

MA/PGDip/PGCert in International Relations

For students entering in 2010

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Faculty:	Social Sciences
Programme length:	12 months
Date of specification:	March 2010
Programme Director:	Dr Dominik Zaum
Board of Studies:	GIPIS
Accreditation:	The University of Reading

Summary of programme aims

The programme aims to provide students with a deeper knowledge and theoretical understanding of the academic discipline of International Relations than that provided at the undergraduate level. It seeks to acquaint them with the current debates in the field and their relationship to contemporary problems of world politics. It also aims to strengthen their ability for critical analysis of International Relations. It offers the opportunity for specialisation in various aspects of international politics, strategic studies, international political economy, international law, international organisations, and area studies.

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 (using both the internet and the library); organise and distil the essence of large amounts of information on contested issues; evaluate the information and grasp the different sides of an argument, develop an independent view, and support it effectively in both written assignments and oral presentations.

Programme content

The MA in International Relations consists of 180 credits; a taught element (120 credits) and a dissertation (60 credits). There are two core modules 'International Relations' (30 credits) and 'Conflict and Conflict Resolution' (30 credits), which run for two terms (Autumn and Spring). In addition, students choose module options totalling 60 credits from the list below [of which only 30 credits can be research modules (*)]. Students may take up to 30 credits in another MA programme subject to the approval of the Director of GIPIS. Students must also 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>			
PIM09	International Relations	30	7
PIM03	Conflict & Conflict Resolution	30	7
PIM12	Dissertation	60	7

Optional postgraduate modules:

PIM11	International Security Studies	30	7
PIM15	Political Integration in Europe	30	7
PIM21	Contemporary Diplomacy	30	7
PIM25	International Political Economy	30	7
PIM28	The United Nations, Humanitarian Intervention & Contemporary Warfare	30	7
PIM29	The Practice of Strategy in History	30	7
PIM30	Strategic Theory	30	7
PIM31	Modern Strategy		
PIM37	The Origins and Causes of War	30	7
PIM42	Conflict in the Middle East	30	7
PIM43	Terrorism in a Globalising World	30	7
PIM46	Cold War Culture	30	7
PIM44	Research Training – Philosophical Issues*	30	7
PIM45	Research Training – Data Collection & Analysis*	30	7
LWMTDS	International Dispute Settlement	20	7
LWMTF	European Legal Frameworks : Constitutionalism, Citizenship & Democracy	20	7
LWMTHR	International Human Rights Law	30	7
LWMTIC	Prosecuting International Crimes: Contemporary Issues and Problems	10	7
LWMTW	War Law	20	7
LWMTIL	International Law in Theory & Practice	20	7
LWMTCI	Contemporary Issues in International Law	10	7

Part-time/Modular arrangements

The programme can be taken part-time over two years (or exceptionally on a flexible basis over a maximum of 6 years). In the first year of study, a student will be required to complete the core modules in ‘International Relations’ and ‘Conflict and Conflict Resolution’. In the second year of study, a student will be required to choose two further optional modules and the Dissertation. The programme may not normally be extended beyond two years

Progression requirements

None

Summary of teaching and assessment

Teaching methods will vary from module to module but teaching will primarily be by means of seminars. Certain modules may be partially taught by means of lectures and tutorials.

All 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:

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 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 Certificates

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 2.1 Honours degree or its equivalent and, for students whose first language is not English, an IELTS score of 6.5.

Admissions Tutor: Dr P.J 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 Programme Directors, 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 (reading.ac.uk/student).

GIPIS has its own handbook as well as a full induction programme at the beginning of the university year. Student progress is monitored via termly progress reports written by the Unit Convenor and provided to the Director 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

Students with a postgraduate degree in International Relations may be able to pursue careers in a wide range of areas in government, business, research, journalism, publishing, teaching, and the work of non-governmental organizations. A number of students also go on to further post-graduate studies at the PhD level.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

The Graduate Institute has exchange arrangements with Charles University, Prague, and with the Université Libre de Bruxelles. Each year a weeklong study trip to Brussels is organised to visit EU and other governmental and non-governmental institutions.

