

HAMILTON CENTER

The Hamilton Center is the newest academic unit of the University of Florida, uniquely dedicated to educating the future leaders of a free society. Offering courses from world-class faculty on themes in Western civilization, the Hamilton Center aims to help students enter an unparalleled pipeline for singular opportunities both at UF and beyond.

CONTACT

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Effective Spring 2025

The Hamilton Center offers two multidisciplinary minors, Philosophy, Politics, Economics, and Law (PPEL) and Great Books and Ideas (GBI). Both minors prepare students for lives of success in a modern world and revolve around timeless classics.

Student Experience in Hamilton

Hamilton Center students have a variety of life-changing opportunities to pursue academic, career, and personal growth. Faculty facilitate connections to prestigious internships and summer fellowships enable students to get a head start on career ambitions. In addition, the Hamilton Center sponsors programs so students can study abroad at Oxford and Cambridge, two of the world's most elite institutions.

The Hamilton Center brings world-class scholarship and instruction to the classroom right here in Gainesville. Leading researchers in the humanities and social sciences, Hamilton Center faculty are also devoted teachers. Students receive close mentorship from their professors who teach them in small classes. The kind of teaching the Hamilton Center aspires to support not only encourages free expression and the pursuit of truth, but also helps students develop the skills and networks they need to succeed in their careers after UF. Free thought, free expression, free from agenda – that is what students can expect from Hamilton Center classes.

Courses

Study the intellectual foundations of our world, understand new historical perspectives, and learn how to apply this knowledge for a meaningful career through our rigorous, multidisciplinary courses.

AMS 2010 Civil Discourse and the American Political Order 3 Credits

Grading Scheme: Letter Grade

Explore the concept of civil discourse along with the basic principles of American democracy and how they are applied in our republican form of government. Through a review of the US Constitution, founding documents, and landmark Supreme Court cases, understand how the nature and functions of our institutions of self-governance have been shaped. These lessons will then be applied to case studies.

ISS 2105 The Origins of the Contemporary West: I (Ancients to the Scientific Revolution) 3 Credits

Grading Scheme: Letter Grade

Multidisciplinary survey of the big ideas in Western Civilization and the societies and cultures which helped to form them. Students will learn about the West's cultural heritage by reading and discussing great works of philosophy, history, politics, literature, art and science from antiquity to the seventeenth century. Begins with creation stories in the Hebrew and Greek traditions and ends with the Scientific Revolution.

ISS 2106 The Origins of the Contemporary West: II (Enlightenment to Modernity) 3 Credits

Grading Scheme: Letter Grade

Multidisciplinary survey of the big ideas in Western Civilization, and the societies and cultures which helped to form them. Students will learn about their cultural heritage by reading and discussing great works of philosophy, history, politics, literature, arts and science from the eighteenth century onwards. Starts with the Enlightenment and ends in the twentieth century.

ISS 2122 The History of Political Economy 3 Credits

Grading Scheme: Letter Grade

Political economy is grounded on the dual convictions that political institutions affect economic growth and that economic conditions affect political decisions. Students will review great works in the history of political economy, focusing not just on the development of economic thought but on the ways economic thought necessarily connects to political and social structures in modern market economies.

ISS 2290 Great Books of the Ancient World 3 Credits

Grading Scheme: Letter Grade

Multidisciplinary exploration of Great Books written in the ancient Western world. These core texts raise questions that have occupied Western societies ever since. Authors to be considered include Homer, Herodotus and Thucydides, Sophocles and Euripides, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Polybius and Tacitus, Horace and Ovid, in addition to large sections from both the Old and New Testaments.

ISS 2291 Great Books of the Medieval World 3 Credits

Grading Scheme: Letter Grade

Multidisciplinary exploration of Great Books written in the medieval Western world. During this period Christianity moved from being proscribed and persecuted to being the established religion of Western nations. The core texts of the era grapple with many of the questions which arose from that transformation. Authors to be considered include Augustine, Boethius, Alfarabi, Averroes, Maimonides, Aquinas, Dante, Petrarch, Chaucer, Julian of Norwich and Luther, among others.

ISS 2292 Great Books of Early Modern World: Renaissance to Enlightenment 3 Credits

Grading Scheme: Letter Grade

Multidisciplinary exploration of Great Books written between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. These core texts raise questions that have occupied Western societies ever since. Authors to be considered include Machiavelli, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Hobbes, Milton, Locke, Swift, Hume, Rousseau, Voltaire, Gibbon, Franklin, among others.

ISS 2293 Great Books of Modern World 3 Credits

Grading Scheme: Letter Grade

Multidisciplinary exploration of Great Books written in the modern West, between the French Revolution and the twentieth century. These core texts raise questions that continue to occupy Western societies. Authors to be considered include Burke, Brönte, Tocqueville, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Freud, Eliot, Joyce and Faulkner, among others.

