

# Politics and international relations

## Collecting policy

## User profile

This statement covers collection provision for the staff and students of the Department of Politics and International Relations. Staff and students in other departments whose courses include elements of politics or international relations also use the collection. Principal areas for interdisciplinary interest are economics, European studies, history, philosophy and law. In addition, local school students taking government and politics at A-level or equivalent occasionally consult the collection.

## Research interests

The Department's research is organised around two primary inter-connected themes:

- Applied political theory
- Conflict: causes, conduct, and consequences

Under these themes are four fluid research groupings: international relations, government, political theory and strategic studies. Most members of the Department have homes in more than one grouping and research more than one theme. Increasingly cross-disciplinary, formal centres and forums for the research of the Department and its members include:

- The Centre for Strategic Studies
- Forum for Studies on War
- Reading Ethics and Political Philosophy (REAPP)
- Ways of War Centre

Greater detail on research activities is provided on the Department's website at [www.reading.ac.uk/spirs/research/spirs-research.aspx](http://www.reading.ac.uk/spirs/research/spirs-research.aspx).

Detailed listings of individual academic's research interests are maintained on staff profile pages at [www.reading.ac.uk/spirs/about/spirs-staff.aspx](http://www.reading.ac.uk/spirs/about/spirs-staff.aspx).

## Dimensions of teaching and learning

At undergraduate level the Department offers the BA Politics and International Relations and BA War, Peace and International Relations degrees, and the joint BA International Relations and Economics and BA Politics and Economics degrees.

Politics and/or International Relations can form part of joint honours undergraduate study, in combination with subjects of other departments at the University, including the Philosophy Department's Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) programme.

Postgraduate MA, MRes and MPhil taught course modules cover topical areas in:

- Diplomacy
- International Relations
- International Security Studies
- Military History and Strategic Studies
- Strategic Studies

The MA Public Policy is offered by the School of Politics, Economics and International Relations. MA, MRes, MPhil and PhD students may study part-time.

A full list of undergraduate programmes available is provided on the Department's website at <https://www.reading.ac.uk/spirs/ug/spirs-ugcourses.aspx>, with postgraduate programmes detailed at <https://www.reading.ac.uk/spirs/pg-taught/spirs-pgtcourses.aspx>.

## Current holdings

Most collection material falls into the 320, 350 and 940-999 sections of classification but there are extensive additional materials in the 337.914 (European integration) and philosophy sections. More detail on relevant Call Number ranges is set out in the Books section of the dedicated subject guide at [libguides.reading.ac.uk/politics](http://libguides.reading.ac.uk/politics).

### **Books, e-books and official documents**

The Library holds a large print collection of scholarly works in the 320s and a smaller but sizeable collection in the 350s. A significant number of volumes in the 940-999 history section can be considered political in character. Print books required for teaching and current research projects are held on open access. A number of lesser-used, research level monographs relating to political science are housed in Closed Access or in the Off-site Store.

In addition to printed monographs, a large number of e-books are available via the Library's catalogue and electronic databases. Access is provided to Cambridge Companions Online and the political science content of the Oxford Handbooks Online and Oxford Scholarship Online services. Individual e-book copies of in-demand titles are made available on aggregators such as MyiLibrary and EBL and on the e-book platforms of particular publishers, among them Taylor & Francis and Cambridge University Press.

The House of Commons Parliamentary Papers (HCPP) database provides access to digitised collections of historical UK Parliamentary papers. Print volumes of Hansard are retained in Closed Access with an unmaintained collection of other printed UK Parliamentary papers mostly held in the Off-site Store. Modern UK Parliamentary and official publications are generally publicly available online.

The European Documentation Centre (EDC) in the Library includes not only the Official journal - now online only - but also periodicals and statistics. Monographs published and donated by the European Union are in the main collection. An institutional shift towards free online provision is again reducing the breadth and value of the EDC print collection.

### **Periodicals**

Current journal titles in politics and international relations are accessible predominantly in electronic form only, through publisher packages or on archival services like JSTOR. Additionally, some titles are accessible through journal collections on databases such as HeinOnline. Ongoing print and/or online subscriptions are taken out to small number of selected individual periodicals, shelved with a wider legacy collection of print title holdings. Some of these subscriptions are jointly funded by one or more other academic units, specifically History, Modern Languages and Philosophy.

The full-text of contemporary content in major national and regional UK newspapers is accessible on the ProQuest Newsstand and LexisLibrary databases. Additionally, full archival access is available for The Financial Times, The Guardian and The Times.

