

# The Program in Political Philosophy, Policy, and Law (PPL) at the University of Virginia

## Student Handbook 2024-25

*Welcome to the Program in Political Philosophy, Policy, and Law for the 2024-25 academic year. This year the program is being run by Director Justin Snedegar and Assistant Director Vijay Phulwani. This is our first year working together, and we're looking forward to making PPL as rewarding as it can be. We're also excited to work with all of you.*

*This handbook is the first place you should go if you have questions about the program. We'll also post useful materials on the PPL website and distribute them to you either as part of your required PPL classes or by email. We're hoping to complete a full refresh of the website this year. Consider this handbook the most up to date and authoritative source on program policies and requirements.*

*If you have any questions that are not addressed in the handbook, please just ask one of us.*

*Justin Snedegar (Director)  
Vijay Phulwani (Assistant Director)*

## I. What is PPL?

The major in Political Philosophy, Policy and Law (PPL) provides undergraduate students with an opportunity to pursue intensive study of the connections between political philosophy and legal theory, legal thought and historical change, law and public policy. The major is based firmly on the view that the study of law has a rich humanistic tradition and that its pursuit encourages sustained reflection on the fundamental values of political association. Because the domain of law, policy and political philosophy is huge, a principal objective of the major is the integration of diverse disciplinary perspectives. But interdisciplinary dialogue on political and legal ideas, processes, doctrine, and policies can be fruitful only if the participants engage one another from a position of disciplinary strength. As a major, PPL is grounded on this presumption.

## II. Faculty & Staff

### PPL Core Faculty

Director: Justin Snedegar, [jsnedegar@virginia.edu](mailto:jsnedegar@virginia.edu)

Office: Dawson's Row #2, 106

Office hours: Wed 10-12, or by appointment

Assistant Director: Vijay Phulwani, [vijayphulwani@virginia.edu](mailto:vijayphulwani@virginia.edu)

Office: Gibson Hall 266

Office hours: Tu, Wed 3-4

## Affiliated Faculty

Besides the directors, we have many faculty members across the university who are interested in PPL topics and who would be, and have already shown themselves to be, good PPL thesis supervisors. This list will be updated regularly, but here is a start.

Nate Adams, Philosophy  
Talbot Brewer, Philosophy  
Jennifer Rubenstein, Politics  
Rebecca Stangl, Philosophy  
Alex Motchoulski, Philosophy

## Administrative Staff:

Sharon Marsh, Department of Politics, [smm4@virginia.edu](mailto:smm4@virginia.edu)

## **III. Major Requirements**

### **1. General Requirements**

In order to graduate, PPL students must complete:

- a. Three required PPL courses
- b. Three co-requisite courses
- c. An eight-course interdisciplinary core

### **2. PPL Courses**

- a. PPL 2010 Morality, Law, and the State – Fall semester of third year
- b. PPL 4005 Thesis Preparation (1 credit) – Fall semester of fourth year. If study abroad or scheduling conflicts make this impossible, alternative arrangements may be made in consultation with the director.
- c. PPL 4010 Capstone Research Seminar – Final semester

These classes are restricted to PPL majors.

### **3. Co-Requisites**

The co-requisites are (1) one course in the history of political thought, (2) one course in legal history and public policy, and (3) ECON 2010 (Microeconomics). Co-requisite courses must be completed by the end of the third year.

The first two co-requisites must be selected from the following menus:

- a. History of Political Thought  
PHIL 2560 Classical Political Philosophy  
PHIL 2770 Political Philosophy  
PHIL 1730 Introduction to Political Philosophy  
PLPT 3010 Ancient and Medieval Political Theory

PLPT 3020 Modern Political Theory  
PLPT 3030 Contemporary Political Theory  
PLPT Islamic Political Thought

- b. Legal History and Public Policy  
HIUS 3752 Early American Law  
HIUS 3375 Modern American Law  
HIUS 5559 Global Legal History  
PLAP 3810 Constitutional Interpretation  
COMM 3410 Commercial Law I

No more than one co-requisite course may count toward the fulfillment of the requirements for the interdisciplinary core. ECON 2010 may NOT count toward your core classes if you are minoring in Economics.

