

Political Economy Concentration Narratives

We are sharing with you a first hand account of how peer advisors in the Political Economy major narrowed down their concentration topic and selected the four courses towards it. We are hoping the following narratives will help you in your journey as you finalize your concentration topic and concentration courses for the PE major.

Abdullah K.

Hi everyone! My name is Abdullah and I am one of the Peer Advisors for Berkeley's Political Economy major. I am a transfer student in my final year and my Political Economy concentration is **Global Development and Sustainability**. I chose this as my concentration because it represents the essence of my interests, coursework and career pathway that I have taken on during my Berkeley. I decided to mix and match classes from a couple of pre-designed concentrations as well as incorporate other classes that aligned with my goals, ultimately resulting in this self-designed concentration. I wanted to pursue a focus that looked at the various dimensions of human development ranging between the social, economic, political, and historical sectors, and then applying this to a global scale so as to understand the bigger picture of things. Moreover, I am interested in tapping into and exploring the notion of "sustainability" as it relates to the usage and consumption of goods & services, and further into the accepted norms or practices within societies that constitute everyday life. This specialization has broadened my horizon and given me insights into the interconnected nature of how we as humans work towards development, the significance of looking at the process through a universal lens, and what it means for the preservation of our local communities & the planet that we all call home.

The classes I took towards the **Global Development and Sustainability** concentration are:

- **CYPLAN 115** - *Urbanization in Developing Countries*
- **SOCIOL 120** - *Economy and Society*
- **GPP 115** - *Global Poverty: Challenges and Hopes*
- **ESPM 101A** - *The Politics and Practice of Sustainability Transitions*

Allyssa C.

Hi everyone! My name is Allyssa and I am one of the Peer Advisors for Berkeley's Political Economy major. I am a fourth year and my Political Economy concentration is **International Trade**. I chose this as my concentration because it encapsulated the specialty classes I have taken during my time at Cal. I decided to take classes that interested me and then create a concentration based on a theme. I liked that my concentration was interdisciplinary, rather than specialized or concentrated since I wanted to keep my options open for classes I would be able to take to fulfill the concentration. These classes made me question the idea of "trade" as it goes beyond being the exchange of goods and services but also includes ideas, diseases, and technologies. This specialization has pushed me to look further into the interactions within the international community and I am now able to better understand the historical implications of international trade on the global economy and the importance of understanding the economic as well as the social and political impact of international trade on the global community.

The classes I took towards the **International Trade** concentration are:

- **POLECON 159** - *Digital Technology, Political Economy, and Justice*
- **POLECON 162** - *Pandemics and Politics: Infectious Disease in Historical Perspective*
- **GLOBAL 178** - *Political Discourse in the Twenty-first Century*
- **POLI SCI 149E** - *Special Topics in Area Studies (South East Asia)*

Aminah M.

Hi everyone! My name is Aminah, I'm an incoming senior studying Political Economy with a concentration in **Globalization and Environment w/ Econometrics**. After taking SOCIOL 127- *Development and Globalization*, I became very interested in globalization issues. Professor Muzzi's POLECON 154 - *Global Trade and Finance* course deepened this interest, allowing me to learn more about the trade agreements; the SOCIOL 127 - *Development and Globalization* course gave me an economics perspective and the ENVECON 147 - *The Economics of the Clean Energy Transition* incorporated my interest in environmental economics into my major. I chose to add the econometrics emphasis to further my quantitative and research skills, which I feel has helped me a lot in post-grad job search and interviews. Overall, I really enjoyed picking my concentration classes, as each one allowed me to explore a different interest of mine. In taking four different, but related courses, I can now draw interesting connections about the state of global environmental and economic issues.

The classes I took towards the **Globalization and Environment w/ Econometrics** concentration were:

- **SOCIOL 127- *Development and Globalization***
- **POLECON 154: *Global Trade and Finance***
- **ENVECON 147: *The Economics of the Clean Energy Transition***
- **ENVECON C118: *Introductory to Applied Econometrics***

Ella P.

Hello! My name is Ella Paningbatan and I am a fourth year, studying Political Economy with a concentration in **Global Inequalities**. As I was taking courses that fulfill my major requirements, I realized that I was interested in global social issues, particularly in the many ways that people around the world have widely different experiences with equality/inequality and why. When I took my first sociology class, SOCIOL 124 - *Sociology of Poverty*, I became even more interested in the topic, so I considered concentrating in Inequalities in the US. In the next semester, the only poverty course I was able to take did not have an American scope, but rather compared Europe and the United States as I was studying abroad in Scotland. This class encouraged me to widen my horizons, and I eventually finalized my concentration in Global Inequalities. Overall, I found this concentration deeply interesting as it allowed me to take different classes in various departments that provided a new perspective to the concept of inequality and also further my understanding of the root causes and possible solutions of a persistent social issue.