### **Reference/bibliographic**

A collection of print reference works on topics relating to politics and international relations is maintained in the 4th Floor Reference Section, including a print set of International political science abstracts (1962-2002), political dictionaries and subject encyclopedias. Online access is provided to a number of individual political reference works, including:

- Encyclopedia of modern political thought
- The encyclopedia of political thought
- International encyclopedia of political science

Online access is provided to a further range of dictionaries, encyclopedias, and handbooks within two electronic reference packages, Credo Reference and Oxford Reference Online.

IBSS (International Bibliography of the Social Sciences) is available online with coverage from 1951, particularly focussing on political and international affairs. Other key bibliographic research databases are the AltPressIndex (1991- ), which covers alternative, radical and left-wing periodicals and Social Sciences Citation Index (1970-), including coverage of major academic journals in politics and international relations.

Indexes to Government publications and official statistics are also available in the print reference section on the 4th Floor. British Government publications are indexed online on departmental and agency websites and via UKOP (United Kingdom Official Publications).

### **Multimedia/audio visual**

The Library holds a limited number of DVDs of relevance, which are mainly films and documentaries on politics-related topics, notably conceptions of freedom. A range of news reports on past political events and international affairs are available on the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), MediaHub and World Newsreels Online databases.

### **Related special collections**

The Overstone Library collection in the humanities and social sciences contains about 300 political works from the 17th to the 19th centuries.

## Strengths, exclusions and areas for development

The Library collections are strong in established, continuing areas of the Department's undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, particularly European studies, international relations, military strategy and political theory. They are weakest in their coverage of the Asian-Pacific region, British society and specialist areas of new teaching, such as media and politics.

As well as media and politics, collection areas identified for development are the new taught fields of parliamentary studies, the politics of immigration and the politics of the welfare state.

## Collecting level

Book stock is principally acquired to serve the resource needs of the Department's undergraduate and postgraduate taught course modules. Monographs at research level are acquired selectively, at the request of academic staff members or research students and with the express sanction of the Department's Library Representative.

Journal provision, while targeted towards taught module needs, supports research use as well as teaching requirements. Reference material is purchased as funds permit.

## Alternative access

### **Inter-library loans**

Staff and research postgraduates are able to order inter-library loans online, funded by the Department. Undergraduates and taught postgraduates continue to use a printed form which may be counter-signed by a tutor or supervisor. Up to four inter-library loan vouchers are available free to each undergraduate student for dissertation use.

### **Other information resources in the University**

A small in-house collection of books published by members of academic staff is maintained by the Department, for consultation on request.

### **Use of other libraries**

The SCONUL Access scheme permits access to most UK university libraries, typically with borrowing rights for staff, part-time and research students. Under this or local schemes, the British Library, Bodleian Library in Oxford and the LSE Library in London are well used. The use of relevant specialist libraries is encouraged, such as the RUSI Library of Military History and International Institute for Strategic Studies Library.

## Selection, acquisition and stock editing

See the General Collection Development Statement for general principles.

The Department's priorities for selection of material attempt to balance the three sectors of:

- Government and politics
- International relations
- Political theory

The Liaison Librarian will order books on reading lists which are not in stock unless very expensive, ordering extra copies for the Course Collection and/or 7-Day loan where there is evidence of need. Copies of required readings not in stock are prioritised for purchase over secondary readings. Extra copies of texts listed as required reading, or in high demand, will be obtained in electronic format (an e-book) where available and cost-effective. The Liaison Librarian may make additional suggestions for purchases, with the Library Representative's sanction required to order other items from the Department's allocated funds.

Journal access is considered on an on-going basis by the Department, informed by the Liaison Librarian, with an annual review by the Department of all title subscriptions.

Reference works will normally be selected by the Liaison Librarian, where necessary for funding in consultation with the Department. The Library Liaison Team Manager may also be consulted.

The Liaison Librarian selects material for withdrawal and relegation. Many module textbooks are updated on a regular basis, with the current and any immediately preceding editions kept. Older textbook editions and outdated editions of other books will be withdrawn subject to the following provisos:

- old editions with important extracts, such as chapters in edited works missing from a later edition, may be retained
- works of permanent or continuing research value, but little-used, and old editions of some major works will be relegated to the Off-site Store or Closed Access and available on request

Underused duplicate copies and little-used secondary material in foreign languages will be withdrawn. Other books which have not been loaned in the past 10 years are considered for relegation to the Off-site Store or withdrawal.

*Policy written by Ross Connell, Politics Liaison Librarian, August 2015*