

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

Philosophy, Politics and the Public Honors Program

XAVIER UNIVERSITY: A JESUIT, CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN CINCINNATI, OHIO



PHILOSOPHY, POLITICS AND THE PUBLIC at Xavier University is a distinctive interdisciplinary honors program dedicated to rigorous and wide-ranging study of the theory, history and other practical considerations that define the idea of “the public.” Students who are invited to join this challenging program, established in 2003, investigate dimensions of public experience from multiple disciplinary points of view, from philosophy to history, from natural science to literature, and from social science to the arts.

The PPP program brings together many of Xavier’s traditional curricular strengths in innovative ways to focus on the unifying concept of “the public sphere” in democratic societies. The program is inspired by the philosophy, politics and economics programs commonly found in the British university system, but also provides greater emphasis on philosophical conceptions and historical context.

Through coursework that is both multi-disciplinary as well as centered in a particular concentration, students are able to follow their own interests in understanding the role of the public. Students also are encouraged to become actively involved in politics, working on political campaigns, lobbying on behalf of legislation, participating in internships in local and national government offices, and taking advantage of summer study in Paris that includes a seminar in Brussels, the seat of the European Union.

Xavier also offers two other honors programs: Honors Bachelor of Arts; and University Scholars.

THE PROGRAM

The Philosophy, Politics and the Public honors program is highly selective, with 15 to 20 freshman students enrolling each fall.

Curriculum: Special PPP courses, along with courses from traditional disciplines, together enable students to explore the central concepts of this program.

- ▶ First semester courses follow Xavier’s undergraduate Core Curriculum. Students are placed in selected sections of European History I and Ethics as Introduction to Philosophy. In preparation for advanced work in the program, PPP students take the following two courses during their first-year spring semester: European History II (HIST 134) and the Theory of Knowledge (PHIL 290).
- ▶ The sophomore year sequence brings together faculty from history and political science. Its focus is on the growth and development of America’s civic culture, with special emphasis on electoral and legislative politics.
- ▶ The junior year sequence centers upon the philosophical ideas of the Enlightenment, culminating in the French Revolution as a primary shaper of both modern democratic institutions as well as modern conceptions of “the public.” Students also travel to Paris and Brussels to meet with French specialists and enrich their study with on-site learning and discussion.

For details about these course sequences, visit www.xavier.edu/honors/ppp_overview.cfm.

Elective concentration: Students are encouraged to choose an elective concentration in a discipline that most closely fits their own academic interest in the concept of “the public.” Students can take a total of 18 hours of available electives in the PPP honors program. They choose either an interdisciplinary minor, such as gender & diversity, international studies, Latin American studies, peace studies, or Catholicism & culture, or select a minor that is departmentally based, such as business, economics, history, international studies, philosophy, political science, or art.

Foreign language: In addition to required Core and elective courses, PPP students must complete either a full minor in a foreign language or complete two languages through intermediate proficiency, one additional course from a history survey of the student’s choice, and two courses in economics.

Senior thesis: In the senior year, all PPP students submit a research thesis for public defense. The focus of the thesis is multidisciplinary and addresses issues concerning the public that flow from the student’s own elective concentration. A sample of some recent student thesis titles include the following:

- ▶ The Cincinnati Neighborhood Movement: Community Building & the Grassroots Public Sphere
- ▶ Are Cities Obsolete? Urban Space as the Context for a Vital Public Sphere
- ▶ The True Public Sphere of India: Withstanding the Threats of Globalization and Consumerism
- ▶ The Emergence of Women in the Spanish Political Sphere After the Death of Franco
- ▶ U.S. Fiscal Policy & the Possibility of Responsible Budgeting
- ▶ The Social, Political and Psychological Effects of Increased Internet Use on the American Democratic Public
- ▶ Building Frustration: Ohio Charter Schools, Public Schools, Communities, and the Properties That Divide Them

OUTCOMES

PPP graduates are prepared for a wide variety of careers, both academic and professional. Some go on to further study, including law school or graduate programs in public policy or in such traditional disciplines as philosophy or mathematics.

Others PPP graduates choose to become involved in the active world of the public sphere both locally and nationally, including in congressional offices and various departments of the U.S. federal government, Teach For America or the Peace Corps. Others have gone on to careers in journalism or to work at the grassroots level on behalf of marginalized communities. The program is an excellent preparation for careers in these areas or in related fields such as diplomacy, foreign service or electoral politics.

Honors students also take advantage of a wide range of major scholarships and fellowships for graduate study, including the following:

- ▶ American Scandinavian Foundation
- ▶ Beinecke Brothers Scholarships
- ▶ British Marshall Scholarships
- ▶ Carnegie Endowment Junior Fellowship
- ▶ Jack Kent Cooke Foundation
- ▶ Fulbright Scholarships
- ▶ Gates Scholarships
- ▶ Goldwater Scholarships
- ▶ Hertz Fellowships
- ▶ Javits Fellowships
- ▶ James Madison Fellowships
- ▶ Luce Scholarships
- ▶ Mellon Fellowships
- ▶ Mitchell Scholarships
- ▶ National Institutes of Health Undergraduate Scholarship Program
- ▶ National Science Foundation Graduate Fellowships
- ▶ Rhodes Scholarships
- ▶ Rotary Scholarships
- ▶ Soros Fellowships for New Americans
- ▶ Thurgood Marshall Scholarships
- ▶ Truman Scholarships

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES

All three honors programs at Xavier offer participation in a unique fraternity of highly motivated students and top-notch professors. The programs are challenging but students can take advantages of many special opportunities, including these:

► **Intercession PPP seminar in Paris and Brussels:**

This unique PPP program will bring together faculty and students from the Sorbonne (University of Paris) with students from Xavier to discuss relations between the United States and Europe. Topics include church-state relations, comparative revolutions, federalism, international relations, environmental issues and economic policy.

