352 Financial Development and Regulation
or ECON 511 Institutions and Governance
or ECON 514/ECON 389 Tax Policy in Emerging Markets
or ECON 532T Inclusive Growth: The Role of Social Safety Nets
or ECON 534T Long Term Fiscal Challenges
or ENVI/PSCI 283 Dirty Politics: Regulating Hazardous Chemicals and Waste
or ENVI/HSCI/SCST 309/PSCI 301 Environmental Politics and Policy
or PSCI 224 Neo-Liberalism: What Is It and Why Does It Matter?
or PSCI/SOC 241 Meritocracy
or PSCI 243/AFR 256 Politics of Africa
or PSCI 247 Political Power in Contemporary China
or PSCI 253/AFR 253 Comparative Race and Ethnic Politics
or PSCI 254 Democracy in Comparative and Theoretical Perspective
or PSCI 268 Israeli Politics
or PSCI 340 Why States Fail: Political Violence at the End of the 20th Century
or PSCI 341 Modern Midas? Resource Abundance and Development
or PSCI 350T Comparative Political Economy
or PSCI 351 The New Left and Neoliberalism in Latin America
or PSCI 354/ASST 245/HIST 318 Nationalism in East Asia

One U.S. Political Economy and Public Policy course:

ECON 203/WGSS 205 Gender and Economics
or ECON 205 Public Economics
or ECON 209 Labor Economics
or ECON 220 American Economic History
or ECON 229 Law and Economics
or ECON 230 Economics of Health and Health Care
or ECON 351 Tax Policy
or ECON 374T Poverty and Public Policy
or ECON 383 Cities, Regions and the Economy
or ECON 456 Income Distribution
or ECON 457 Public Economics Research Seminar
or ECON 468 Your Money or Your Life: Health Disparities in the United States
or ENVI 307/PSCI 317 Environmental Law
or PSCI 208T Wealth in America
or PSCI/WGSS 209 Poverty in America: Dangerous Politics
or PSCI 214 Racial & Ethnic Politics in America
or PSCI 216 American Constitutionalism I: Structures of Power
or PSCI 217 American Constitutionalism II: Rights and Liberties
or PSCI/LEAD 218 The American Presidency
or PSCI 308 In Search of the American State
or PSCI/LEAD 311 Congress
CREDIT FOR COURSEWORK DONE ELSEWHERE

Science may be completed during (e.g. during study abroad), but only with these courses offered elsewhere are usually highly imperfect substitutes that will not provide adequate preparation for the senior seminars; students may in rare cases be able to complete either of these requirements during study at another college or university (e.g. during study abroad), but only with prior permission from the chair. The three electives and other introductory courses in Political Science may be completed during study at another college or university (e.g. during study abroad) with permission of the chair. The general policy of the Program is to grant credit for one course per semester abroad and in extraordinary circumstances, credit for three courses for an entire year abroad. Students who score a 5 on the AP exam in Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, or Comparative Government and Politics may receive credit towards the major for the cognate introductory economics or political science course(s). Credit for A levels and IB exams in Economics and for introductory microeconomics and macroeconomics classes taken at other colleges and universities (subject to approval by the Economics department study away coordinator) is given consistent with the current policy of the Economics Department. No substitute higher-level coursework is required for majors receiving credit in this way, although it is certainly encouraged. Students in the class of 2019 and earlier who score a 5 on the AP exam in U.S. Government and Politics may receive credit towards the major for the cognate introductory political science course(s). Students in the class of 2020 and later classes cannot substitute AP credit for PSCI 201.

RECOMMENDED PROGRESSION THROUGH THE REQUIRED MAJOR COURSES

Students considering a major in Political Economy are encouraged to begin with ECON 110 and 120 and any one of PSCI 201, 202, 203, or 204 in their first year, as these courses are the prerequisites or co-requisites for POEC 250. All prospective POEC majors are encouraged to take PSCI 201, and indeed are required to do so if they are in the class of 2020 or later, as it provides tools of political analysis that will be essential for the projects all POEC majors will undertake in POEC 402. Students who score a 5 on the AP exam in Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, or Comparative Government and Politics may receive credit towards the major for the cognate introductory economics or political science course(s). Credit for A levels and IB exams in Economics and for introductory microeconomics and macroeconomics classes taken at other colleges and universities (subject to approval by the Economics department study away coordinator) is given consistent with the current policy of the Economics Department. No substitute higher-level coursework is required for majors receiving credit in this way, although it is certainly encouraged. Students in the class of 2019 and earlier who score a 5 on the AP exam in U.S. Government and Politics may receive credit towards the major for the cognate introductory political science course(s). Students in the class of 2020 and later classes cannot substitute AP credit for PSCI 201.

