

LANCASTER
UNIVERSITY



Philosophy, Politics & Economics

Contents

There are many good reasons to study Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE), at Lancaster University: the fascinating and challenging content of the degree itself; the flexible degree structure that allows you to choose your modules and to change your degree if you wish; the excellence in teaching and student satisfaction with the course (PPE at Lancaster University is rated higher for overall course satisfaction than PPE at Warwick, Sussex, Essex, Hull, Royal Holloway and Swansea, in the National Student Survey 2013). There is also award-winning accommodation guaranteed on a safe campus in a collegiate university in one of the most beautiful parts of the UK.

Although not many universities offer PPE, they all differ in terms of the course content and structure. This short brochure is designed to give you an introduction to PPE at Lancaster.

The Philosophy, Politics and Economics brochure is arranged in three sections.

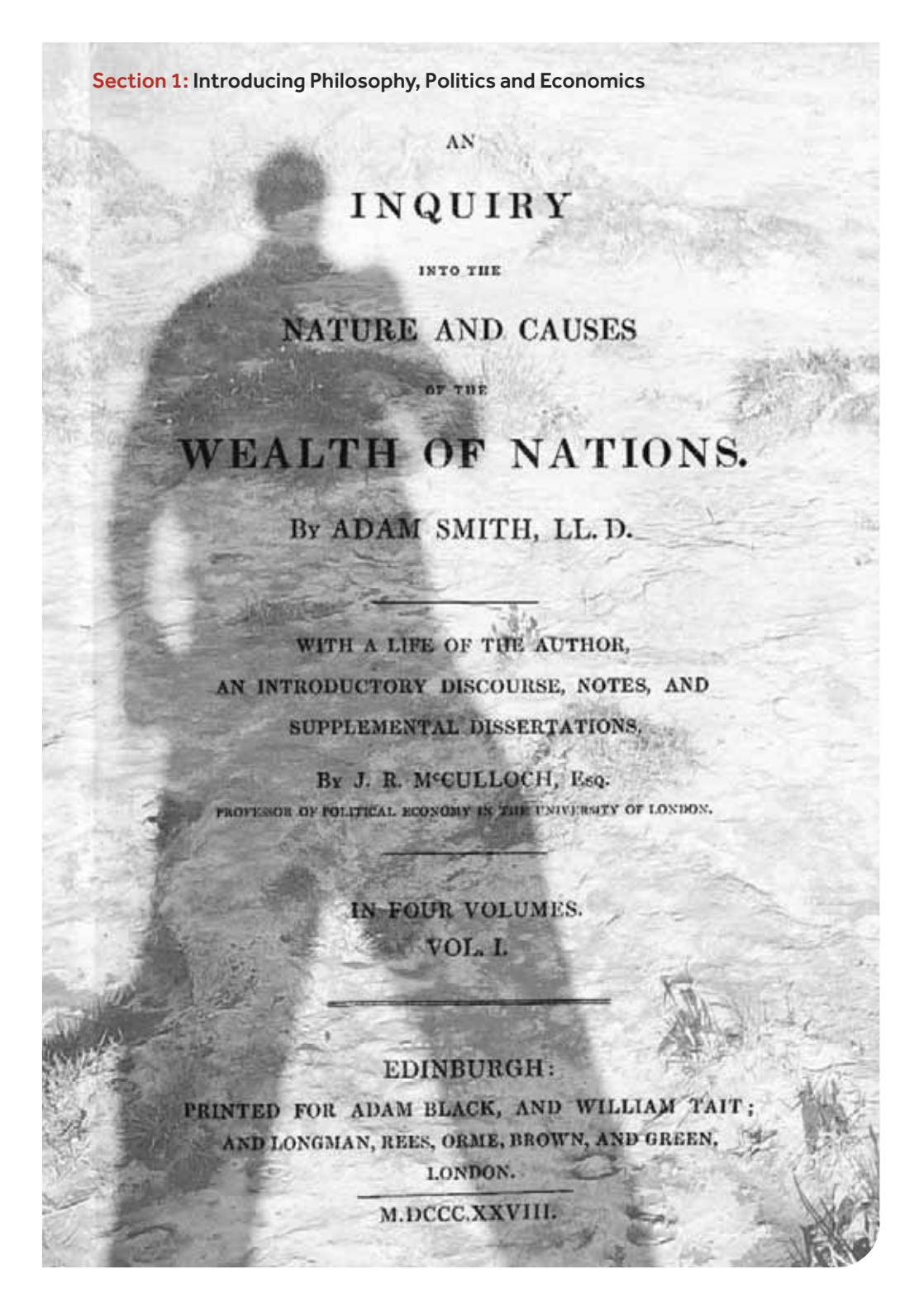
Section 1 is a brief introduction to the three subject areas.

Section 2 outlines the course content and course structure

Section 3 gives some brief information about life in Lancaster.

There are many more details about specific course modules on the Department and University website. www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/ppr/

If you can't find answers to your queries, or want to talk to someone in person, do get in touch with us – the contact details are at the end of the brochure.



AN
INQUIRY
INTO THE
NATURE AND CAUSES
OF THE
WEALTH OF NATIONS.

By ADAM SMITH, LL. D.

WITH A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,
AN INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE, NOTES, AND
SUPPLEMENTAL DISSERTATIONS,

By J. R. McCULLOCH, Esq.
PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL ECONOMY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED FOR ADAM BLACK, AND WILLIAM TAIT;
AND LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, AND GREEN,
LONDON.

M.DCCC.XXVIII.

Introducing Philosophy, Politics and Economics

Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) is a classic joint degree – many politicians, journalists, civil servants, authors and broadcasters studied PPE as undergraduates. The three subjects complement each other well and overlap and connect in a variety of ways. You may already be studying one or more of these subjects, but there is no requirement that you have done so. The only set requirement is that you have a B' or above in GCSE Maths (or the equivalent). This section gives a brief introduction to the three subjects. If you are already studying all three subjects then you may want to move ahead to Section 2 about course content and structure.

What is Philosophy?

The philosopher Bertrand Russell once suggested that the person who doesn't think philosophically...

