

MA (Research) in European Union Politics

For students entering in October 2006

Awarding Institution: The University of Reading
Teaching Institution: The University of Reading
Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences Programme length: 12 months
Date of specification: 30 Sept. 2006
Programme Director: Dr Jonathan Golub
Board of Studies: GIPIS
Accreditation: The University of Reading

Summary of programme aims

The programme is primarily aimed at students, who wish to progress to research degree after completion of the Masters degree. It aims to provide students with a thorough knowledge of the European Union and its place in the wider international context. Specifically the programme focuses on political, economic and legal relations at an intra and extra-regional level. It aims to equip students with a good understanding of the current theoretical debates that surround the internal and external relations of the region. The programme aims to enable students to develop their analytical skills in evaluating primary and secondary source material.

The Research Training component of the programme is ESRC recognised and consists of the following elements:

University Research Training:

General Research and Transferable Skills (10 credits)
Essentials of Research Methods (20 credits)

GIPIS Research Training:

Philosophical Issues (10 credits)
Techniques of Data Collection & Analysis (10 credits)
Quantitative Data Analysis (10 credits)

Transferable skills

The programme will develop students' bibliographical skills by requiring them to compile bibliographies for their essays and dissertation. It will encourage students to develop their IT skills, by the use of a range of electronic databases and WWW resources in their research for essays and dissertation. It will enhance their presentational skills by making them present seminar papers to a group of students. The dissertation element will develop students' research skills and personal initiative as well as training them in structuring and summarising complex subject matter and in evaluating and presenting their own thoughts on a subject in a coherent and precise manner.

Programme content

The MA in European Union Politics combines taught courses with independent research. The programme consists of 180 credits; a taught element (120 credits) and a dissertation (60 credits). Students must take the core taught module, Political Integration in Europe, which runs for two terms (Autumn and Spring), plus the full complement of research training (60 credits). In addition, students choose one 30-

credit option module from the list below. Students may take up to 30 credits in another MA programme subject to the approval of the Director of GIPIS. The students' dissertation is planned in consultation with their supervisor and is submitted for assessment in September following completion of the core module and the optional modules.

Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Level
<i>Compulsory Modules</i>			
PIM15	Political Integration in Europe	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 Social Sciences	20	M
EDMES2	Transferable Skills for Social Sciences	10	M
<i>Option Modules (subject to availability in any given year)</i>			
PIM10	International Relations of the Mediterranean	30	M
LWM04A	European Union Law	30	M
ECM48	Issues in Euro-Asian Studies I	20	M
ECM49	Issues in Euro-Asian Studies II	20	M
PIM26	The EU as a Global Actor	30	M
PIM27	The Politics of the Monetary Union	30	M

Part-time/Modular arrangements

The programme can be followed on a part-time basis over 24 months or on a part-time modular basis over 72 months.

Progression requirements

None

Summary of teaching and assessment

The programme is taught primarily through seminars with student presentations and structured discussion, with lectures where appropriate. Other teaching provision includes: individual tutorials, training sessions in the library and an optional study visit to the institutions of the European Union.

The core and option modules are assessed by course work and examination. Failed coursework has to be re-submitted at the latest by 1st September the same year. If the examination is failed it has to be re-sat in September the same year. A failed dissertation has to be re-submitted within 12 months.

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)

Failing categories:

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 not exceed 55 credits.

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more overall including a mark of 60 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 50 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:

2:1 BA/BSc Hons Degree or equivalent. Students whose first language is not English must have an IELTS score of 7.0 or equivalent.

Admissions Tutor: Dr A.U.Ellner.

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.

Students meet with their Director of Studies once a term to assess their progress. A formative essay is written by students at the beginning of the Autumn term. This essay does not contribute to the students' degree but enables their Director of Studies to spot any academic difficulties at an early stage and to agree with the student concerned appropriate strategies to resolve them.

Career prospects

Students with an MA (Research) in European Union Politics can find work, for example:

- in the diplomatic service,
- in EU institutions,
- in Non-Governmental Organisations,
- in Research Institutes,
- in Journalism for print media, radio and TV.

The emphasis in the programme on analytical abilities, the summarising and presentation of complex arguments and empirical evidence mean that students may go on to pursue careers in a wide range of fields such as teaching, marketing, IT, civil service, and local government. A number of students go on to further post-graduate studies at PhD level, both at The University of Reading and elsewhere.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

The programme allows for formal exchanges with the Université Libre de Bruxelles and with Charles University, Prague.