THE DEGREE WITH HONORS IN POLITICAL ECONOMY

Due to the special demands of this interdisciplinary major, the only route to honors in Political Economy is the thesis. Seniors may pursue the honors thesis course (Political Economy 493-W31) during the fall semester and winter study period. The third course contributing to such an honors program would normally be an elective in Political Science or Economics taken during the junior year. This course, which may be one of the required electives, must be closely related, indeed must prepare the ground for the honors thesis.

Juniors in the Political Economy major with at least a 3.5 GPA in the program may apply for the honors thesis program by means of a written proposal submitted to the chair by the end of the first week after spring vacation. Written guidelines for such proposals are available in the chair’s office and on the program website. The proposal should have been discussed with at least two faculty members, and at least one faculty advisor from each discipline must be solicited by the student prior to submission of the proposal. Final decisions about admission to the honors program will be made in late May after spring grades become available.

To achieve the degree with honors in Political Economy, the thesis must be completed by the end of winter study period and be judged of honors quality by a committee consisting of the two advisors and a third reader. A thesis judged to be of particular distinction will qualify its author for the degree with highest honors.

STUDY ABROAD
Despite the fact that Political Economy requires more courses than the typical major, many Political Economy majors go abroad. Since POEC 250 and POEC 253 are offered in the fall, students considering spending only one semester abroad often find spring to be the better choice. Nonetheless, many students study away for the fall or the whole year. Political Economy majors have often been overrepresented in Williams at Oxford. Students planning to be abroad in the fall should take POEC 250 in their sophomore year if at all possible. Similarly, it is necessary to plan ahead to find the best way to satisfy the empirical methods requirement (POEC 253 or ECON 255) before the fall of the senior year. The easiest major credits to obtain abroad are the electives in Political Science and Economics. General study away guidelines for Political Economy are available here.

POEC 250(F) Economic Liberalism and Its Critics
Crosslistings: POEC 250/ECON 299/PSCI 238

Primary Crosslisting
Economic liberalism holds that society is better off if people enjoy economic freedom. Its critics point to what they believe this position ignores or what it wrongly assumes, and hence, how it would make bad policy. This course explores the relationship between politics and economics by surveying influential works of political economy. Its first part examines major thinkers in relation to the historical development of capitalism in Western Europe and the United States: the classical liberalism of Adam Smith, Karl Marx’s revolutionary socialism, and the reformist ideas of John Stuart Mill and John Maynard Keynes. The second part considers mid-20th-century writers who revise and critique economic liberalism from a variety of perspectives, including Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, Ronald Coase, Arthur Okun, and Albert O. Hirschman. The third part surveys significant recent contributions relevant to the themes of the course, with applications to current public policy issues, including topics such as: power relations and autonomy in the workplace; asymmetric information and social insurance; economic inequality and distributive justice; equality of opportunity; the economics of health care; positional goods and the moral foundations of capitalism; intergenerational equity and climate change; economic nationalism and new trade theory; behavioral economics; finance and financial crises; and rent-seeking. The combination of the historical focus of the early part of the course with discussion of modern policy issues and debates in the latter part of the course permits you to appreciate the ongoing dialogue between classical and contemporary views of political economy.

Class Format: lecture/discussion
Requirements/Evaluation: eight essays of 650 words each, several short homework assignments, and a final exam
Prerequisites: ECON 110 and 120 or equivalent; PSCI 201, 202, 203, or 204 (may be taken concurrently with POEC 250); open to non-majors
Enrollment Preferences: Political Economy majors and sophomores intending a Political Economy major
Enrollment Limit: 35
Expected Class Size: 35
Dept. Notes: formerly POEC 301
Distributional Requirements: Division 2
Other Attributes: AMST Critical and Cultural Theory Electives, POEC Required Courses

Fall 2016
LEC Section: 01 MR 02:35 PM 03:50 PM Instructors: Jon Bakija, James Mahon

POEC 253(F) Empirical Methods in Political Economy (Q)
This course introduces students to common empirical tools used in policy analysis and implementation. The broad aim is to train students to be discriminating consumers of public policy-relevant research. The emphasis in the course is on intuitive understanding of the central concepts. Through hands-on work with data and critical assessment of existing empirical social scientific research, students will develop the ability to choose and employ the appropriate tool for a particular research problem, and to understand the limitations of the techniques. Topics to be covered include basic principles of probability; random variables and distributions; statistical estimation, inference and hypothesis testing; and modeling using multiple regression, with a particular focus on understanding whether and how relationships between variables can be determined to be causal—an essential requirement for effective policy formation. Throughout the course, the focus will be on public policy applications relevant to the fields of political science, sociology, and public health, as well as to economics.

