

MRes in International Relations (International Law and World Order)
For students entering in October 2010

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Faculty:	Social Sciences
Programme length:	12 months f/t, 24 months p/t
Date of specification:	March 2010
Programme Director:	Dr Andreas Behnke
Board of Studies:	GIPIS
Accreditation:	University of Reading

Summary of programme aims

To introduce students to theoretical and practical approaches to the study of the separate but related disciplines of International Law and International Relations through the study of core modules in International Law in Theory and Practice and Contemporary Issues in International Law, and to encourage interdisciplinary scholarship. In particular this degree programme encourages the ability to delineate and evaluate issues, select relevant materials and produce arguments encompassing policy, existing practice and knowledge at an advanced level in International Law and International Relations. It seeks also to develop those practical, generic and personal transferable skills necessary to conduct independent research.

Transferable skills

Students are encouraged to act independently in planning tasks and using feedback to reflect on their performance and re-assess the appropriateness of current levels of knowledge and skill. They will further enhance their ability to think analytically, to develop frameworks for considering and resolving complex problems, and to discriminate between good and bad arguments. Students will develop their IT skills by the use of a range of electronic databases and WWW resources in their research for essays and dissertation and enhance their presentational skills by presenting seminar papers to a group of students. The dissertation will develop research and planning skills and personal initiative as well as training students in structuring and summarising complex subject matter and evaluating and presenting their own thoughts on a subject in a coherent and precise and timely manner.

Programme content

The programme consists of 180 credits; a taught element (120 credits) and a dissertation (60 credits). The dissertation must be written on a topic that has a meaningful relationship to international law or international politics.

Within the taught element there are three core modules: LWMTIL International Law in Theory and Practice (20 credits), LWMTCI Contemporary Issues in International Law (10 credits) and PIM09 International Relations (30 credits), and students must also take 60 credits of research methods modules.

Compulsory modules:

<i>Code</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
PIM12	Dissertation	60	7
LWMTIL	International Law in Theory and Practice	20	7
LWMTCI	Contemporary Issues in International Law	10	7
PIM09	International Relations	30	7

And two modules from the following:

PIM44	Philosophical Issues in the Social Sciences	30	7
PIM45	Data Collection and Analysis	30	7
LWMTRM	Research Methods	30	7

Part-time/Modular arrangements

The programme can be taken part-time over two years. In the first year of study, a student will be required to complete the core modules PIM09 'International Relations' and either LWMTRM 'Research Methods' or PIM44 'Research Methods Philosophical Issues'. The remaining modules and the dissertation must be completed in the second year of study. The programme may not be completed over more than two years.

Progression requirements

None.

Summary of teaching and assessment

The programme is taught by a mixture of seminars with student presentations and structured discussion, individual tutorials (especially where the dissertation is involved), and a small number of lectures.

All modules, except for the Dissertation, 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 pass mark for all modules is 50 per cent.

Mark Interpretation

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 MRes students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall *and have no mark below 40 in any of their modules*. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for 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 40 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 40 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 of their modules*. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for 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 40 will be eligible for the award of a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more and have no mark below 40 will be awarded eligible for a Merit.

For PG Certificates

To pass the Postgraduate Certificate students must gain an average mark of 50 or more *and have no mark below 40 in any of their modules*. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 10 credits.

Admission requirements

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained a First or Upper Second Class Honours in a related discipline.

All applicants are considered on their individual merits and the Institute may vary these requirements if it sees fit.

Admissions Tutor: Dr Philip Giddings

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 Personal Tutors, School Senior Tutors, the Students' Union, the Medical Practice and the Student Services Directorate. The Student Services Directorate is housed in the Carrington Building and includes the Careers Advisory Service, the Disability Advisory Service, Accommodation Advisory Team, Student Financial Support, Counselling and Study Advisors. Student Services has a Helpdesk available for enquiries made in person or online (www.risisweb.reading.ac.uk), or by calling the central enquiry number on (0118) 378 5555. Students can get key information and guidance from the team of Helpdesk Advisers, or make an appointment with a specialist adviser; Student Services also offer drop-in sessions on everything from accommodation to finance. The Carrington Building is open between 8:30 and 17:30 Monday to Thursday (17:00 Friday and during vacation periods). Further information can be found in the Student website (www.reading.ac.uk/student).