#### **4. Interdisciplinary Core**

In consultation with the director or assistant director, each student will craft an interdisciplinary curriculum of eight courses. The requirements for the interdisciplinary core are as follows:

- a. At least three courses must deal with the theoretical foundations of PPL; these courses must be from at least two different departments.
- b. At least three courses must deal with policy; these courses must be from at least two different departments.
- c. The other two courses may come from either category.
- d. At most one course from the PPL co-requisites may be counted toward the interdisciplinary core.

Please note that any PLPT course and any PHIL course with significant ethical/political content will count as a theoretical foundations course.

Graduate level courses above the 5000 level are permitted, but only with the consent of the instructor. Students who take courses above the 5000-level must take them as independent studies.

For a non-comprehensive list of courses that count towards the interdisciplinary core, please see below.

#### **5. Final Project**

All PPL students are required to submit a research project/thesis in their final semester in the program. The PPL research project should be an article-length paper (35-40 pages), on some fairly focused topic.

The range of possible topics is enormous. To help get you started, please consult the list of core PPL topics and readings available on the program website. The one requirement is that the topic be genuinely interdisciplinary, blending (in some proportion) philosophical and

empirical analysis, seeking to both evaluate and explain the political institutions, legal practices, or policies, under discussion.

Different topics, of course, require different approaches, so there is no one-size-fits-all template for a PPL thesis. The only things that are clearly excluded are: 1. Purely empirical studies purporting to explain institutions/events/texts/historical episodes with no reference to arguments about their philosophical significance; 2. Highly theoretical philosophical speculation with no connection to political, legal, moral practices.

Students complete their capstone projects in PPL 4010, which is offered only in the Spring semester. However, all 4<sup>th</sup> year students must also take the 1-credit PPL 4005 Thesis Preparation class in the prior Fall semester. This provides a formal mechanism by which students can start to identify topics, advisors and working bibliographies so that these are in place by the time they start their capstone class in January.

Final grades for your research project are agreed between your capstone instructor and your thesis advisor, subject to review by the director (to ensure consistency across the two sections). PPL is a distinguished major, and so students are eligible for honors. Please note, however, that you can receive honors only if your final UVA GPA is 3.4 or higher. (This is a College rule, not a PPL rule.) Levels of honors (distinction, high distinction, highest distinction) are determined by the director, in consultation with your capstone instructor.

#### **IV. Timeline for Students**

##### **Third Year**

1. Ensure that your major has been changed to PPL in SIS
2. Take PPL 2010 in the fall
3. Think about possible topics for your final year research project. Don't delay until the last minute. Keep in mind that you will not only need a topic, but also an advisor. It's often easier to secure an advisor with relevant expertise if you have taken a class with them—bear this in mind as you select your classes. Contact the director or assistant director if you need advice/inspiration about possible research topics.

##### **Fourth Year**

4. Ensure that your major has been changed to PPL in SIS
5. Take PPL 4005 in the fall, where you will identify a thesis topic and faculty advisor
6. Meet with the director or assistant director in the fall to fill out course checklist (see below)
7. Take PPL 4010 in the spring

#### **V. Policies**

##### **1. Course Approval**

You must obtain approval from the Director for any courses you wish to count toward your PPL major that are (a) neither required PPL courses nor (b) pre-approved PPL courses. Approval for

other courses may be sought at any time (before, during or after the completion of a course). To seek approval for a course, please submit an email to the Director, explaining why you think the class ought to count toward your major, attaching a course syllabus if available.

Please note that the Director's approval won't be immediately reflected on SIS. The fact that an approved course is not listed as such on SIS is not a reason for concern. (See the section on SIS below)

## **2. Double Majors**

PPL Students are permitted to double-major, subject to satisfying College rules and those of other Major concentrations (always be aware of the rules for your other major). The college permits only 2 courses to count simultaneously toward two majors, and some departments impose further restrictions. The College rules about double majoring can be found at: <https://college.as.virginia.edu/declaremajor>.