Class Format: lecture/discussion
Requirements/Evaluation: problem sets, group projects, and three exams
Prerequisites: MATH 130 or its equivalent; one course in ECON; not open to students who have taken ECON 255
Enrollment Preferences: Political Economy majors, Environmental Policy majors and sophomores
Enrollment Limit: 25
Expected Class Size: 15
Dept. Notes: does not satisfy the econometrics requirement for the Economics major; POEC 253 cannot be substituted for ECON 255, or count as an elective towards the Economics major
Distributional Requirements: Division 2, Quantitative/Formal Reasoning
Other Attributes: ENVP PE Theory/Methods Courses, PHLH Statistics Courses, POEC Required Courses

Fall 2016
LEC Section: 01 MR 01:10 PM 02:25 PM Instructor: Lara Shore-Sheppard

POEC 397(F) Independent Study: Political Economy
Open to juniors or seniors majoring in Political Economy, with approval of a faculty supervisor and the chair.
**Class Format:** independent study  
**Distributional Requirements:** Division 2

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**Fall 2016**

IND Section: 01  TBA  Instructor: Jon Bakija

**POEC 398(S) Independent Study: Political Economy**
Open to juniors or seniors majoring in Political Economy, with approval of a faculty supervisor and the chair.

**Class Format:** independent study  
**Distributional Requirements:** Division 2

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**Spring 2017**

IND Section: 01  TBA  Instructor: Jon Bakija

**POEC 401(F) Contemporary Problems in Political Economy**
This course examines contemporary problems in political economy in the United States and across the developed world. Using both Economics and Political Science methods of analysis, students study the exercise of power and the accumulation of wealth in the world today as well as central public policy debates around those processes. We begin with a discussion of the philosophical foundations of economic policy-making. We then discuss welfare states in comparative perspective with special attention to the development of the American welfare regime. The remainder of the course is dedicated to particular issue areas of contemporary concern: pensions, health insurance, education, family policy, and immigration. The goal of this course is to build upon theoretical debates encountered in POEC 250 as well as to prepare students for the public policy projects they will do in POEC 402.

**Class Format:** seminar  
**Requirements/Evaluation:** one 8- to 10-page paper; one 12- to 15-page paper; in-class group presentations; class participation  
**Extra Info:** may not be taken on a pass/fail basis; not available for the fifth course option  
**Prerequisites:** ECON 110 and 120; PSCI 201 or 203, or equivalent; PSCI 202 or 204, or equivalent; POEC 253 or ECON 255, or permission of instructor; open to non-majors  
**Enrollment Preferences:** Political Economy majors  
**Enrollment Limit:** 20  
**Expected Class Size:** 20  
**Dept. Notes:** required in the Political Economy major  
**Distributional Requirements:** Division 2  
**Other Attributes:** GBST Economic Development Studies Electives, POEC Required Courses

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**Fall 2016**

SEM Section: 01  TR 09:55 AM 11:10 AM  Instructors: Darel Paul, David Zimmerman

**POEC 402(S) Political Economy of Public Policy Issues**
In this course, students form groups that conduct a political and economic analysis of a public policy issue of their choosing. They do extensive reading, conduct interviews in Washington, D.C. (during spring recess), write a major report on their findings and recommendations, and present and defend their findings in a public talk.

Students visit Washington, D.C. Sunday night through Wednesday of the first week of spring vacation to conduct interviews relating to their group projects. This is a course requirement.

**Class Format:** seminar with student presentations  
**Requirements/Evaluation:** group policy projects including an 80- to 100-page paper and 2-hour presentation  
**Extra Info:** may not be taken on a pass/fail basis; not available for the fifth course option  
**Prerequisites:** POEC 253 or ECON 255, POEC 250, POEC 401; open only to Political Economy majors  
**Dept. Notes:** required in the Political Economy major  
**Distributional Requirements:** Division 2  
**Other Attributes:** EXPE Experiential Education Courses, POEC Required Courses

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**Spring 2017**

SEM Section: 01  TF 02:35 PM 03:50 PM  Instructors: William Gentry, Cathy Johnson

**POEC 493(F) Honors Thesis: Political Economy**
Political Economy independent study.

**Class Format:** independent study  
**Distributional Requirements:** Division 2

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**Fall 2016**