Within the Graduate Institute of Political and International Studies, Directors of Studies will provide help and guidance on academic, and where appropriate, other matters. A member of the academic staff of the Institute acts a Careers Advisor and the Institute has a Director and a Deputy Director to provide student support. In addition, all students receive a detailed Handbook to help them study successfully.

Career prospects


A postgraduate degree will open many doors in more specialised areas of employment such as academia (with further postgraduate study), the media (journalism and broadcasting), the civil service and other branches of public service. This degree is of particular relevance to those wishing to pursue a career in the international civil service with an international organisation or non-governmental organisation.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

The programme does not involve study abroad.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

Knowledge and understanding of:	Teaching/learning methods and strategies
 <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Key issues in international law and international relations and the process of interdisciplinary analysis of international issues;2. A range of research methodologies sufficient to formulate appropriate and relevant research questions and conduct independent research in law and politics;3. A select range of options to broaden understanding of the operation of law and politics at an advanced level;4. Appropriate contextual background to understand the substantive law.	<p>The basic knowledge in all modules is provided by seminars, although some modules may include lectures. All seminars allow a student to gauge his/her progress in that module and will require significant student input into the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. The critical input into learning is provided by a student's own reading and preparation for group discussions (particularly engagement with primary sources).</p> <p>Assessment</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>Modules adopt a variety of assessment methods but all modules utilise either summative assessed work or an end of year unseen, timed exam. The majority of modules utilise a combination of both methods of assessment.</p>

Skills and other attributes

<p>B. Intellectual skills – able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Think logically;2. Analyse and problems and issues;3. Discriminate between relevant and irrelevant material;4. Understand technical material;5. Apply relevant knowledge effectively; and6. Construct defensible arguments and exercise critical judgment.	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>Logic, analytical skill and the ability to apply relevant knowledge is inherent in the study of law and politics and these skills are encouraged and developed in seminars.</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>Both formal examinations and summative assessed work assess all these skills either directly or indirectly.</p>
<p>C. Practical skills – able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Discover and use legal and/or political and contextual materials from a variety of sources; and2. Evaluate legal and/or political and contextual material both individually and a part of a team;3. Construct and present (orally and in writing) defensible arguments and exercise critical judgment.	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>All the practical skills are present in each module and are developed through seminars. The essence of legal study and the study of political science is to provide an answer to a practical problems having identified the issues, selected relevant facts and used appropriate analysis to provide a solution. The encouragement of these faculties is inherent in all parts of the degree. All modules seek to develop powers of critical analysis and judgement.</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>The written element of 3 is directly assessed through summative assessed work and/or formal examinations (examinations indirectly assess 1 and 2). The dissertation requires elements of 2 and 3. Some modules assess oral communication (formatively or summatively).</p>

<p>D. Transferable skills – able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work independently and hard; 2. Use different types of information sources; 3. Communicate technical material effectively both orally and in writing; and 4. Construct defensible arguments and exercise critical judgement; 5. Reflect critically on one's own learning; 6. Consider career development. 	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>International law and international relations are subjects of considerable complexity; some material is difficult and not all of it is of over-powering interest – a student must work hard to engage with such material. A student will be required regularly to participate in class discussions and make presentations. He or she will be required to engage with a considerable amount of academic and other literature and to assess and evaluate such literature critically and in the context of presenting advanced arguments both orally and in writing.</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>Both formal examinations and summative assessed work assess all these skills (oral skills are assessed in at least one module) other than 5 & 6. Seminars encourage a student to reflect on his or her own learning. Guidance is given throughout the degree programme on career development.</p>
<p>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.</p>	