

# Philosophy, Politics and Economics: Upper-Year Choices

## 1. Which Disciplines?

You can choose to remain “Tri-Partite” – that is, studying all three disciplines of Philosophy, Politics, and Economics – or to go “Bi-Partite”, with two of the three. It’s generally reckoned that Tri-Partite is a bit more demanding, because although the workload is the same (eight examination papers), you need to have mastered the basics of three different disciplines. However obviously this depends to a large extent on the choices you make. Certainly a Tri-Partite selection can be extremely diverse, if for example your Philosophy choices are focused on metaphysics, your Politics choices on institutions and your Economics choices on econometrics. But on the other hand it’s possible to select papers – especially from Philosophy and Politics – that are academically very close, so that Tri-Partite PPE feels more like “Bi-Partite” Political Philosophy and Economics. I recommend that you simply choose according to your academic interests, and not assume that Tri-Partite is going to be specially problematic.

## 2. Which Papers?

In all of Philosophy, Politics and Economics you take a “core” of two papers for each discipline you do. If you are Tri-Partite, that makes six papers out of the eight, and the other two can be freely chosen from any of the three disciplines. If you are Bi-Partite, then you must choose at least one additional paper from each of the two disciplines, and the other two papers can be freely chosen from the two disciplines concerned. Hence in effect you can split your eight papers 3-5, 4-4 or 5-3 between the two disciplines.<sup>1</sup>

### Core Philosophy

You take Paper 103 “Ethics” and one of the three core “History” papers:

- 101 “History of Philosophy from Descartes to Kant”
- 115 “Plato: Republic”
- 116 “Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics”

Most choose the first of these, which is a natural follow-on from first year “General Philosophy”. As taught at Hertford College, this typically focuses most on Descartes and Hume, with some Locke and Berkeley in the middle (though you are welcome to ask for others if you wish).

### Core Politics

You choose two out of the core of five papers:

- 201 “Comparative Government”
- 202 “British Politics and Government since 1900”
- 203 “Theory of Politics”
- 214 “International Relations”
- 220 “Political Sociology”

In practice, Theory of Politics seems to be the most frequently chosen of these, and “British Politics and Government since 1900” the least frequently chosen.

### Core Economics

You take the two papers:

- 301 “Macroeconomics”
- 302 “Microeconomics”

*Peter Millican, June 2007*

---

<sup>1</sup> However in practice the options are more flexible than this. First, the “Theory of Politics” paper can count as either Philosophy or Politics (so if you are Bi-Partite Philosophy/Politics you can in effect do a 6-2 or 2-6 split by counting this as part of your minority discipline). Secondly, if you are bipartite Politics/Economics you can include a Philosophy paper as one of your two “free choices”, and if you do Philosophy/Economics you can include a Politics paper in the same way, as long as it is either a “core” paper or one of the two “History of Political Thought” papers.