“goes through life imprisoned in the prejudices derived from common sense, from the habitual beliefs of his age or his nation, and from convictions which have grown up in his mind without the cooperation or consent of his deliberate reason.”

This may be a little bit strong, but it does capture something important about philosophy. Philosophy calls into question and often challenges our opinions, dogmas, prejudices and assumptions. Philosophy requires you to be able to take up a critical attitude that includes your own views (after all, anyone with a strong conviction believes that they are in the right, but it does not mean that they are right: why should your conviction be an exception?).

Section 1: Introducing Philosophy, Politics and Economics



Do free markets lead to inequality? If they do, what obligations do the wealthy have to assist the poor?

For example, take the question: are inheritance taxes fair? How do we answer this? One problem here is that people differ in what they think the answer is. For example, some think that is plainly and clearly obvious that inheritance tax is fair. Why on earth should a person be entitled to receive massive wealth, without having worked for it, in such a way that societies end up unequal? Another person might be equally convinced that of course such taxes are always unfair: why shouldn't a person be allowed to pass on their property to others that they love and care for?

However, if we don't want to be *'imprisoned in the prejudices derived from common sense'* we need to do something more. We need to try to find out whether inheritance taxes really are fair or not. But how do we answer this question? It's not a question like *"Is water H₂O?"* or *"What is water made of?"* We cannot answer is inheritance tax fair? by observing the world. We can't find out about the true nature of fairness by looking through a microscope or any other instrument.



But, you might object, can't we look at the world and 'see' examples of fairness and unfairness? The problem here is that different people 'see' the world in different ways. Someone who thinks that inheritance tax is unfair may see a trust-fund layabout quaffing champagne and think: *"Look, you can see how unfair that is: he hasn't worked for that money, and others are starving!"* But another person might look at the same situation and 'see' otherwise: *"here is a person doing no wrong, exercising his rights to live his life as he pleases. What right does the state or anyone else have to interfere here?"*

What if we did a survey and found out what most people think? But this won't help either. A social science survey wouldn't tell us if the tax is fair, it would only tell us whether (certain) people think it is fair. For example, back in the Eighteenth Century the majority of people in the UK may well have held that slavery was permissible, but that doesn't mean that it is, or was, permissible.

Section 1: Introducing Philosophy, Politics and Economics

If we can't answer these questions by asking other people their views, how do we go about answering them? In order to answer philosophical questions you have to do philosophy. This doesn't mean that you have to be a professional philosopher. What it does mean is that you have to think critically, carefully, and creatively. One thing that is always important in philosophy – especially as a first step – is being clear about what we mean (you will often hear philosophers, and philosophy students, starting their response to a question with *"It depends what you mean by ..."*). So, we might begin by trying to clarify what we mean by fairness. For example, consider the following three claims about fairness:

"It's only fair that people are rewarded if they work hard"

"A fair society is one without huge inequalities in wealth"

"It's only fair that criminals should have their ill-gotten wealth taken away"

If you think about these for a moment it is not hard to see that these are in tension (for example, think about the fair treatment of a hard working criminal whose wealth is many times more than average). At this point we might clarify things by distinguishing different senses of 'fair'. For example, in the first claim fairness is to do with desert (what people deserve in return for work), whilst in the second claim it is do with justice, with the just allocation of resources. Being clear is a useful start, and an important part of philosophical reasoning, but this still wouldn't answer our initial question about whether inheritance tax is fair. In order to do that our critical discussion would have to expand to include broader philosophical debates about how we ought to live (e.g., is the freedom to give your money to your children more important than issues of justice and desert? Which values are the really important ones? How can we tell?).

Philosophy involves an attempt to critically engage with questions that matter to us and to bring about a better, more sophisticated and well-grounded, understanding of the world. This involves 'going beyond' common-sense opinions and beliefs.

Studying philosophy involves learning to do certain things. You already have the power to reason, and to reason critically. What the study of philosophy involves is you applying and developing your powers of critical reasoning.

Some of our philosophy modules at Lancaster are historical, where we study some of the great thinkers from the history of philosophy. Other modules are topic based (e.g., Philosophy of Mind, or Philosophy of Science). Topic-based modules may make use of arguments and discussions by philosophers from the past. But when we introduce work by Mill, or Hume, or Kant, or Plato, or Nietzsche or Wittgenstein, whether it is in the historical modules or the topic-based ones, we want you to engage with the questions and problems that they address, we don't want you to simply report their thoughts.

This focus on learning to do philosophy, and in developing your skills and views may be something very different to your school or college experience of philosophy. Indeed, some A-level students feel frustrated precisely because they are learning about philosophy rather than being encouraged to develop their own critical skills and philosophical understanding. At Lancaster we value critical originality, provided, of course, that it is well argued, well informed, and communicated in a clear, relevant, way.



Section 1: Introducing Philosophy, Politics and Economics



What is Politics?

Some people think of Politics as a very specialised activity, confined to places like Westminster and Town Halls, and to elected representatives and their advisors. Others see Politics everywhere – it's something that all of us 'do', not just when voting or signing petitions but even when making everyday decisions like choosing to buy certain products in particular shops.

Nowadays teachers of Politics tend to take the latter, much broader view of their subject: viewing politics as a means of resolving dilemmas and disputes which arise within (and between) all human communities. It would be silly to say that there was Politics in every human activity – there isn't any Politics in the way we clean our teeth, for example – but there is certainly Politics in every workplace, every school classroom, and even among university teachers of Politics and their students.

Politics helps us to understand ourselves and our relationships with others, as well as the events which dominate the headlines of serious newspapers and trigger earnest internet discussions. As such, it is no surprise that although professional politicians might be widely distrusted in most Western societies, the subject of Politics is as popular as ever among undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Clearly, there are many points of connection between philosophy and politics. Political philosophy has always been a core part of philosophy as philosophers recognised the fact that Politics is a central aspect of human life. Take our sample philosophical question about the fairness of inheritance tax. It would be very hard to address this question without having some grasp of Politics, both in the broad sense (about how humans resolve differences and organise societies) and in the narrower sense (one that focuses on political institutions and political decision making).

