PPES – Philosophy, Political Science, Economics and Sociology (TR015)
School of Social Sciences and Philosophy

Trinity College Dublin is recognised internationally as Ireland’s leading university and as one of the top universities in the world. Trinity was founded in 1592, and today the university is a lively and cosmopolitan community of students from around the globe. Its bustling 47-acre campus is the ideal environment for studying, learning, relaxing and living.

Trinity’s School of Social Sciences and Philosophy is at the forefront of research and teaching across the disciplines of philosophy, political science, economics and sociology.

Trinity has an international reputation for its research on issues of global societal and economic importance such as migration, development, international macroeconomics and political and economic integration in Europe. Our students benefit from a research-led education which exposes them to leading academics, the latest knowledge and ideas, and to an education that emphasizes analytical skills and creative thinking.

Why Choose the PPES Programme?

Trinity’s PPES programme is the only university degree in Ireland where students can combine the study of philosophy, political science, economics and sociology. It provides an integrated multidisciplinary education in the social sciences and philosophy, with students studying four subjects that are central to understanding any society. It brings together some of the most important approaches to understanding the social and human world, developing skills suited to a range of future careers and activities.

PPES will appeal to students who are excited about the challenges of understanding the way societies are organised, create wealth and are governed, while drawing on the methods and insights of philosophical enquiry. If you are puzzled about how our world is structured and have a desire to change it, then PPES is the degree for you.
Degree Options in BESS

BESS is an uniquely flexible programme offering ten different degree options: Business (B.B.S.) and nine other single or joint honor/major with minor possibilities in the disciplines of Business, Economics, Political Science and Sociology. Students have a great deal of choice and flexibility in shaping their degree pathway. For example in second year one student could opt to take Economics only while another student could opt to take Business and Sociology, while a third student could opt to take Political Science and Economics. Any combination of disciplines is allowed as per the box to the right.

Course Structure and Assessment

Most BESS modules involve a system of continuous assessment which can include research-based essays, projects and/or presentations, contributing up to 50% of the grade for the year. The remainder is based on the results of written examinations.

Within BESS all students take the same modules in first year giving all students the same core grounding in the four disciplines. After this students can adjust their course options to reflect their academic strengths, interests and emerging career aspirations. The BESS programme provides students with a broad-based education while offering a high-level of flexibility in two very important ways: (1) in choosing the specific degree they wish to study for; and, (2) in choosing individual modules.

Single Honors

- Business
- Economics
- Political Science
- Sociology

Joint Honors/Major with Minor

- Economics and Political Science
- Economics and Sociology
- Political Science and Sociology
- Business and Economics
- Business and Political Science
- Business and Sociology

year 1

In the common first year of the programme students are introduced to a wide range of subjects giving them the opportunity to explore new interests without committing to a particular area at this early stage.

year 2

Students choose to study one or two of the BESS disciplines, Business, Economics, Political Science and Sociology. Students are also free to choose from a range of approved modules in other disciplines.

year 3

Students specialise in the areas of their chosen disciplines that interest them, selecting from a wide range of modules. In third year, many students have the opportunity to study abroad at distinguished universities around the world such as the ESSEC Business School in Paris, the Chinese University of Hong Kong and Berkeley University in California.

year 4

Students now focus on the research based development of their core topics as they prepare for their final degree grade. Students are required to complete a piece of independent research as part of their Trinity degree known as the Capstone Project. This provides an excellent opportunity to position themselves for a career in a specific sector or for postgraduate study.
Degree Options in PPES

PPES is an extremely flexible degree which allows gradual specialisation over the course of the four-year programme. Students have a great deal of choice and flexibility in shaping their degree pathway and can opt to graduate with a Single Honor, Joint Honor, or Major with Minor Award, in any combination of the four disciplines, Economics, Philosophy, Political Science and Sociology.