ISS 2440 Introduction to Philosophy, Politics, Economics and Law 3 Credits

Grading Scheme: Letter Grade

Introduces students to core debates, concepts, and tools that will help them understand the complex interplay of philosophy, politics, economics, and law in the modern world. Students will learn how philosophical, political, economic, and legal analyses can complement (and challenge) each other. The aim is for students to develop a multidisciplinary point of view that will allow them to analyze and address contemporary problems in a fuller way than any one disciplinary lens permits.

ISS 2445 Legal Reasoning: How to Think Like a Lawyer 3 Credits

Grading Scheme: Letter Grade

Introduces students to the basic principles of legal reasoning, including rules, standards, facts, precedent, authorities, analogies, custom, equity, and the burden of proof. Students will examine how legal reasoning functions in practice and they will learn about how it compares to forms of reasoning in other fields and disciplines. Provides preparation for students considering law school or interested in legal thinking.

ISS 3441 Liberty and Order: Philosophical, Political, Economic and Legal Perspectives 3 Credits

Grading Scheme: Letter Grade

How do we strike the proper balance between liberty and order in the political, economic, and legal domains? How do we avoid the extremes of anarchy on one side and authoritarianism on the other? This multidisciplinary course identifies ways this balance has been struck in the past and how it might be achieved in the present day.

Prerequisite: 3 credits of AMS, ISS, PHI, POS or ECO.

ISS 3442 Human Flourishing: Philosophical, Political, Economic and Legal Perspectives 3 Credits

Grading Scheme: Letter Grade

What does it mean to live well or to flourish as a human being? This fundamental question lies squarely at the intersection of philosophy, politics, economics, and law. This interdisciplinary course introduces students to the long-running debate in the western intellectual tradition about this question. Students will analyze the strengths and weaknesses of different theories of human flourishing and they will evaluate their ethical, social, political, economic, and legal consequences.

Prerequisite: 3 credits of AMS, ISS, PHI, POS or ECO.

ISS 3444 Philosophy, Politics, Economics, and Law 3 Credits

Grading Scheme: Letter Grade

Explores the lives, writings, debates, theories, and history of major figures in Philosophy, Politics, Economics, and Law. Students will learn both historical and modern perspectives on major figures. Each offering will focus on a single major figure.

Prerequisite: 3 credits of AMS, ISS, PHI, POS or ECO.

ISS 3930 Special Topics in Philosophy, Politics, Economics, and Law 1 Credit

Grading Scheme: Letter Grade

Special topics in Philosophy, Politics, Economics, and Law.

Prerequisite: 3 credits of AMS or ISS or PHI or POS or ECO.

ISS 3932 Philosophical and Literary Traditions and Ideas 3 Credits**Grading Scheme:** Letter Grade

Rotating topics course focusing on the major philosophical and literary traditions and ideas in Western literature. Courses will focus on one major theme, such as Love, Death, or Life.

Prerequisite: Sophomore standing or higher.**ISS 3934 Political and Historical Traditions and Ideas 3 Credits****Grading Scheme:** Letter Grade

Rotating topics course focusing on the major political and historical traditions and ideas in Western literature. Courses will focus on one major theme, such as Justice, Sovereignty, or Liberty.

Prerequisite: Sophomore standing or higher.**ISS 4910 PPEL Research Seminar 3 Credits****Grading Scheme:** Letter Grade

Students will apply the methodological, theoretical, and historical knowledge they have gained in the PPEL major by conducting an original research project about a topic of real-world significance. Students will be guided through the research and writing process; review papers that have been recently published in undergraduate PPE journals; and present their research at the end of the semester.

Prerequisite: PPEL majors.**ISS 4920 Great Books & Ideas Thesis Writing Workshop 3 Credits****Grading Scheme:** Letter Grade

Provides students with knowledge base and experience to engage in scholarly writing and develop arguments in order to properly write a high-quality thesis on a topic within the scope of the Great Books and Ideas degree program. An investigation into the conventions of identifying a legitimate research "problem," and will move on into the nuts and bolts of developing and articulating your central "argument."

Prerequisite: Great Books major of junior or senior standing.**ISS 4931 Big Problems in Philosophy, Politics, Economics, and Law 3 Credits****Grading Scheme:** Letter Grade

Students will examine a major contemporary problem at the intersection of Philosophy, Politics, Economics, and Law. Students will be provided an opportunity to learn about a topic area, then engage in scholarly debate and writing on the topic. Rotating topics may include political polarization, global justice, climate change, etc.

Prerequisite: 6 credits of AMS or ISS or PHI or POS or ECO.**ISS 4940 PPEL Internship 3 Credits****Grading Scheme:** S/U

PPEL majors may earn academic credit for completing a relevant internship. Students are responsible for identifying and securing their own internships and the internship must be pre-approved by the Hamilton Center's Director of Undergraduate Studies before the beginning of the semester in which it is to take place. Relevant internships include positions in government, public policy, law, financial institutions, non-profits, business, or consulting. 140-hour internship.

Prerequisite: PPEL majors.**ISS 4970 Great Books & Ideas Senior Thesis 3 Credits****Grading Scheme:** Letter Grade

Faculty supervised thesis work for the Great Books and Ideas degree.

Prerequisite: ISS 4920.