The classes I took towards the **Global Inequalities** concentration are:

- **SOCIOL 124 - *Sociology of Poverty***
- **EAPPOLS 108-169 (Study Abroad) - *Comparative Social Policy: Global Perspectives***
- **GPP 115 - *Global Poverty: Challenges and Hopes***
- **SOCIOL180I - *Comparative Perspectives on U.S. and European Societies: Inequality***

Han T.

Hi! I'm Han, a third-year Political Economy major and one of the Peer Advisors. My concentration is a self-designed one titled **International Development and Technology**. It combines recommended classes from the two pre-designed concentrations of International Development and Technology and the Economy, as well as others with interesting and relevant topics that I found in Social Science departments. As I am interested in business and economics plus law and politics, which got me to pursue the major in the first place, I wanted to choose a concentration that combines both fields. The two major requirements, Classical and Contemporary Theories of Political Economy respectively, cover development from the Industrial Revolution to the present, which I also experienced firsthand when traveling in Asia. On the other hand, technology is gaining increasing importance in our lives and societies, and many of their inventions and adoptions take place right here at UC Berkeley and Silicon Valley. Therefore, all four classes use political economy to study development, technology, or both, and then apply their respective concepts to the real world.

The classes I took towards the **International Development and Technology** concentration are:

- **SOCIOL 166** - *Society and Technology*
- **SOCIOL 127** - *Development and Globalization*
- **LEGALST 157** - *International Relations and International Law*
- **CYPLAN 115** - *Urbanization in Developing Countries*

Lance D.

Hello! My name is Lance, and I am a third-year Political Economy student with a concentration in **Development and Globalization**. Having grown up in the developing world, I am curious about the complex political, economic, and social challenges faced by developing nations. At the same time, as someone who loves exploring different cultures and was exposed to international relations in high school, I wanted to explore political-economic challenges from a global perspective. This led me to select classes that touched upon different aspects of my concentration, starting off with a SOCIOL 127 - *Development and Globalization* class which equipped me with a foundational understanding of the historical context, theoretical frameworks, and contemporary debates surrounding development. This was supplemented by the GPP 115 - *Global Poverty* course which portrayed globalization as a deliberate evolution of the Western development "project," exacerbating poverty in the Global South. Next, a GLOBAL 178 course on *Political Discourse in the Twenty-first Century* taught me how to critically analyze the language and power dynamics within political-economic and social movements. Lastly, ESPM 169 - *International Environmental Politics* course highlighted the trade-offs faced by developing nations in balancing political-economic considerations against the existential threat of climate change. Each course contributed to a holistic exploration of my academic interests, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the Political Economy major.

The classes I took towards the **Development and Globalization** concentration are:

- **SOCIOL 127** - *Development and Globalization*
- **GPP 115** - *Global Poverty: Challenges and Hopes*
- **GLOBAL 178** - *Political Discourse in the Twenty-first Century*
- **ESPM 169** - *International Environmental Politics*

Olivia K.

Hi! My name is Olivia, and I am a third-year Political Economy student with a concentration in the **Political Economy of Asia**. My concentration combines a class from the Political Economy of Asia concentration with other relevant classes that I took while studying abroad. While studying abroad in Korea for one year, I became interested in the political economy of Asia and wanted to learn more about the increasing role that Korea has as a middle power in East Asia. The GLOBAL 110Q - *Asia in the Global Context* course has greatly expanded my knowledge of international trade in Asia and how the past colonial influences impact Asia as we know it today. The study abroad course *International Relations in East Asia* was very interesting as it showed how various international relations theories can be used to examine relations between Korea, China, and Japan today. Lastly, the Study Abroad courses *Modern Korean History* and *Korea-U.S. Relations* greatly expanded my knowledge of the Korea-U.S. alliance and how it has allowed the U.S. to maintain power in the region. Overall, I found this concentration insightful as it allowed me to have a deeper understanding of the formation of states and nationalism in Asia while understanding their current economic and political ties.

The classes I took/am taking towards the **Political Economy of Asia** concentration are:

- **GLOBAL 110Q** - *Asia in the Global Context*
- **EAPPOLS 146-88** (Study Abroad) - *International Relations in East Asia*
- **EAPASST 118** (Study Abroad) - *Modern Korean History*
- **EAPINTL 142** (Study Abroad) - *Korea-US Relations*