## **3. Minors**

In general, the College prohibits courses from counting toward both a minor and a major simultaneously. They make some exceptions for students in Interdisciplinary majors like PPL, but even then there are restrictions, so you should keep this in mind as you plan your classes. The College rules about minoring are discussed at the website above, and also at: <http://college.artsandsciences.virginia.edu/declareminor>. Students may not minor in PPL.

## **4. Transfer Courses**

PPL students may only count up to six credits of class work from non-UVA institutions without permission. You may petition the director to allow an additional 3 credits toward the major.

## **5. Study Abroad**

PPL students are encouraged to pursue study abroad programs. The one restriction is that you cannot study abroad during either your first or last semester in the PPL program (normally the Fall of your third year and the Spring of your fourth year) because these are semesters when the mandatory PPL 2010 (gateway) and PPL 4010 (capstone) are offered.

Note that although PPL majors are all expected to take PPL 4005 (thesis preparation seminar) in their final Fall semester, an exception to this rule can be made for those who plan to study abroad during that semester. However, to qualify for that exception, students must make arrangements with the Director for some alternative form of thesis preparation during the Study Abroad period. You should consult the Director before departing for your Study Abroad program if possible, and in any case before the sign-up period for Spring classes.

## **6. Registration and SIS**

SIS can be difficult, particularly with interdisciplinary majors. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the director. We will get your issues sorted out, but, in the meantime, don't worry too much. If you want to know where you are in terms of program requirements, please consult the course checklist.

# PPL Course Checklist

Name:

Graduation Semester:

## Required PPL Courses

Course #	Course Title	Semester	Grade
PPL 2010	Morality, Law & the State		
PPL 4005	Thesis Preparation		
PPL 4010	Research Seminar		

## 3 Co-Requisite Courses

Course #	Course Title	Semester	Grade
ECON 2010	Microeconomics (required)		

## 8 Interdisciplinary Core Courses

\* one co-requisite course may overlap

**Theoretical Foundations (at least 3 classes from at least 2 departments)**

Course #	Course Title	Semester	Grade

**Policy & Law (at least 3 classes from at least 2 departments)**

Course #	Course Title	Semester	Grade

Approved by:

# PPL Approved Courses – Fall 2024

## Co-Requisites: History of Political Thought

- PHIL 1000 Intro to Philosophy
- PHIL 3640 Political Philosophy
- PLPT 1010 Intro to Political Theory
- PLPT 3010 Ancient & Medieval Political Thought

## Interdisciplinary: Theoretical Foundations

- BIOL 3450 Biodiversity & Conservation
- ECON 2010 Microeconomics
- ECON 2020 Macroeconomics
- PHIL 1410 Forms of Reasoning
- PHIL 1710 Human Nature
- PHIL 1740 Issues of Life & Death
- PHIL 2060 Philosophical Problems in Law
- PHIL 2110 History of Philosophy: Ancient & Medieval
- PHIL 2660 Philosophy of Religion
- PHIL 3110 Plato
- PHIL 3150 17th Century Philosophy
- PHIL 3640 Political Philosophy
- PHIL 3720 Contemporary Ethics
- PHIL 3810 Sex, Sexuality & Gender
- PLAN 3840 Ethics of City & Environment
- PLPT 1010 Intro to Political Theory
- PLPT 3010 Ancient & Medieval Political Thought
- PLPT 3500 Special Topics in Political Theory (varies)  
Concepts of Law  
The Earth: Ethics, politics, and Economics
- PLPT 4200 Feminist Political Theory
- PLPT 4305 American Political Thought to 1865
- PLPT 4500 Special Topics in Political Theory (varies)