In 2009, the seminar schedule included morning meetings on the campus of the University of Paris, and afternoon sightseeing and architectural field trips in and around Paris, plus a weekend trip to Versailles. Students also travelled to Brussels to meet with representatives from the U.S. State Department and European Union. Students who complete the course successfully will receive three credit hours in philosophy. All accommodations, airfare, transportation, field trips and meals are included. Financial support for this intercession is provided to the student by the program.

► **Internships:** Students complete summer internship opportunities in their home cities or in Washington, D.C. Recently, PPP students have done internships in the offices of U.S. senators and representatives from Illinois, Ohio, Colorado and Connecticut, as well as in the Mayor's Office in Cincinnati. Other students have chosen internships in both the Democratic and Republican National Committees as well as in the White House Budget Office.

► **Study abroad:** Students can also take advantage of semester-long study abroad programs in Ireland, Scotland, England, France and Spain. Summer study has included London, Rome, Paris and Buenos Aires. The semester programs undertaken in Ireland and England have included internships in the Irish Parliament and British House of Commons, alongside the academic work done in the classroom.

► **The Honors House:** A 1920s-era Spanish-style villa once lived in by silent film star Theda Bara, this house is used by honors students for quiet study, educational programs and social gatherings. The house has a living and dining room, full kitchen, computer and study rooms, and a recreation room with pool table and other games.

► **Honors residences:** Reserved residence hall wings are available as an option for honors students. Honors students make a mutual commitment to serious academic study and agree to extended quiet times in these wings. They can also serve as resident assistants (RAs) and assist in programming special activities targeted toward honors students. These activities emphasize faculty involvement and offer opportunities to serve others in an academic capacity. To live in the honors wings, honors students need to indicate their preference on the room reservation form, which is sent after admission is granted to Xavier.

► **Honors Council:** Students are elected by their peers to advise the directors of the honors programs. The council also plans social and educational events for honors students including poetry readings, film festivals, conferences, dances, cookouts, dinners and prayer services, many of which are held at the Honors House.

► **Priority registration:** Honors students are advised by the directors of the honors program in which they are enrolled. In addition, they are given priority in selecting and scheduling their courses

THE AMERICAN DREAM PROJECT

The Philosophy, Politics and the Public honors program is a key participant in a new academic project centered upon the concept of "The American Dream." Through a series of combined courses, students will become well-versed in the various languages of politics. The block of courses will enhance the students' ability to debate and deliberate on issues of public importance as well as their capacity to articulate a vision of the promise of American life.

Courses during the 2009-2010 academic year included:

- Philosophy: The American Dream: Past, Present and Future
- English: The Rhetoric of Politics
- History: The Politics of Image-Making

Each of these courses includes guest speakers from various disciplines across the University, along with outside speakers who provide students with the visual and digital skills for establishing a presence for the American Dream project online. In the spring, students take a third and final course in this block in which they produce, individually or in teams, a visual documentary on the American Dream and help launch an initial survey of the American Dream. Both the videos and the survey will be part of an ongoing effort to make the Institute for Politics and Public Life a major national voice in interpreting the American Dream.

FACULTY

The PPP program features the best of Xavier's faculty. Although engaged in research and officers in an array of professional organizations, our faculty is first and foremost dedicated to teaching. With small classes, PPP students have the opportunity to work closely with their teachers and to fully benefit from their expertise. For a complete list of participating faculty, visit www.xavier.edu/honors/faculty.cfm.

ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM

Admission to the Philosophy, Politics and the Public honors program is competitive. To qualify for participation, students must be interested in defining "the public," which can have many different meanings including the people, a forum for ideas, a physical space or even shared states of consciousness.

Students should rank in the top 15 percent of their high-school class and present composite scores of at least 1300 (SAT) or 29 (ACT). In addition to the guidelines for academic scholarship, prospective PPP students need to complete an application form, which includes a brief essay. An interview may also be requested at the discretion of the program director. The application is available online at www.xavier.edu/honors/apply.cfm. The priority deadline is March 15.

PPP students are eligible for all scholarship awards available from Xavier University. In addition, the University Scholars program is able to offer some supplementary scholarship assistance to qualified students.

CORE CURRICULUM

The foundation of Xavier's success is its commitment to its Jesuit heritage. The Core Curriculum endeavors to realize and embody Xavier's mission and philosophy of education and serves as a valuable foundation for all undergraduate students. Within the Core, the four-course Ethics/Religion and Society (E/RS) Focus fosters students' understanding of socially significant issues from the perspectives of the humanities, especially literature, philosophy and theology, as well as from the perspectives of the social and natural sciences.

Along with courses in their major, Xavier students also take courses in: cultural diversity, English composition, fine arts, foreign language, history, literature, mathematics, philosophy, science, social science and theology.

XAVIER AT A GLANCE

Founded in 1831, Xavier is a Jesuit Catholic university in Cincinnati, Ohio. Its three colleges offer 85 undergraduate majors, 54 minors and 13 graduate programs to 7,019 total students, including 4,368 undergraduate students.

ACCLAIM

- ▶ Recognized for the 16th consecutive year by *U.S. News & World Report*, with a 2011 ranking at #3 among the top 146 universities in the Midwest, #1 for graduation rate, and top rankings for freshman retention and commitment to teaching.
- ▶ Named one of the best schools nationwide for undergraduate education for the seventh year by *The Princeton Review*.
- ▶ Ranked #41 among the "Top 50 Best Values" in private universities nationwide by *Kiplinger's Personal Finance*.
- ▶ Tapped for the 2008 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for innovative service-learning and volunteerism.
- ▶ Recognized by *Business Week* as one of "The Best Undergrad Business Schools" in the nation.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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