Political Economy
Coordinator: Bruce Podobnik

The political economy minor investigates the nature and consequences of the dynamic interaction between political and economic forces. These forces are shaped and driven by a complex array of social relationships and interests, and are expressed through a diverse range of processes that operate at the local, national, and global levels. Courses in the minor explore the political-economic dynamic from multiple disciplinary perspectives and historical angles, using a variety of conceptual approaches.

To earn a minor in political economy, students must complete five courses: two required core courses and three electives. The core courses, located in the departments of Economics, International Affairs, and Sociology-Anthropology, introduce students to various theories of political economy and examine their application to significant national and international patterns and developments.

The elective courses are distributed into three concentrations. Students minoring in political economy must take one class from each. Courses in the first concentration, Global Dynamics, explore how living and working conditions throughout the world are shaped by the interrelationship between national and global political and economic processes. Courses in the second concentration, National Structures and Power, examine the ways in which the roots and exercise of power, as well as sociocultural dynamics, are structured by the political-economic relationship as it emerges in a unique national context. Courses in the third concentration, Cultural Forces and Social Movements, investigate theoretically and practically the importance and interplay of culture, power, resistance, and social change.

Potential employers and graduate programs seek liberal arts graduates who have strong analytical skills and knowledge of contemporary events; a political economy minor offers evidence of such preparation. Reflecting the sponsoring faculty’s broad array of training and interests, the minor highlights a wide range of topics and potential applications. Examples include the interplay between social relations and the organization of production; the relationship between governments and markets in determining national development, power, and political stability; the ways in which ideas, discourse, gender, race, and identity affect and interact with political and economic forces to structure social environments; the influence of state power on the global economy; and the role of social movements in promoting economic and political change.

Students may enhance any major through the addition of a minor in political economy. Those interested in pursuing a political economy minor should schedule a meeting with one of the sponsoring faculty to discuss program offerings and develop a curricular plan.

Minor Requirements
A minimum of 20 semester credits (five courses), distributed as follows:

- Two courses from the following:
  - ECON 250 Radical Political Economics
  - IA 340 International Political Economy
  - SOAN 300 Social Theory

- Three electives, one from each of the following three concentrations:

  **Global Dynamics**
  - ECON 232 Economic Development
  - IA 238 Political Economy of Development
  - SOAN 249 The Political Economy of Food
  - SOAN 270 Cultural Politics of Youth in East Asia
  - SOAN 350 Global Inequality
  - SOAN 360 Colonialism and Postcolonialism

  **National Structures and Power**
  - ECON 220 The Financial System and the Economy
  - ECON 295 Political Economy of Korea
  - HIST 142 Modern Latin American History
  - HIST 347 Modern Mexico: Culture, Politics, and Economic Crisis
  - RHMS 360 Digital Media and Society
  - SOAN 353 Popular Culture/Public Protest: China

  **Cultural Forces and Social Movements**
  - SOAN 214 Social Change
  - SOAN 221 Sociology of Work, Leisure, and Consumption
  - SOAN 228 Class, Power, and Society
  - SOAN 254 The Social Life of Money and Exchange
  - SOAN 274 Contemporary Chinese Society
  - SOAN 285 Culture and Power in the Middle East
  - SOAN 300 Social Theory
  - SOAN 324 Anthropology of Violence
  - SOAN 342 Power and Resistance

Faculty