Section 1: Introducing Philosophy, Politics and Economics



As a PPE student studying Politics, you will focus on the institutions and practices of certain political systems – Britain, the US, China and the EU, for example. However, these states and their institutions cannot be understood without reference to the global context. In introducing you to key concepts and developments in International Relations, PPE at Lancaster University offers the opportunity to understand the both the political and economic aspects of the phenomenon known as 'globalisation', and other issues in global political economy.

Another key aspect of Politics is political theory, which allows you to develop your own ideas as well as understanding the work of great political thinkers of the past and present.

We do not require any previous qualifications in the subject – the key to success is an enthusiasm to learn more about the developments and trends which shape the fast-changing contemporary world.

Our question about whether inheritance tax is fair has philosophical and political aspects. Questions about taxation clearly have an economic side to them too. In the abstract we might assume that increasing taxation would make more revenue available to the state (with further political questions about what the state does with that revenue and why, and philosophical questions about what it ought to do with it).

But, as Russell noted, we cannot simply take our assumptions for granted. Inheritance taxes may have actually decrease revenue (if rich people are motivated to leave the country, for example). What we need here is to draw upon a discipline that can tell us something about the precise ways in which wealth and other scarce resources get to be exchanged and distributed: that discipline is economics.

Section 1: Introducing Philosophy, Politics and Economics

The image shows a blurred stock market ticker board. The text is out of focus, but the layout is clear. It consists of several columns of data. The first column contains blue numbers, likely stock identifiers. The second column contains green numbers with downward arrows (↓) or red numbers with upward arrows (↑), indicating price changes. The third and fourth columns contain white numbers, likely current prices. The fifth column contains red numbers, possibly representing another set of prices or values. The overall background is dark, and the text is brightly lit, creating a high-contrast, busy appearance typical of a financial market display.

Stock ID	Change	Price 1	Price 2	Price 3
10.98		18.59	20.45	
30 ↓		25.61	25.10	
7 ↓		35.58	34.52	
25 ↓		29.44	29.00	
796 ↓		44.50	43.58	
4 ↑		26.07	26.17	
43 ↓		10.19	10.15	
15 ↑		16.00	15.72	
7 ↑		15.32	15.30	
23 ↑		6.07	6.25	
68 ↓		33.71	33.50	
12 ↑		26.22	25.86	
2 ↑		32.06	31.98	
1 ↓		58.99	58.10	
177 ↓		6.20	6.51	
10 ↓		21.48	20.82	
15 ↓		116.15	115.50	
7 ↑		74.12	74.00	
2 ↑				

What is Economics?

Economic matters are in the news a lot. But if you watch or read the news it might seem that Economics is just about inflation, unemployment, balance of payments, exchange rates, and the economic crisis. But these phenomena are just one part of Economics: macroeconomics. Macroeconomics critically focuses on the interaction of large-scale phenomena (such as inflation) to better understand the nature and functioning of whole economies (at a national or international level). But there is another part of economics, microeconomics – in its original Greek (oikonomikos) the literal meaning of 'economics' is the management of a household. Think for a moment about the many different things a 'household' does. Members of the household have to work, they have to buy food and other resources. Throughout human history everyday economic transactions have played a central part in our lives: buying, selling or exchanging goods, buying, selling or exchanging labour.

These transactions involve making certain kinds of decisions, especially in the light of the fact that wealth, labour, and other resources are limited, or scarce. If you have enough wealth to buy a pound of wheat you cannot use that wealth to buy a pound of carrots, you have to make an economic decision. If you have enough time to build a wall for your neighbour you cannot use that time to dig a well for someone else. Suppose you have a field of wheat, what determines the price you will be paid for the wheat: after all, it is to your advantage if you can sell it for a huge sum, but what if nobody wants to pay that sum? What if there are other farmers selling different crops, or the same crop at lower prices? What if you were the only person with wheat to sell and there is no other source of food? We may all have some rough and ready ideas about what to say here, but microeconomics allows us to make sense of, and better understand, these economic transactions, and patterns in economic behaviour, in a much more rigorous and systematic way.

Section 1: Introducing Philosophy, Politics and Economics

What is Economics? continued

The idea of a market is central to microeconomics. Markets are social systems which allow prices to be established. Competitive markets bring mutual advantages to traders, whatever their individual objectives happen to be. Where sellers compete with one another, there are advantages for buyers. Where buyers compete with one another, there are advantages for sellers. Free markets allow buyers and sellers to achieve mutual satisfaction. Within a liberal market order, each individual is permitted to apply his limited (but unique) knowledge however he sees fit. Hence, Adam Smith's 'invisible hand': *'it is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their self-interest.'* Microeconomics allows you, amongst other things, to better understand how different kinds of market, and the various elements of markets, work. Understanding the functioning of markets is a very useful for better understanding national and global politics and for a wide range of careers (try to think of a career that doesn't involve market mechanisms of some kind or other).

Studying Economics also includes critically theorizing about characteristics of rational economic behaviour; how individual property rights are assigned; and practical options for organising economic activity. Robert Solow (1996 Nobel economics prize-winner) has suggested that the remit of economics is *'to aid the organisation of incomplete perceptions about the economy, to see connections that an untutored eye would miss, and to tell plausible stories based upon a few simple principles'*. As such, the application of economic principles can deliver insights into many real world phenomena, where the tools of economics are used to understand many aspects of human behaviour; for example, health, crime, fertility and gambling.

At Lancaster University, the study of Economics includes a wide range of topics within macroeconomics and microeconomics. The PPE course is designed for students who may not have taken Economics before, and who may not have a higher-level maths qualification (A-level). There are some parts of the course that do require some statistical and analytical skills, but these are designed to be accessible without a maths background. Single honours Economics students spend a third of their first year on the course Quantitative Methods for Economics. This means that PPE students do not normally take the mathematical economics modules in the third year.