## Co-Requisites: Legal History/Public Policy

- COMM 3410 Commercial Law I
- PLAP 3809 Constitutional Interpretation

- ECON 4440 Economic Inequality
- PHIL 1000 Intro to Philosophy
- PLAP 2250 American Political Tradition
- PLAP 3140 Mass Media & American Politics
- PLAP 3400 American Political Economy
- PLAP 3500 Special Topics in American Politics (varies, must get approval)  
Presidential Power  
Election 2024
- PLAP 3810 Constitutional Interpretation
- PLAP 4500 Special Topics in American Politics (varies, must get approval)  
American Political Ideas  
Polarization in American Politics
- PLCP 1010 Intro to Comparative Politics
- PLCP 3120 Political Economy of the Welfare State
- PLCP 3500 Special Topics in Comparative Politics (varies, must get approval)  
Representing Diverse Identities  
The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Btwn Facts and Pol
- PLCP 4200 Comparative Legislatures\*
- PLCP 4220 Comparative Budgeting & Economic Policy
- PLCP 4250 Politics of Economic Reform\*
- PLCP 4430 Politics of Corruption\*
- PLCP 4500 Special Topics in Comparative Politics (varies, must get approval)  
Making Rich Democracies

**3 Co-Requisites: Microeconomics (ECON 201)**  
**1 in History of Political Thought**  
**1 in Legal History/Public Policy**

**8 Interdisciplinary (1 overlap w/Co-Requisites):**  
**@ least 3 in Theoretical Foundations**  
**@ least 3 in Policy & Law**

**A maximum of 2 courses may overlap  
with another major or minor**

# PPL Approved Courses – Fall 2024

Political Theory and American Social Movements  
 Montesquieu's Political Thought  
 Politics and Morality  
 PLPT 5500 Special Topics in Political Theory (varies)  
 Foundations of American Politics  
 PLIR 1010 International Relations  
 PLIR 4320 Religion & War  
 PLIR 4450 Clash of Ideas in World Politics  
 RELJ 3052 Responses to the Holocaust  
 RELJ 3390 Jewish Feminism

Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Women  
 Clientelism, Coercion, and Vote Buying  
 SOC 2900 Economy & Society  
 SOC 3410 Race & Ethnic Relations  
 SOC 2052 Sociology of the Family  
 WGS 4500 Topics in WGS (varies, must get approval)  
 Capstone: Gender & Espionage  
 Mass Incarceration  
 WGS 2100 Intro to Gender & Sexuality  
 WGS 2125 Race & Power in Gender & Sexuality

## Interdisciplinary: Policy & Law

ANTH 2280 Medical Anthropology  
 ANTH 2285 Anthropology of Development & Humanitarianism  
 BIOL 1040 The DNA Revolution  
 COMM 3410 Commercial Law I  
 COMM 3420 Commercial Law II  
 COMM 3559 Foundations of Sustainable Commerce  
 COMM 3880 Global Sustainability  
 COMM 4558 Ethical Application of Artificial Intelligence  
 COMM 4741 Global Commerce  
 ECON 2010 Microeconomics  
 EDLF 2050 What the Innovators Do  
 EDLF 2070 Effective Altruism  
 EDLF 3240 Education in Multicultural Societies  
 EDLF 3490 Education, Power & US Democracy  
 EDLF 3491 Inequality in US Social Policy  
 EDLF 4080 U.S. Education Policy  
 EDLF 4610 Civil Rights Education & Movement

ECON 2020 Macroeconomics  
 ECON 2060 American Economic History  
 ECON 4300 Public Choice  
 ECON 3430 Sustainability & the Environment  
 ECON 4200 Antitrust Policy  
 ECON 4210 International Trade: Trade & Policy  
 ECON 4310 Economics of the Public Sector  
 ECON 4440 Economic Inequality  
 ECON 4820 Experimental Economics  
 EDHS 2860 Child Protection in Emergencies  
 EDHS 2895 Mental Health and Schools  
 EDIS 2010 Teaching as a Profession  
 HIST 3281 Genocide  
 HIUS 2061 American Economic History  
 HIUS 3652 African-American History since 1865  
 HIUS 4501 Major Seminar in American History (varies, must get approval)\*  
 Using and Abusing Medieval Past in modern World

**3 Co-Requisites: Microeconomics (ECON 201)**  
**1 in History of Political Thought**  
**1 in Legal History/Public Policy**

**8 Interdisciplinary (1 overlap w/Co-Requisites):**  
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**@ least 3 in Policy & Law**

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# PPL Approved Courses – Fall 2024

