

MA in International Security Studies

Awarding Institution:

The University of Reading

Teaching Institution:

The University of Reading

Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences

Programme length: **12 months**

For students entering in **Oct. 2004**

Date of specification: **14 August 2003**

Programme Director:

Dr Cecilia Albin

Board of Studies:

GIPIS

Accreditation:

The University of Reading

Summary of programme aims

The programme aims to equip students with a thorough understanding of key theories, concepts and scholarly debates related to international and global security, broadly defined, and their relationship to contemporary security problems. As well, it aims to provide students with empirical knowledge of specific security issues, especially since the Cold War period, and with the ability to critically analyse these. Opportunities for specialisation are offered in various areas of strategic studies, diplomacy and conflict resolution, and the international relations and politics of particular regions.

Transferable skills

The programme develops students' capacity for independent study and research, critical analysis, effective organisation and presentation of ideas orally and in writing, and the use of IT. Requirements include weekly reading assignments to prepare for seminar discussions, oral presentations to fellow students and participation in seminar debates, and the preparation of essays and a dissertation. These tasks require students to select and assess materials on assigned topics, often using the internet; organise and distill the essence of large amounts of information on contested issues; and grasp the different sides of an argument, develop an independent view, and support it effectively. Training is also provided for doctoral programmes as part of the ESRC 1+ 3 scheme.

Programme content

The MA in International Security Studies consists of 180 credits; a taught element (120 credits) and a dissertation (60 credits). The central element is the compulsory core module, 'International Security Studies' (30 credits), which runs for two terms (Autumn and Spring). In addition, students choose optional modules totaling 90 credits from the list below [or one 30 credit option plus the full complement of research training (60 credits)], which run concurrently with the core module. Students may take up to 40 credits in another MA programme subject to the approval of the Director of GIPIS. Students are also required to write a dissertation (60 credits), which is planned in consultation with a supervisor and submitted for assessment in September.

Mod Code	Module Title	Credits	Level
<i>Compulsory Modules</i>			
PIM11	International Security Studies	30	M
PIM12	Dissertation	60	M
	Research Methods (for MA with research training):		
PIM01	Philosophical Issues in the Social Sciences	10	M
PIM02	Data Collection and Analysis	20	M

EDMES1	Essentials of Research Methods for the Social Sciences	20	M
EDMES2	Transferable Skills for Social Sciences	10	M

Option Modules

PIM03	Conflict & Conflict Resolution	30	M
PIM21	Contemporary Diplomacy	30	M
PIM19	Domestic Politics and Foreign Policies of the Middle East	30	M
PIM23	External Relations of the European Union	30	M
PIM08	International Politics of the Asia-Pacific	30	M
PIM09	International Relations	30	M
PIM10	International Relations of the Mediterranean	30	M
PIM18	Strategic Studies	30	M
PIM17	Terrorism and Security	30	M

Part-time/Modular arrangements

The programme can be followed part-time over a period of 24 months. It can also be taken on a modular basis for a period up to but not exceeding 72 months.

Progression requirements

None

Summary of teaching and assessment

The programme is taught through a mixture of seminars with student presentations and structured discussion, individual tutorials (especially where the dissertation is involved), and a small number of lectures. The Core Module and most Option Modules are assessed on the basis of 50 per cent course work and 50 per cent examination. Some Option Modules may be assessed on the basis of coursework only, or of 75 per cent examination and 25 per cent coursework. The pass mark for all modules is 50 per cent.

The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

<u>Mark</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
70 – 100%	Distinction
60 – 69%	Merit
50 – 59%	Good standard (Pass)
<u>Failing categories:</u>	
40 – 49%	Work below threshold standard
0 – 39%	Unsatisfactory Work

For Masters Degrees

To pass the MA students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation *and have no mark below 40 in any module*. The total credit value of all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits.

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more overall including a mark of 70 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 50 will be eligible for a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more overall including a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 50 will be awarded eligible for a Merit.

For PG Diplomas

To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more *and have no mark below 40 in any module*. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits.

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more and have no mark below 50 will be eligible for the award of a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more and have no mark below 50 will be awarded eligible for a Merit.

For PG Certificate

To pass the Postgraduate Certificate students must gain an average mark of 50 or more *and have no mark below 40 in any module*.

Admission requirements

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained a good 2.1 Honours degree or its equivalent. Students whose first language is not English should also have obtained an IELTS score of 7.0. Admissions Tutor: Dr R. J. McKeever

Support for students and their learning

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support includes IT Services, which has several hundred computers and the University Library, which across its three sites holds over a million volumes, subscribes to around 4,000 current periodicals, has a range of electronic sources of information and houses the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@IL) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Programme Directors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union.

GIPIS runs a full induction programme at the beginning of the university year, and provides students with its own handbook. Student progress is monitored via termly reports written by Unit Convenors and examined by Directors of Studies. Through its formative essays scheme GIPIS also gives individual help to students whose early assignments have revealed the need for remedial effort to enhance their writing skills.