Studying economics allows students to gain a sophisticated grasp of centrally important activities and institutions – rational decision making, markets, price mechanisms. An understanding of economics is directly relevant to a proper understanding of many topics and practices of importance. But PPE offers something more than just economic understanding. As we have noted already, there are many important interconnections between the three subjects. One cannot really study, or understand, the decisions made by politicians and states without an understanding of economics. But one cannot really understand economic transactions, or macroeconomic phenomena (like exchange rates, or unemployment) in the abstract, without a grasp of their political dimension. In both politics and economics there are philosophical questions, questions that cannot be answered within the disciplines themselves, but which require a distinctive kind of ‘standing back’ in order to engage with fundamentals. Economists may argue about which particular model of inflation is the best one, economically speaking, but such debates may not address the question of why inflation matters to us, in terms of human flourishing and well-being.

Economists may be able to establish that certain kinds of market are the most efficient way for allocating resources, but this does not tell us whether market efficiency ought to be valued above other values (such as equality or freedom). To properly address these questions we need to turn to philosophy.

Overall, the three subject areas in PPE weave together, and mutually support each other, in a wide variety of ways. But how exactly do they fit together in terms of your university degree? That is the topic for the next section.



Section 2: The PPE Degree: Content and Structure



The PPE Degree: Content and Structure

As you probably know, only a few universities in the UK offer PPE degrees. One reason for this is that it can be complicated to co-ordinate three different subject areas, over three years, for large numbers of students. But the Lancaster University undergraduate system is ready-made for PPE: it is a 'modular' system for all students, whether or not they are doing joint honours. The degree that a student comes out with is determined by the modules that they take, and, as we will see, there is a great deal of flexibility in this kind of system.

In the case of PPE the requirement is to take a sufficient number of modules in each of the three subject areas, though there are some additional minor restrictions in the case of the Economics part of PPE. For example, PPE are not usually able to take mathematical economics modules in their third year.

The PPE degree programme involves teaching in three subject areas in different departments. Politics and Philosophy are taught by the Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion (PPR), whilst Economics is taught by the Department of Economics (within the Lancaster University Management School (LUMS)). PPR administers the degree, which means that your University registration is within PPR. PPR is based in County South College, at the North end of campus, on 'B' floor (conveniently situated above the Northern Oak Bar, the County Café and next to the ReFuel Café and lounge).

Politics and Philosophy lectures and seminars tend to be held at the northern end of campus, whilst Economics lectures and seminars are held in the Management School and Southern end of campus (don't worry, there is time allocated to allow you to get from one lecture to another!).

The Lancaster degree programme is divided into two parts: Part I and Part II. Part I is the first year, Part II the second and third years. Part I and Part II work in different ways.

Section 2: The PPE Degree: Content and Structure

Part I

Part I is an introductory year. You have to pass Part I to proceed to Part II. Your marks from Part I do not count towards your final degree classification. In Part I all students – including single honours students – take three modules. The fact that PPE students take three modules in different subjects is not unusual. A single honours Politics student might study Politics, History, and Sociology, or Politics, Philosophy and Religious Studies. Indeed, a single honours student might study the same modules as a PPE student! The difference is that the PPE student is pre-enrolled onto the modules. This is important in the case of Economics, as there is a quota system where pre-enrolled students are guaranteed a place on the Economics first year module ECON100, whilst those taking the subject as a 'minor' may not get a place (depending on demand).

For each of the three Part I courses there are two one-hour lectures a week in a large lecture theatre. Lectures are meant to introduce you to topics, to give you guidance and direction, and, hopefully, inspire your interest in the topic in question. For each module, students are allocated to small discussion groups (seminars). There are usually set readings or other tasks for each seminar. Seminars meet for an hour once a week with a tutor to discuss the topic in more detail, and to allow you to discuss and clarify any difficulties you have in that week's tasks or readings. At University (unlike school or college) most of your learning is down to you: to the time spent on reading, working on your notes, preparing for essays and other assignments.

PHIL 100 Introduction to Philosophy

This first-year module provides an introduction to some key areas in philosophy and provides the background in knowledge and critical skills necessary to study philosophical topics in more detail in Part II. The module begins by introducing philosophy as a subject and as a distinctive set of methods. It then covers five topics over the year.



Could science ever show us that we don't have free will?

1. Knowledge and Reality:

looks at the limits of our knowledge and the relationship between philosophical theories and our 'common-sense' views of the world.;

2. Critical Thinking:

introduces students to key concepts and methods in informal logic (there are no symbols to learn at this stage, though students with an interest in symbolic logic can take Logic and Language in the third year).

3. Ethics:

introduces key ideas in ethical theory, in 2013 the focus was on JS Mill's ethical views and problems with them;

4. Free Will:

looks at the question whether we really are free, and whether scientific discoveries, in neuroscience, for example, could ever show that we are not free.;

5. Political Philosophy:

covers different material from that covered in *POLI 100*, in 2013 the focus was on philosophical and ethical problems to do with capitalism (this is of particular relevance for PPE students).

The course is designed to be accessible to those who have not done philosophy before, without duplicating material studied at A-level, with a particular stress on developing your own skills in critical, reasoned, argument, rather than merely learning key facts from the history of philosophy.

Section 2: The PPE Degree: Content and Structure

POLI 100 Understanding Politics and Governance

The aim of this Part I core course is to introduce students to some of the key areas of the fields of Politics and International Relations. The course is designed both for students who are new to Politics and for those who have studied Politics before. This course explores some of the main themes and issues in Politics and Governance in contemporary times. It does so by building up a story about 'liberal democracy' and 'the state'. These ideas have come to both dominate our political landscape – but now face serious challenges and threats. The course is divided into three main sections. In the first term we start by looking at the principles of liberal democracy (democracy liberalism, and property) before looking at two states which exemplify those principles (the UK and USA).

We then survey some of the institutions of liberal democracy which work within and beyond the state level (such as the European Union and the United Nations). The second term concentrates on the historical development of the international system of states focusing on the events surrounding the Cold War to our present situation; an examination of how governance is organised and globalised through the realms of politics and economics; and the development of structure, institutions, and ideas which have led to the possibility of global governance. Finally, in the third term, we explore of the complex and challenging role that the USA has on the current world political stage, and take a survey of some contemporary issues in politics.