Educational aims of the programme

Upon completion of the MA programme, students will have broadened and strengthened their knowledge and understanding of International Relations in a systematic way. They will be aware of the main epistemological and theoretical issues relevant to the academic study of International Relations, and of current debates within the discipline. They will have a general familiarisation with the full range of quantitative and qualitative research skills relevant to the study of International Relations and will have practical knowledge of specific methods and research techniques. They will have engaged in a sustained piece of independent and critical research within the context of close and supportive supervision. They will also have acquired non-subject specific research skills and generic skills and knowledge appropriate to a research and other careers.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:	Teaching/learning methods and strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) the principal concepts and theories associated with the academic discipline of International Relations;(b) the major issues and debates in contemporary world politics and the relevance of International Relations theory to these questions;(c) specific aspects of International Relations;(d) research methods	<p>Students will be taught by means of seminars with students presentations and structured discussion, individual tutorials, and a limited number of lectures. In the Core module students will become familiar with the key concepts and theories of International Relations and with the major issues and debates. In the Option modules, students will gain specialised knowledge of different aspects of International Relations, including international politics, strategic studies, international political economy, international law and international organisations. In the Research Methods module, students will become familiar with the full range of quantitative and qualitative research skills and underlying issues, train in a range of methods of data collection and analysis, and acquire an understanding of the main epistemological and theoretical issues in the social sciences. In the Dissertation module, students will, under the guidance of dissertation supervisor, apply appropriate methods of analysis to a specific topic, taking increasing responsibility for their own learning.</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>Students' knowledge is tested through a combination of coursework, examinations and a dissertation.</p>

Skills and other attributes

<p>B. Intellectual skills – able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) analyse and interpret patterns and processes of world politics in a theoretically aware manner;(b) identify and employ relevant scholarly literature in support of one's own research;(c) demonstrate a sound understanding of research methods and techniques appropriate to the study of International Relations;(d) structure complex arguments;(e) criticise and defend intellectual positions in a well reasoned and empirically substantiated fashion;(f) express oneself orally and in writing in a cogent and effective manner.	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>These intellectual skills will be taught in all modules: Core, Option, Dissertation and (for the MA in research training), Research Methods. These skills will be taught by means of seminars with students presentations and structured discussions, some individual tutorials, essay writing, workshops and the writing of a dissertation. Additional training will be available to students through study visits to the library and other research resources, and through the support of Study Advisors.</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>All these intellectual skills are assessed throughout the programme in termly essays, exams and the dissertation.</p>
<p>C. Practical skills – able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) cull relevant material from select bibliographies for the preparation of oral presentations and written assignments;b) use library and electronic resources, including databases and websites, for the purpose of conducting research;c) budget one's time satisfactorily for the completion of weekly assignments, exam preparation and the writing of a dissertation;d) memorise and recall key concepts, theories and historical data in support of one's work.	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>The Graduate Institute's induction day includes an introduction to the use of the University Library and other relevant resources. Students learn through independent study, availing themselves when necessary of guidance from the Course Convenor and Study Skills Advisors.</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>The practical skills developed during the course form an integral part of knowledge and intellectual skill acquisition and are assessed throughout the programme in coursework, exams and the writing of the dissertation.</p>

D. Transferable skills – able to:

- a) engage in independent study;
- b) evaluate evidence using reasoned arguments;
- c) structure complex arguments;
- d) articulate one's own thoughts in a coherent fashion;
- e) give oral presentations;
- f) write effectively;
- g) manage one's time efficiently;
- h) use IT (e.g., internet sites and electronic databases) and other scholarly resources.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

These skills are taught by means of seminars with students presentations and structured discussions, some individual tutorials, essay writing, workshops and the writing of a dissertation. Additional training is available to students through study visits to the library and other research resources, and through the support of Study Advisors.

Assessment

The transferable skills developed during the course form an integral part of knowledge and intellectual skill acquisition and 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 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.