Career prospects

The degree prepares well for many careers as in the civil and foreign service, non-governmental and international organisations, private firms, journalism, teaching and research. A number of students also go on to further post-graduate studies at the PhD level, at the University of Reading or other institutions.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

The Graduate Institute has exchange arrangements with Charles University, Prague, and with the Université Libre de Bruxelles. It organises annually a weeklong study trip to Brussels, which includes visits to numerous institutions located there.

Educational aims of the programme

- To familiarise students with key theories and concepts of international and global security, their relationship to contemporary security problems, and debates over the meaning and new boundaries of security studies;
- To provide students with empirical knowledge of security issues and threats (military and non-military) of international concern and/or of concern to a particular region, and of the means used to mitigate these and promote stability, especially during and since the end of the Cold War period;
- To enhance students' capacity for independent research, critical analysis, and effective organisation and presentation of complex arguments.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

<p>A. Knowledge and understanding of:</p> <p>(a) key theories, paradigms and concepts of international and global security, and their application to contemporary issues;</p> <p>(b) major debates in security studies;</p> <p>(c) empirical security issues and threats (military and non-military), and alternative means of managing them;</p> <p>(d) research methods and skills relevant to security studies.</p>	<p><u>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</u></p> <p>Teaching takes the form of seminars with student presentations and structured discussion, individual tutorials, and lectures where appropriate. Other provisions include training sessions in the University Library and an optional annual study trip to Brussels.</p> <p>The Core Module introduces students to concepts and issues of security, during and since the end of the Cold War. It surveys different approaches to questions about what security is and how to promote it, and who should be made secure. Critically examined are concepts of 'international', 'global' and 'human' security; the nature of various threats to security; and ways in which states and other actors have sought and now seek to tackle them.</p> <p>The Option modules provide students with opportunities to gain in-depth knowledge of particular areas and issues including strategic studies, diplomacy, conflict resolution, terrorism, and the politics of specific regions.</p> <p>The Research Methods module introduces a broad range of research tools (quantitative and qualitative), and provides training in different methods of data collection and analysis. It provides students with knowledge of the major epistemological and theoretical issues in the social sciences. In the Dissertation module, students apply, under the guidance of dissertation supervisor, appropriate methods of research and analysis to a specific topic.</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>Students' knowledge is tested through a combination of coursework, examinations and a dissertation.</p>
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Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills – able to:

- (a) critically assess and compare major paradigms and concepts of security;
- (b) apply current debates and paradigms of security to empirical issues and events, and vice versa;
- (c) formulate and defend intellectual positions effectively, including with reference to relevant scholarly literature and empirical evidence;
- (d) undertake independent research, and in so doing demonstrate understanding of and the ability to apply research methods appropriate to the field of security studies.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

These intellectual skills are taught in the Core and Optional Modules, in the work on the Dissertation, and (for the MA with research training) Research Methods. The teaching takes the form of seminars with student presentations and structured discussions, individual tutorials, and the preparation of essays and a dissertation.

Additional training is available, as needed, through the support of Study Advisors and a variety of library and research resources.

Assessment

These intellectual skills are assessed throughout the programme in essays, examinations and the dissertation.

C. Practical skills – able to:

- (a) select and assess quality materials on assigned topics, using library and electronic resources;
- (b) distill the essence of and organise large amounts of information on contested issues, and prepare it for presentation orally and in writing;
- (c) refer effectively to key concepts, theories and empirical data in support of one's arguments;
- (d) manage time effectively in the completion of weekly assignments, termly essays, exam preparation, and the writing of a dissertation.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

The Induction Programme at the beginning of the academic year, as well as the Core and Optional Modules, introduce students to library collections and internet resources, and advise them on how to use these in their work.

Effective processing and presentation of information, and the use of concepts and empirical data, are demonstrated and practiced in seminars and assignments.

Time management and other study skills are acquired by students independently, and/or via Course Convenors and Study Skills Advisors.

Assessment

The practical skills developed during the course form an integral part of knowledge and intellectual skills acquisition. They are assessed throughout the programme in coursework, exams and the writing of the dissertation.

D. Transferable skills – able to:

- (a) undertake independent study and research, including through the use of IT;
- (b) evaluate different sources of information and evidence, and formulate and defend positions and arguments effectively;
- (c) process large amounts of information, and present it and one's arguments effectively orally and in writing;
- (d) manage time effectively in the completion of work assignments.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

These skills are taught through weekly assignments to prepare for seminar discussions, oral presentations to fellow students and participation in seminar debates, and the preparation of essays and a dissertation. Additional tuition is available from Study Skills Advisors and Course Convenors.

Assessment

The practical skills developed during the course form an integral part of knowledge and intellectual skills acquisition. They are assessed throughout the programme in coursework, exams and the writing of the dissertation.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the study module guide and programme handbook.