ECON 100 Principles of Economics

This course is in two parts. The first part covers microeconomic analysis, including the theory of demand, costs and pricing under various forms of industrial organisation, and welfare economics. Many applications of theoretical models are examined. The second part covers macroeconomic analysis, including national income analysis, monetary theory, business cycles, inflation, unemployment, and the great macroeconomic debates. This provides a solid grounding in core economic principles and theories and is accessible to those without a background in mathematics or economics.



Section 2: The PPE Degree: Content and Structure

Assessment

For *PHIL 100* and *POLI 100* there are four coursework assignments in each module, plus a three-hour exam in the Summer term. Coursework is worth 40% of the overall mark, the exam is worth 60%. For *ECON 100*, there are four coursework assignments but if you achieve an overall average of 55% or better in your coursework you will be exempt from the three-hour final examination and your coursework average will stand as your final mark. If you do not gain exemption from the three-hour final examination, your final mark will be calculated as 40% coursework and 60% examination.

Preparation

If you have not studied the PPE subjects before, it may help to read some introductory books before Part I.

For Philosophy: Julian Baggini, *The Duck that Won the Lottery and 99 other Bad Arguments* (Granta 2008); Edward Craig, *Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2002); Simon Blackburn, *Think: A Compelling Introduction to Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, 2001); Nigel Warburton *Philosophy: The Basics* (fourth edition) (Routledge, 2010).

A bit harder, but worth reading. Thomas Nagel, *What does it all mean? A Very Short Introduction to Philosophy*. (Oxford University Press, 1987); Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics* (Cambridge university press, 1982); Bernard Williams, *Morality: An Introduction to Ethics* (Penguin, 1973).

For preparation for Politics, Jonathan Wolff's *Introduction to Political Philosophy*, and J Bayliss, S Smith and P Owens (eds) *The Globalisation of World Politics* (fifth edition). It's important (though not vital) to get the newest (fifth) edition. The campus bookshop does a discount deal on our key books – so it could be worth waiting to get here before you part with your cash. However, it's possible that your local library will have one or even both of the books. The Wolff book is the more important of the two for preliminary reading, since it's directly relevant to the first six or seven lectures.

For Economics, the main text for Part 1 Economics is Mankiw and Taylor, *Economics*, (second edition Cengage, 2011) (NOTE second edition). One short introduction that is worth a look is: *Economics: A Very Short Introduction* by Partha Dasgupta (Oxford University Press *Very Short Introductions* series).



Section 2: The PPE Degree: Content and Structure

Part II

In Part I you don't choose which parts of Philosophy, Politics, or Economics, to study. Everyone studies the same modules. In Part II you have lots of choice. All students at Lancaster study the equivalent of 16 single term units (some courses are two-term and count as two units). PPE students have to study at least four single term units in each of their three subject areas. The remaining four units can be shared out amongst the three subjects (most PPE students try to maintain a fairly even split).

We have not got space here to give details of the content of each module. For details about specific module content see the PPR and Economics websites.



Second Year

Philosophy (two-term modules)

Students must take at least one module from:

- PPR.201 History of Philosophy*
- PPR.202 Ethics: Theory and Practice*
- PPR.203 Philosophy of Science*
- PPR.204 Philosophy of Mind*
- PPR.205 Knowledge and Reality*
- PPR.244 Western Philosophy and Religious Thought*

Politics (two-term modules)

Students must take at least one module from:

- PPR.220 Modern Political Thought*
- PPR.222 Politics of Development*
- PPR.223 The United Kingdom: State, Politics and Policy*
- PPR.224 Politics of the European Union*
- PPR.225 Introduction to Peace Studies*
- PPR.226 Comparative Politics of the Asia Pacific and the Middle East*
- PPR.227 Foreign Policy of Contending Powers*
- PPR.239 Indian Politics, Society and Religion*

Economics (single-term modules)

Students must take at least two modules, including:

- Either*
- ECON.220 and ECON.222; or*
- ECON.207 and ECON.208*
- ECON.207 Managerial Economics*
- ECON.208 Business and International Macroeconomics*
- ECON.209 Applied Business Economics*
- ECON.210 Introduction to Statistical Methods for Economists*
- ECON.212 Introduction to Econometrics*
- ECON.220 Intermediate Microeconomics 1*
- ECON.221 Intermediate Microeconomics 2*
- ECON.222 Intermediate Macroeconomics 1*
- ECON.223 Intermediate Macroeconomics 2*
- ECON.227 Applied Macroeconomics*

Section 2: The PPE Degree: Content and Structure

Third Year

Philosophy (single-term modules)

Students must take at least two modules from:

- PPR.302 Continental Philosophy*
- PPR.304 Themes in the Philosophy of the Sciences*
- PPR.305 Logic and Language*
- PPR.307 History of Twentieth Century Philosophy*
- PPR.309 Practical Philosophy*
- PPR.391c Special Subject: Philosophy of Medicine*
- PPR.392a Special Subject: Future Generations*
- PPR.392b Special Subject: Ethics and Genetics*
- PPR.392c Special Subject: Ethics of Communication*
- PPR.392d Special Subject: Ethics of the Financial Crisis*

Politics (single-term modules)

Students must take at least two modules from:

- PPR.320 Political Ideas: Liberal Thought*
- PPR.321 Reading Political Theory*
- PPR.322 Liberals and Communitarians*
- PPR.328 Understanding External Intervention in Violent Conflicts*
- PPR.330 Britain in the World*
- PPR.333 Contemporary Issues in the Middle East*
- PPR.336 Africa and Global Politics*
- PPR.339 Elections, Voters and Political Parties*
- PPR.340 Islamic Politics*
- PPR.341 Contemporary Issues in Human Rights*
- PPR.342 Global Political Economy and the World Today*
- PPR.343 Corporations, Global Political Economy and the Law*
- PPR.345 Exploring the Persian Gulf*
- PPR.349 Politics and Ethics in Indian Philosophy*
- PPR.357 Religion and Politics*
- PPR.362 Religion and Violence*
- PPR.363 Media, Religion and Politics*
- PPR.390 PPR in Education*

