

HELP! What is a Concentration and what do I have to do?!

Demystifying the PE Concentration topic

**What is a
Concentration?**

- A focused area of study on 1 topic that has to do with Political Economy
- 4 of your 9 upper-division courses in this major

- A topic you're interested in learning more about and 4 classes which will help you to understand this topic better
- Your area of emphasis; something you will (eventually) feel comfortable calling yourself particularly knowledgeable about - maybe even an expert!

The Concentration is perhaps the best part of the Political Economy major; it allows you to apply the knowledge you have gained to a topic which you feel particularly drawn to or curious about. This should be an exciting, interesting, and, dare we say, fun process!

**Why do I need a
Concentration?**

- PE covers A LOT of ground - this is where you get to apply the theories and methods you've learned to something specific in the real world!
- To develop a strong, focused, and in-depth understanding of your topic-of-choice

Where do I focus?

Anywhere! Local, global, Northeast Asia, Europe post-WWII, the possibilities are (almost) endless!

- Your concentration does not have to focus on a specific region of the world (though it *can*, if you wish)
- You can choose to look at a topic specifically here in the U.S., generally across the globe, or in a particular country, region, or timeframe.

When should I start?

START THINKING ABOUT YOUR CONCENTRATION EARLY!!

ASAP!!!

We cannot emphasize this enough!

- While you take IAS 45 or PE 100, be thinking about what topics you're most interested in. (Try to take these classes early on so that you have plenty of time to develop your thoughts and ideas!)
- Take advantage of our drop-in advising hours and come speak to us anytime (except maybe during TeleBears!) about Concentration topics you're considering

How do I choose a topic and courses?

Remember, you will spend four courses focusing on this material, so be thoughtful and develop a topic you enjoy learning about!

- Think about a topic within the realm of Political Economy (we know, there are so many options!) which you hope to learn more about
- You might choose:
 - A problem you've noticed in your studies or life experiences
 - A current issue you've read about in the newspaper
 - A question about what has happened, is happening, or will happen to a particular phenomenon or issue
 - A general topic of interest within Political Economy which you hope to become more knowledgeable about

What if I have no idea where to begin choosing a topic?

- Think about some of the classes you have taken which you enjoyed the most - what issues did you learn about in those courses?
- The next time you're skimming the newspaper headlines, notice what article you actually stop to read - what about this article interests you?
- Think about why you chose the Political Economy major - what about it intrigued you and why?

Following your thoughts down one of these paths could be the start to a great Concentration that you're passionate learning about!

And I have no clue how to find classes for my Concentration!

- Think about which academic disciplines might offer valuable insight into your specific topic - check out their classes to see if anything fits!
- The classes you choose should help you understand your topic and teach you how to analyze your topic from a variety of viewpoints or theoretical backgrounds
- These courses should all have your topic in common, as well as being relatable to one another

For example...

If your topic is about policy-making decisions to address social inequality issues in the U.S., perhaps a public policy or political science course may be able to shed light on the policy- and decision-making side, and perhaps a sociology class or two may be able to shed light on the social inequalities you are hoping to investigate.

And remember: Political Economy is a social science, meaning that, as a general rule of thumb, you're better off choosing Concentration courses in the social sciences than in the humanities (e.g. Literature) or a professional school (e.g. Haas School of Business).