

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS



When friends, family, and acquaintances ask us what we study at the University of Pennsylvania, we proudly reply, “Philosophy, Politics, and Economics” - and are often met with confused, intimidated, or even skeptical stares. Despite these reactions, as PPE students we recognize the importance of our interdisciplinary education in the social sciences, and we value it enormously. The PPE discipline provides us with a foundation of knowledge to understand the institutions and social forces that shape our world while also training us to examine the political and economic environment with a critical eye. The papers published in this year’s edition of SPICE reflect the diverse range of scholarship that PPE students pursue as well as the remarkable achievements that can emerge from our dynamic range of studies.

Rethinking the Six-Day War: An Analysis of Counterfactual Explanations constructs a framework to evaluate a “what-if” situation, comparing counterfactual scenarios to analyze the inevitability of a transformational event in Arab-Israeli relations. *Banal Behavior: A Study of Non-Choice* examines the question of what it is to make a conscious decision and how will, thought, and action characterize our meaningful behavior. *The Value of a Liberal Arts Education* argues that a foundational approach to education not only has a place in the modern world, but is part of what makes us intrinsically human. *Market Design in the Presence of Repugnancy: A Market for Children* presents an illuminating analysis of repugnant transactions as constraints on a market, leading to deeper considerations of efficient allocations of scarce resources.

Together these papers represent scholarship from the Five Themes of Study that PPE students may pursue: Choice & Behavior, Ethics & the Professions, Distributive Justice, Public Policy & Governance, and Globalization. Of the many outstanding submissions we received this year, our four selections were truly exceptional and we are proud to present these papers as exemplary scholarship in their respective fields.

This journal would not be possible without the dedicated contributions of our authors, editors, and the faculty advisors of the PPE department. In particular, we extend our appreciation to Dr. Sumantra Sen for his guidance, support, and mentorship, which have been invaluable to us during our years at Penn.

To the students, parents, faculty, alumni, and friends of the PPE Program at Penn, on behalf of the SPICE Editorial Board, we hope that you enjoy this year's issue and the interdisciplinary scholarship advanced by our students.

Sincerely,



Isabelle Sun
Co-Editor-in-Chief



Abby Tran
Co-Editor-in-Chief