Economics (single-term modules)

Students must take at least two modules, including:

- ECON.324 Advanced Macroeconomics*
- ECON.325 Advanced Microeconomics*
- ECON.326 Monetary Macroeconomics*
- ECON.327 Human Resource Economics*
- ECON.328 Economics of Advertising*
- ECON.329 Mathematical Economics*
- ECON.330 Econometrics*
- ECON.331 Industrial Organisation*
- ECON.332 Development Economics*
- ECON.333 International Economics*
- ECON.334 International Business*

The dissertation module gives you the chance to research a topic in more detail

Dissertation

In the third year, PPE students have the option of taking a dissertation. The dissertation module gives students the chance to have individual supervision from a member of academic staff, to work in more detail on a relevant topic. The dissertation is usually 10,000 words and is worked on for two terms.

Many students find that this is a great opportunity to look at a topic in more detail, or to work on a topic that was not covered in any of the taught modules. For students considering going on to postgraduate study, the dissertation provides excellent initial training in the discipline and rigour of academic research.

Assessment

Assessment criteria vary from module to module. For most modules there is a coursework element and an exam, with greater weighting given to the exam mark. Marks from the second and third year count towards the overall degree classification.

Section 2: The PPE Degree: Content and Structure

Changing your mind? The advantage of flexible degrees

If you've read this far you should be a bit clearer about how the different parts of the PPE degree fit together. At this point you might be wondering: *"What happens if I don't like part of the course, can I change?"* The simple answer is *"usually, yes"*: The Lancaster University modular degree system is complicated, but this is for a good reason: to give you flexibility in your studying. First of all it gives you the flexibility to combine three subjects (or do two, or just one). Second, the modular system gives you the flexibility to change your degree after you have tried things out at university.

For example, suppose you apply to do PPE. If, by the time you arrive you have changed your mind and want to study just two, or one of the subjects, it is normally possible to change, provided you have the grades that would have gained you entry to the relevant course. The same point applies at the end of the first year. Suppose you haven't studied Economics at school. It doesn't turn out quite like you had hoped. So long as you pass the first year course with a sufficiently high mark (roughly, a 2.2) there is normally no problem at all in changing your registration to joint honours Politics and Philosophy, or even to single honours Politics, or single honours Philosophy. Matters are a little bit more complicated for students wishing to increase the amount of Economics (e.g., switching to single honours) as they will not have done the Quantitative course in the first year, but the change may be possible provided the appropriate amount of non-quantitative modules are taken.

So, rather than being stuck with the decision you made before you went to University, Lancaster University allows you try out undergraduate study in the three PPE subjects and then see what suits you best. This flexibility contributes to Lancaster's very low dropout rate (if students don't like their major subject, or find it doesn't meet their expectations, they have options other than dropping out and starting again).

Santa Cruz, California

Study Abroad

Most of our students study with us for all three years. But there is the opportunity to study abroad without having to extend the length of your degree. This standardly involves a full year abroad in your second year, usually to a North American (USA, Canada) university. In recent years PPE students have spent a year at Santa Cruz, and Illinois (USA), Carleton, and Trent (Canada).

Study abroad is something that you need to apply for in the first term of your first year, but please note that making an application at this stage does not commit you to going. There may be other study abroad and exchange options available of varying lengths, and to different countries (e.g., Australia, India, Czech Republic). These vary from year to year. For further details about fees (it is usually cheaper than spending your second year in the UK!) see:

www.lancs.ac.uk/study/international-students/study-abroad/outgoing



Section 2: The PPE Degree: Content and Structure

Academic support

In PPR we are keen to ensure that students do well academically. All academic staff have weekly office hours (in addition to lecture and seminar times) where you can discuss your work, or raise queries, or seek advice. Each student also has an academic tutor for the whole three years. This person – normally the same person over the three years – can keep an eye on how things are going across all your modules, keep you informed about what to expect in the forthcoming term, or year, and also offer advice on how to improve your studying, if necessary. The University offers also various forms of academic support, study skills training and advice over and above that offered by the department.

Typical entry requirements

This brochure is written well in advance of the following year's UCAS admissions cycle. Because entry grades and other requirements may change, and because they vary for different joint honours courses, you should consult the Lancaster University website for the most up to date information about the specific course you are interested in. Or, you can contact us using the details at the end of the brochure.

Student numbers

Applicants sometimes ask: *"How many students apply to do PPE?"* and *"How many students do you take?"*. We have about 250 – 300 applicants a year and take 40 – 45 students. But this is not because we have rejected the majority of applicants. Most applicants will apply to five universities.

Our application process is not a selective one, and we do not interview. It is based primarily on our estimation of your academic suitability for the course, so, school qualifications, including predicted grades are the key here.

Applications and open days

Admission to Undergraduate degree schemes is via UCAS www.ucas.ac.uk. The Department organises a number of UCAS open days during the year, normally on selected Saturday afternoons, and Wednesday during most schools half-term break, in Lent (Spring) term. These are intended for applicants to undergraduate degree schemes who have received a UCAS offer. Dates for the current year are detailed in the offer letter (alternatively, you can check the PPR website www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/ppr

Admissions Mentors

All UCAS applicants are allocated a current student as their 'admissions mentor'. If you apply via UCAS and are made an offer, your admissions mentor will contact you giving you his or her contact details. This is a great opportunity to get a current student's view of the course, the department and life in Lancaster. You can meet your admissions mentor in person on UCAS open days.

Campus accommodation – guaranteed

Lancaster University guarantees campus accommodation for all incoming undergraduates who make Lancaster their firm UCAS choice. Lancaster University's accommodation has won, for the third year running, the National Student Housing Survey's Accommodation Award for Best University Halls. Lancaster has also the awards for Best Moving-In Experience and Best Booking Experience. Lancaster is one of only five UK institutions to be awarded the International Student Accommodation Quality Mark.