Study abroad

In third year, students have the opportunity to apply to study abroad in a prestigious European university with the EU-funded Erasmus programme. In addition to Erasmus programmes in Europe, the Departments also have bilateral links with leading universities across the world. Our exchange programmes are highly successful, and are an extremely popular option for PPES students each year. Participating students find that they are hugely enjoyable, academically and culturally rewarding, and appeal to prospective employers.

The PPES Disciplines

The concept behind the PPES programme is that in order to understand social and human phenomena we must approach them from several complementary disciplinary directions and analytical frameworks. For example political decisions often concern economic matters, and government decisions are often influenced by economic events.

CAPSTONE PROJECT

In your final year of study, you will undertake a Capstone project – an independent research project which comprises an in-depth investigation of a specific area of scholarship. The Capstone project is a catalyst to enable you to reflect on your learning from the programme as a whole and to demonstrate your ability to think independently, communicate effectively, develop continuously and act responsibly as you transition to the world of work or to postgraduate studies.

Joint Honor & Major with Minor

- Philosophy and economics
- Philosophy and political science
- Philosophy and sociology
- Political science and economics
- Political science and sociology
- Economics and sociology

Single Honor

- Philosophy
- Political science
- Economics
- Sociology

First Year

In first year you will take all four subjects: economics, philosophy, political science and sociology.

Second Year

In second year you can choose to continue with one, two or three of the subjects and could, for example, take modules ranging from Intermediate Economics, to the History of Philosophy to International Politics, to an Introduction to Social Theory.

Third and Fourth Years

In third year you can take two of the four subjects, or one of the four subjects and modules from a range of approved modules and Trinity Electives. In the fourth year you may choose to take one or two subjects and can exit with a Single Honor, Major with Minor or Joint Honor award.

All students will complete a CAPSTONE project in their final year. Module Descriptors for all four years of the programme can be found on the PPES website: www.tcd.ie/ssp/undergraduate/ppes/current/course-structure/module-outlines/
Trinity Graduate Attributes

Students come to Trinity not only to acquire a certain set of facts or competences but because they have an understanding of the sort of person they want to become. Building on the strong value placed on a solid multidisciplinary formation, we wanted to address the answer to the question ‘what kind of person can I be?’ We distilled this sense of transformation into four Trinity graduate attributes listed below.

To Think Independently
To Act Responsibly
To Communicate Effectively
To Develop Continuously

Defining the Trinity Education, these attributes encompass the qualities, skills and abilities that our students have the opportunity to develop throughout their entire university experience - both in and outside the classroom in activities such as internships or volunteering. They will benefit our students not just in their careers, but in their future lives as individuals and members of society.
"As an individual fascinated by current affairs, I was keen to pursue a course of study that would enable me to better understand how society functions and operates. The opportunity to study a course which offered four different disciplinary perspectives therefore appealed to me. The early years gave me time to gain a broad overview of the social sciences before choosing my specialisations in later years."

Patrick Lavelle
PPES GRADUATE

"When researching courses during my final year of secondary school, it was the PPES degree which struck a chord with me. The small class size, range of subjects and the fact that it was the only course of its kind in the Republic of Ireland, made PPES stand out. Studying PPES has been an absolute joy, equipping me with the desired broad skillset essential in the pursuit of both career aspirations and further study."

Hannah Treanor
PPES GRADUATE

Career and Postgraduate Opportunities

From a career perspective Trinity graduates are extremely well regarded worldwide. Many PPES graduates have gone on to postgraduate study both at Trinity College Dublin and at other leading universities around the world such as University College London, the University of Edinburgh and the College of Europe.

PPES students develop exceptional problem solving and critical thinking skills which are highly sought after by employers. PPES students also develop insights and expertise across a range of disciplines, which enable them to pursue careers in fields as varied as management, research, teaching, journalism, international affairs, public policy and public service. The following are just a few examples of the diverse organisations across the globe where PPES graduates work:

How to Apply

If you are interested in applying for the PPES programme please visit: www.tcd.ie/study