GCCS 3010	Global Commerce	20th Century Genocides
GSGS 3559	New Course in Global Studies (varies, must get approval)	The Cold War 1945-1990
	The Individual and the World	LPPL 2600
	eGlobal: Sustainable Engagement in Rwanda - Part I	Foundations of Behavioral Science
	Understanding the New Silk Roads	LPPL 3210
GSGS 4150	State, Society & Development	Behavioral Sciences for Civic Leadership
GSVS 3310	Sustainability Policy at Home & Abroad	LPPL 4660
GSVS 4100	Evidence for (Sustainability) Policy	Value & Bias in Public Policy
HIEU 3471	English Legal History to 1776	LPPP 2200
HIEU 4502	History of Human Rights	Intro to Public Policy
LPPS 3470	American Healthcare System	LPPP 3559
LPPS 3559	New Course in Public Policy (varies, must get approval)	New Course in Public Policy & Leadership (varies)
	Strategic Decision-Making	Strategic Decision-Making
LPPS 4230	U.S. Mental Health Policy	LPPP 3620
LPPS 3470	American Healthcare System	Engaging Policy Communities*
LPPS 3559	New Course in Public Policy (varies, must get approval)	LPPP 4200
	Strategic Decision-Making	Institutional & Political Context of Public Policy*
LPPS 4230	U.S. Mental Health Policy	LPPS 3050
MDST 3402	War & the Media	Intro to Social Entrepreneurship
PHIL 2820	Philosophy of Health & Healthcare	LPPS 3240
PHS 3095	Health Policy from an Economic Perspective	Terrorism & Counterterrorism
PHS 4050	Public Health Policy	LPPS 3310
PLAN 3020	Planning in Government	Police-Community Relations
PLAN 3060	Law, Land & the Environment*	PLAP 2250
PLCP 3630	Politics in India & Pakistan	American Political Tradition
PLCP 4200	Comparative Legislatures*	PLAP 3140
PLCP 4220	Comparative Budgeting & Economic Policy*	Mass Media & American Politics
PLCP 4250	Politics of Economic Reform*	PLAP 3370
PLCP 4430	Politics of Corruption	Contemporary American Electoral Politics*
PLCP 4500	Special Topics in Comparative Politics (varies)	PLAP 3400
	Making Rich Democracies	American Political Economy
		PLAP 3500
		Special Topics in American Politics (varies)
		Presidential Power
		Election 2024
		PLAP 3810
		Constitutional Interpretation
		PLAP 4360
		Campaigns & Elections*
		PLAP 4500
		Special Topics in American Politics (varies)
		American Political Ideas
		GIS in the Social Sciences
		Polarization in American Politics
		PLCP 1010
		Intro to Comparative Politics
		PLCP 3120
		Political Economy of the Welfare State
		RELG 2650
		Religion, Ethics & Health Care
		SOC 2052
		Sociology of the Family
		SOC 2900
		Economy & Society

**3 Co-Requisites: Microeconomics (ECON 201)**  
**1 in History of Political Thought**  
**1 in Legal History/Public Policy**

**8 Interdisciplinary (1 overlap w/Co-Requisites):**  
**@ least 3 in Theoretical Foundations**  
**@ least 3 in Policy & Law**

**A maximum of 2 courses may overlap with another major or minor**

# PPL Approved Courses – Fall 2024

Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Women  
Clientelism, Coercion and Vote Buying  
PLIR 1010 International Relations  
PLIR 3060 Military Force in International Relations\*  
PLIR 4320 Religion & War  
PLPT 3500 Special Topics in Pol. Theory (varies, must get approval)  
Concepts of Law  
The Earth: Ethics, Politics & Economics  
SOC 4057 Family Policy  
SOC 4230 Deviance & Social Control  
STS 2760 Technology & Policy

SOC 3410 Race & Ethnic Relations  
WGS 3125 Transnational Feminism  
WGS 4500 Topics in WGS (varies, must get approval)  
Capstone: Gender & Espionage  
Mass incarceration

**3 Co-Requisites: Microeconomics (ECON 201)**  
**1 in History of Political Thought**  
**1 in Legal History/Public Policy**

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