Being on campus in the first year is a great way to meet lots of people and make friends quickly and easily. Most students live off campus in their second year – there is plenty of affordable, safe and attractive housing in Lancaster (rents in the city are relatively low because the University has built lots of new student accommodation over the past five years or so). Many students choose to return to campus accommodation in their third year, whilst others choose to stay living in student houses with their friends. Further details are available on the University website:

www.lancs.ac.uk/sbs/accommodation

Section 2: The PPE Degree: Content and Structure

Financial support, bursaries and scholarships

Lancaster University offers various kinds of financial support including academic scholarships for those with exceptional qualifications, and bursaries for students whose family income falls below certain thresholds.

For details of the current University financial support packages please view the scholarships and bursaries section of the University website:

www.lancs.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/fees-andfunding/scholarships-and-bursaries/

Special needs and student support services

Lancaster University has a well-established and highly experienced student support service providing services including: disability support; dyslexia tuition and study support; solving accessibility issues; student counselling; disabled student allowances and other funding; adapted exams.

For further details follow the relevant links at: **www.lancs.ac.uk/sbs/**

Thanks to a very generous donation by a former student, the department is able to offer a number of scholarships and bursaries. For details of the awards currently available, please view the Department website.

After PPE: Postgraduate Study?

Many of our students go on to further postgraduate study either at Lancaster or elsewhere. PPR offers a wide range of taught Masters degrees in Politics and Philosophy.

The Management School offers an MSc course that allows you to carry on with something close to the PPE subject mix: Politics, Philosophy and Management. The programme is ideal for those who aspire to careers in the corporate sector, in major public-sector and political institutions or in international bodies involved in transnational governance – such as NGOs, the United Nations or the European Union. It also provides a firm foundation for those looking to pursue academic careers.

Masters courses involve a combination of advanced level taught courses, self-directed supervised study, and a substantial dissertation. They are usually taken full-time over one year, but may also be taken on a part-time basis over two years. Entry to the MA degree scheme normally requires at least an upper second class honours degree (or the equivalent) in a subject related to the field of study for the MA.



Section 2: The PPE Degree: Content and Structure

Careers

PPE is not a vocational degree (like dentistry or architecture). Most PPE students do not go on to become professional philosophers, politicians or economists. But over 40% of vacancies advertised for graduates are open to graduates of any discipline. Employers are less interested in the knowledge you have acquired than in the intellectual skills your degree has taught you. It is your trained mind that will be in demand. A PPE degree provides you with knowledge and skills that are relevant to a wide range of careers. All three subjects lay a great deal of stress on developing critical analytical skills. These skills and qualities are very much at a premium in the employment market after you finish your degree.

Employers look for clear thinking, broad vision, independence, the capacity to locate and analyse problems and exercise judgement in their solution. It is also very useful to be able to present information lucidly and argue effectively for favoured courses of action. Economics graduates – including joint honours students – are keenly sought by employers, both in the private and public sector, and in terms of earnings tend to outperform many other social science graduates. They have a reputation for precise and analytical thinking – and the ability to evaluate arguments and decisions and assess the reliability of information.



Our graduates find that their analytical and organisational skills, plus their ability to achieve insights into problems, are greatly valued by employers in many areas, including the financial sector, the civil service, journalism, and corporate planning.

At the time of writing, Unistats indicates that 88% of our PPE graduates are in a job or further study within six months from graduating. This is a higher figure than, for example, PPE graduates from Oxford, Warwick, Sussex, Essex, Royal Holloway, UEA, and Swansea).

The University offers a wide range of support and advice to help you in securing a good job, and developing your career after you leave Lancaster University. The Centre for Enterprise, Employability and Careers (CEEC) offers advice on CVs, and a range of events and activities to help you. For further information see:

www.lancs.ac.uk/sbs/ceec/students/

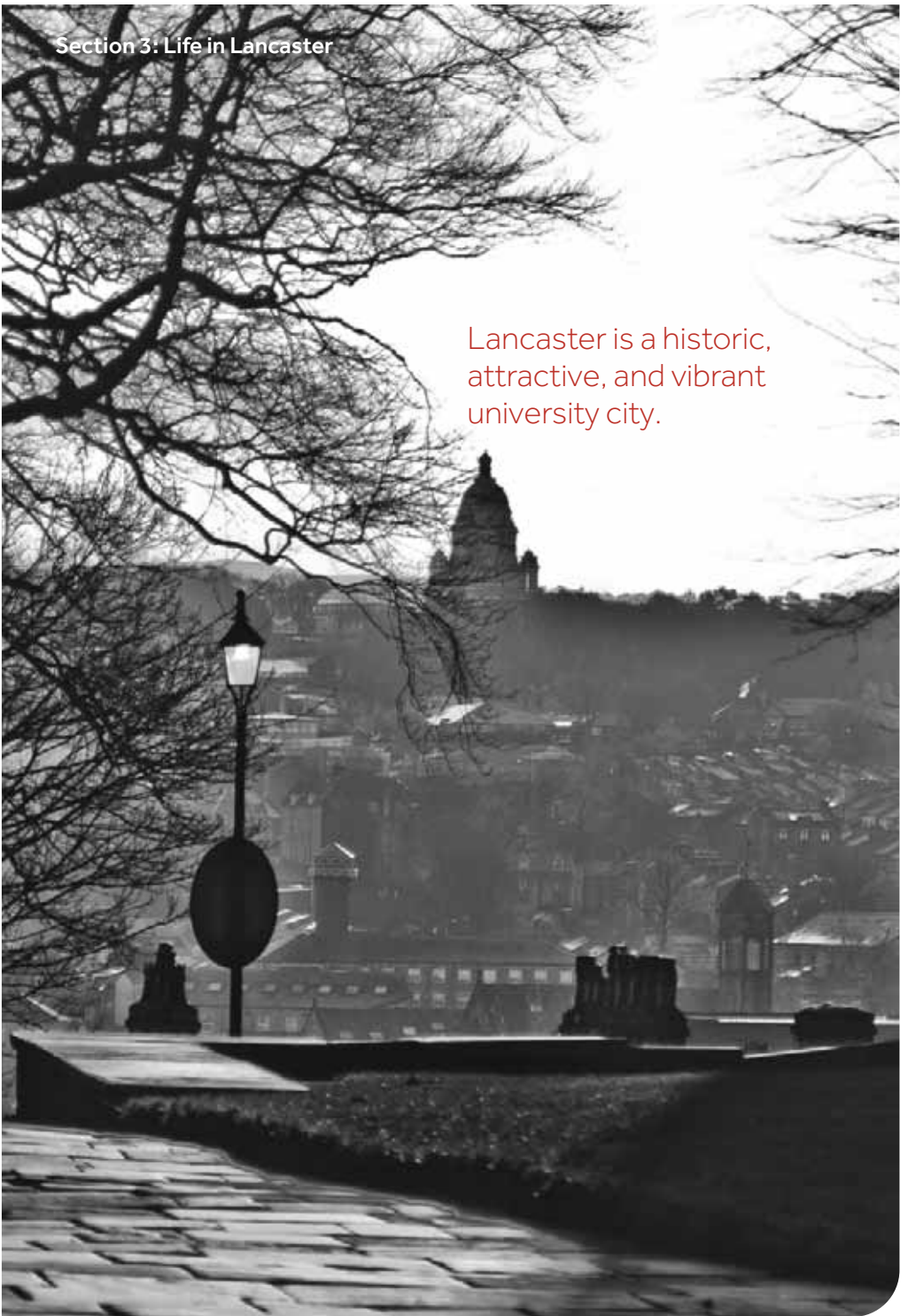
Within the department the Richardson Institute has a number of internships for 3rd year students to gain experience of working on research projects in Politics and International Relations.

