

**MRes in International Relations (International Security Studies)
For students entering in 2012/3**

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	
Faculty:	Arts, Humanities and Social Science Faculty
Programme length:	1 years
Date of specification:	20/Jul/2012
Programme Director:	Dr Andreas Behnke
Programme Advisor:	
Board of Studies:	GIPIS
Accreditation:	

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.

Transferable skills

This module will enhance students' capacity for independent study by requiring them to prepare for weekly discussions using recommended bibliographic materials (print and electronic). It will help them to develop further their IT skills by using a variety of internet sites and public access databases in the preparation of assignments. It will enhance their presentational skills by requiring them to make oral presentations to groups of fellow students. It will strengthen their written communication skills through the writing of essays and a dissertation. The dissertation and research methods components will strengthen students'; research skills and their ability to structure complex subject material as well as evaluate and present their own thinking on a subject in a coherent and precise manner.

Programme content

The MRes in International Security Studies consists of 180 credits; a taught element (120 credits) and a dissertation (60 credits). There are five compulsory core modules 'International Relations', 'International Security Studies', 'Philosophical Issues in the Social Sciences', 'Introduction to Research Methods in Politics and International Relations' and 'Advanced Research Methods in Politics and International Relations', totalling 120 credits. These run for two terms (Autumn and Spring). Students must also write a dissertation (60 credits), which is planned in consultation with a supervisor and submitted for assessment in September.

Compulsory Modules

Mod Code	Module Title	Credits	Level
PIM09	International Relations	30	7
PIM11	International Security Studies	30	7
PIM12	Dissertation	60	7
PIM54	Philosophical Issues in the Social Sciences	20	7
PIM55	Introduction to Research Methods in Politics and International Relations	20	7
PIM56	Advanced Research Methods in Politics and International Relations	20	7

Part-time or 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 two modules 'International Relations' and 'Research Training Philosophical Issues'. The other modules and dissertation will be completed in the second year of study. The programme may not normally be extended beyond 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.

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

Admissions Tutor: Prof Alan Cromartie

Support for students and their learning

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support is provided by a wide array of services across the University, including: the University Library, the Student Employment, Experience and Careers Centre (SECC), In-sessional English Support Programme, the Study Advice and Mathematics Support Centre teams, IT Services and 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 advisers in the Student Services Centre. The Student Services Centre is housed in the Carrington Building and offers advice on accommodation, careers, disability, finance, and wellbeing. 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 and runs workshops and seminars on a range of topics. For more information see www.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 Module 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.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:

key theories, paradigms and concepts of international and global security, and their application to contemporary issues;
(b) major debates in security studies;
(c) empirical security issues and threats (military and non-military), and alternative means of managing them;
(d) research methods and skills relevant to security studies.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

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.

The core modules introduce students to international relations and 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.

The Research Methods modules introduce 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.

Assessment

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

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

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

These intellectual skills will be taught in all modules by means of seminars with student 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.

Assessment

and the ability to apply research methods appropriate to the field of security studies.

C. Practical skills - able to:

- (a) select and assess quality materials on assigned topics, using library and electronic resources;
- (b) distil 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.

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

All these intellectual skills are assessed throughout the programme in termly essays, exams and the dissertation.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

The Induction Programme at the beginning of the academic year, as well as the taught 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.

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 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 process or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.