Educational aims of the programme

To provide a detailed and challenging introduction to the politics of the European Union.

To enable students to understand the debates surrounding the political integration of the European Union.

To enable students to understand the debates surrounding how integration in the European Union has altered its relations with the wider international society.

Using a range of theoretical approaches to enable students to develop an understanding of the complexity of the above issues.

To provide the analytical and intellectual basis for further academic research on the region or for careers that require a thorough understanding of the politics of the European Union.

To develop further students' critical and analytical skills through their engagement with a range of challenging theoretical and empirical literature and to demonstrate these in essays, presentations and examinations.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:

1. the history of the development of European Union policies and institutions,
2. the theoretical and conceptual debates surrounding European integration and the relationship of European integration to the external policies of the European Union,
3. the debates surrounding the policies of the European Union.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

The programme is taught primarily through seminars with student presentations and structured discussion, with lectures where appropriate. Other teaching provision includes: individual tutorials, training sessions in the library and an optional study visit to the institutions of the European Union.

Students are given wide ranging bibliographies covering the subject area, including basic and advanced texts. Essays, seminar and exam questions are set at a level that will stretch students' capabilities and ensure that they must be using sources that are at the forefront of the scholarship of the subject. Students are obliged to locate and use appropriate sources for their reading that are informative and significant within the subject area.

Assessment

Students' knowledge is tested through a combination of coursework, examination and dissertation.

Skills and other attributes

<p>B. Intellectual skills – able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) conduct independent analysis informed by a sound understanding of appropriate theoretical, conceptual and methodological approaches,2) undertake substantial independent research and demonstrate originality in the application of knowledge.3) use the scholarly literature to develop their own research.	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>Through seminar presentations and the following structured discussions students are encouraged to develop their own analysis backed up by the ability to justify their position with reasoned argument and empirical evidence and a good knowledge of the relevant theoretical approaches.</p> <p>Lectures provide an introduction to the relevant theoretical, conceptual and methodological approaches to the subject area. This is backed up by a reading list which covers everything from basic to advanced literature on the subject area.</p> <p>Students are encouraged from the first seminar to seek out new sources on the subject matter. Thus students are pushed to undertake independent research from the beginning of the programme. The challenging nature of the seminars encourages them to develop originality in their application of knowledge.</p> <p>Through the process of devising and writing a dissertation on one aspect of the subject area with supervision from a tutor, the student is further encouraged to develop their research skills and an originality in the application of knowledge.</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>All these intellectual skills are assessed throughout the programme in essays, exams and the dissertation</p>
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- C. Practical skills – able to:**
- 1) identify, locate and use written sources,
 - 2) memorise and be able to recall written arguments and empirical evidence,
 - 3) identify appropriate resources including the internet for the study of the subject.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Students will be familiarised with the relevant archives, library collections and internet resources in the Core and Optional modules and will be given advice on how to use these resources effectively. Students will develop these skills throughout the programme, but will gain greatest experience in the dissertation module.

Assessment

1 and 2 are assessed throughout the programme in coursework. The other skill (3) is not formally assessed but its effective use will enhance the performance in the modules undertaken.

- D. Transferable skills – able to:**
- 1) amass evidence derived from textual sources,
 - 2) evaluate evidence using reasoned arguments,
 - 3) structure complex arguments,
 - 4) articulate their own thoughts in a coherent fashion,
 - 5) give oral presentations,
 - 6) put together a bibliography,
 - 7) manage their time,
 - 8) use IT and other resources.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

The intellectual skills represented by 1, 2, 3, and 4 are taught in all components of the course, with 3 and 4 being of special importance for the dissertation module. Among the other skills that of giving an oral presentation (5) will be acquired in the modules taught during the first two terms of the programme. Bibliographical skills and the use of IT (6 and 8) will be developed throughout the course but especially in the dissertation module. The latter will also be very important for teaching time management skills.

Assessment

1,2,3, and 4 are assessed throughout the programme in coursework. The other skills are not formally assessed but their effective use will enhance performance in the modules undertaken

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 module description and in the programme handbook. The University reserves the right to modify this specification in unforeseen circumstances, or where the process of academic development and feedback from students, quality assurance processes or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.