Lancaster University also offers the Lancaster Award. A number of graduate employers have indicated that would like official confirmation of students' non-academic activities that are relevant to employability – things like voluntary work, training undertaken, career workshops attended, and so on. The Lancaster Award is a programme of activities and tasks which, when completed, give the student an additional certificate of their achievements. For further details see:

www.lancs.ac.uk/careers/award/

Section 3: Life in Lancaster

Lancaster is a historic,
attractive, and vibrant
university city.



Life in Lancaster

As we saw right at the start of this brochure, there are many good reasons to study PPE at Lancaster: the flexible degree the excellence in teaching and research, the award-winning accommodation, and so on. But there is also the high quality of life in Lancaster, whether on campus, in the City, or enjoying the beautiful coast and countryside.

Lancaster University is renowned for its safe and friendly campus, and, campus accommodation regularly wins the Best University Halls award in the National Student Survey.

There are over 11,000 students at the University. This may seem like a large number compared to your school or college (and it probably is!) but it is a small number for a university. Many city universities have 70,000 students or more. Because Lancaster is a smaller, campus-based, university, it is very easy to make lots of friends and to feel involved. In addition, Lancaster avoids the problem of students feeling lost in a large student body because it is a collegiate University. All students and staff are members of one of the nine colleges (eight undergraduate plus one graduate). Each college has accommodation, its own bar and social facilities and the members run a wide variety of activities and events.

The college system allows students to make friends outside their own subject (so you have two routes to making friends!) and provides support – over and above that provided by departments and by the University student support services – in the form of college personal tutors (who are on hand to listen, and help out, should you run into problems). Colleges have their own sports teams and there is enthusiastic inter-college rivalry in activities throughout the year.

Most undergraduates live on campus in their first year. The campus is set in green fields with views out to the sea and the mountains of the Lake District and is about three miles from Lancaster city centre with regular buses, and a network of cycle routes. Most undergraduates live off campus in their second year, though many return in their third year. The majority of students living off campus live in Lancaster.

Lancaster is an attractive and vibrant university city. It should be noted that Lancaster is not a large urban city but is, rather, in terms of its character and size, more like a historic market town (it was only granted 'city' status in 1937). The city has a population of 50,000 and adjoins the traditional seaside town of Morecambe which has a similar population. Lancaster thus avoids many of the social problems that face large cities.

Section 3: Life in Lancaster

Students make up a large proportion of the city's population, in term time at least. There are plenty of student bars and pubs, and a student-only nightclub: *The Sugarhouse*. There is always plenty to do. For those who want access to big city attractions – e.g., shops and big clubs, Manchester is about one hour away; London is only two hours twenty minutes away; Edinburgh and Glasgow can be reached even more quickly. For those travelling by car, the M6 motorway passes close to Lancaster and offers fast road connections to the rest of the country.

The city has a wide range of distinctive shops, as well as the usual high street stores, and both an outdoor market. Lancaster is an attractive (and reasonably priced) place to live: with historic buildings, riverside and canalside walks, and a beautiful park with stunning views over Morecambe Bay and the mountains beyond.

There are plenty of student bars and pubs, a student-only nightclub – *The Sugarhouse* – and a thriving music scene





Lancaster is situated in one of the most attractive parts of England. One of the most striking features of the area is the Lake District. The mountains, sweeping valleys and wide lakes are easily reached by road or rail. Closer to home are two 'Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty' – Arnside and Silverdale, with woodlands and wetlands, rare birds, and stunning views; The Forest of Bowland, with unspoilt moors, rivers and woods (and only a few minutes' drive from campus). Lancaster has a great deal to offer those who enjoy outdoor pursuits and many of various university student societies pay regular visits to the surrounding area for backpacking, fell-walking, caving, pot-holing, rock-climbing, orienteering and water sports. Cyclists can enjoy the network of cycle ways throughout Lancashire and into the Lake District and Yorkshire (the Ribble Valley is Bradley Wiggins' favourite!).

Overall, Lancaster and its surrounding area make it a very attractive prospect. We hope that you will join us for your studies in philosophy, and that you will find life in the Department, the University and in Lancaster, as rewarding and as enjoyable as we do.

Please see our webpage for detailed contact information or contact us directly at:

**Department of Politics,
Philosophy and Religion
County South Building
Lancaster University
Lancaster
LA1 4YL
UK**

Email: ppr@lancaster.ac.uk

Tel: +44 (0)1524 65201





Cover art/photograph by Neil Manson

