

PH336-15 Principles of Political Economy: Economics & Politics

26/27

Department

Philosophy

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Laura Gelhaus

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

Multiple

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

Political Economy is about who gets what, when, and how – it is about the choices people make that affect the distribution of gains and losses, and about the societal and political conflicts and incentives surrounding them.

This means that the module is concerned with the relations between politics, economy, and society at different levels. It considers important topics from the perspectives of both economics and political science as academic disciplines, as well as an integration of these disciplines for a multi- and interdisciplinary approach. For example, we could explore how voters and parties behave, and whether or how their behaviour may affect the demand for or provision of policies which reduce inequality - one of the defining challenges of the 21st century.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

The module aims to equip students with a multi and interdisciplinary awareness of key theories and ideas on what shapes political decisions and their outcomes. This will include questions of

governance at different levels, for instance at municipal versus national levels, and also different contexts across the globe.

We will study four specific areas where existing research in politics and economics as academic disciplines has overlapped. By the end of the module, students should be able to navigate these topics through different perspectives and approaches presented by both disciplines. The focus is on the extent to which these perspectives complement or conflict with each other.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Please note that this syllabus may change - the below is an overview of the module in the 25/26 academic year.

We will study four specific areas where political science and economics perspectives overlap.

1. Voting and party behaviour. We will study why voters and parties behave the way they do. For example, do voters' make rational choices on which party programme is closest to their interests? Similarly, do parties set their programmes in line with what they think will get them elected, or are there other forces at play? Why may mainstream parties take up far-right positions, and is this strategy electorally successful?
2. Inequality and Redistribution. We will study how people perceive inequality and what makes them demand for more redistributive policy. For example, how does the expectation of future higher earnings affect people's position on tax policy? What role do cultural beliefs such as meritocracy play? We will also study when and why governments respond to demands for more redistribution. For example, do they want to satisfy the 'average' voter or cater only to elites? What biases may policymakers have when designing redistributive policies?
3. Public Goods. In this section, we will study who is best placed to ensure the provision of public goods. Should these be ensured by the government, or are private companies much better placed? What is the role of local self-organisation? We will also look at cases of inequality in public goods provision and why they may arise.
4. Interest Groups. In this section, we complicate our basic assumptions of who makes decisions in democratic systems. While previously the focus was on voters, parties, and governments, interest groups have been influential in some important policy sectors. Is this a threat to democracy, or, instead, a democratic process? How can we determine whether an interest group has been influential given their multitudinous - and often opaque - interactions with the policy process?

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Develop a broad understanding of the impacts of the differing perspectives of economics and politics as academic disciplines.
- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of each disciplinary approach, and when they

can be complementary.

Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

[Specific reading list for the module](#)

Interdisciplinary

Co-taught by Politics and Economics for PPE students only. Students' work should demonstrate an interdisciplinary engagement with perspectives from politics and economics.

Subject specific skills

A solid knowledge and understanding of:

- (i) Political Science: Knowledge and understanding of relevant theoretical approaches and techniques in political science and political science research with application to contemporary problems arising in public policy.
- (ii) Applied Economics: Knowledge and understanding of standard economic models and techniques with application to contemporary problems arising in public policy.
- (iii) Research issues: Familiarity with contemporary debates and latest research in some specialised areas of PPE. Evaluate how to approach a problem from the perspective of a contemporary researcher with a PPE background.
- (iv) Interdisciplinarity: Familiarity with the concept and challenges of interdisciplinarity and how to integrate disciplinary research perspectives.

Transferable skills

- (i) information literacy
- (ii) critical thinking
- (iii) communication
- (iv) intercultural awareness
- (v) problem solving
- (vi) professionalism
- (vii) teamwork
- (viii) sustainability

This module counts towards your Warwick Award.

Study

Teaching split

Provider	Weighting
Economics	50%
Politics & International Studies	50%

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 2 hours (12%)
Seminars	8 sessions of 1 hour (5%)
Private study	124 hours (83%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

Private study time will allow students time to prepare for their seminars and develop their skills to become independent learners. Through independent reading and discussion with others, students will be exposed to a variety of viewpoints, learn to choose among them, and will be better prepared to develop their own distinctive ideas. Independent learning will also allow students to explore their own research interests within the module, e.g. particular empirical cases.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group D2

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Written Assignment 1 (1000 words)	15%		Yes (extension)
Examination	85%		No

Assessment group R1

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Examination	100%		No

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback. Students can also seek additional verbal feedback in Advice and Feedback

Hours and receive feedback in seminars and lectures.

[Past exam papers for PH336](#)

Availability

Courses

This module is Core optional for:

- UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
 - Year 3 of V7MR Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite with Economics Major)
 - Year 3 of V7MR Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite with Economics Major)
 - Year 3 of V7MP Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite)
 - Year 3 of V7MP Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite)
 - Year 3 of V7MP Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite)
 - Year 3 of V7MP Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite)
 - Year 3 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
 - Year 3 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
 - Year 3 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
- UPHA-V7MM Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics (with Intercalated year)
 - Year 4 of V7MS Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite with Economics Major) (with Intercalated Year)
 - Year 4 of V7MS Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite with Economics Major) (with Intercalated Year)
 - Year 4 of V7MQ Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite) with Intercalated Year
 - Year 4 of V7MM Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite) (with Intercalated year)
 - Year 4 of V7MM Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite) (with Intercalated year)
 - Year 4 of V7MH Philosophy, Politics and Economics - Economics/Philosophy Bipartite (Economics Major) (with Intercalated year)
 - Year 4 of V7MF Philosophy, Politics and Economics - Economics/Politics Bipartite (Economics Major) (with Intercalated year)
 - Year 4 of V7MI Philosophy, Politics and Economics - Philosophy/Economics Bipartite (Philosophy Major) (with Intercalated year)
 - Year 4 of V7MJ Philosophy, Politics and Economics - Philosophy/Politics Bipartite (with Intercalated year)
 - Year 4 of V7MG Philosophy, Politics and Economics - Politics/Economics Bipartite (Politics Major) (with Intercalated year)