

**MA International Relations (full-time)**  
**For students entering in 2017/8**

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Programme length:	1 years
Date of specification:	14/Sep/2017
Programme Director:	Dr Christina Hellmich
Board of Studies:	GIPIS

**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 three core modules 'International Relations Theory' (20 credits) and 'Themes and Issues in Contemporary International Relations' (20 credits) and either 'Introduction to Qualitative research methods in Politics and International Relations' (20 credits) or 'Introduction to Quantitative research methods in Politics and International Relations' (20 credits), although both can be taken. In addition, students choose module options totalling 60 credits from the list below. Students may take up to 20 credits in another MA programme subject to the approval of the Programme Director. Students must also write a dissertation (60 credits), which is planned in consultation with a supervisor and submitted for assessment in September. Optional modules below are indicative and may be subject to change and may not run year to year.

<i>Code</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
<b>Compulsory Modules</b>			
PIM63	International Relations Theory	20	7
PIM81	Themes and Issues in Contemporary International Relations	20	7
PIM12	Dissertation	60	7
And at least 1 of:			
PIM85	Introduction to Qualitative research methods in Politics and International Relations	20	7
PIM86	Introduction to Quantitative research methods in Politics and International Relations	20	7
<i>Optional postgraduate modules</i>			
PIM64	International Security Studies	20	7
PIM66	Contemporary Diplomacy	20	7
PIM69	Strategic Theorists	20	7
PIM70	Strategic Practice	20	7
PIM71	The Origins and Causes of War	20	7
PIM73	Conflict in the Middle East	20	7
PIM74	Terrorism in a Globalising World	20	7

PIM80	Building Peace After Civil War	20	7
PIM84	Parliamentary Studies	20	7
PIM54	Philosophical Issues in the Social Sciences	20	7
LWMTSI	International Institutional Law & Dispute Settlement	20	7
LWMTCB	International Criminal Law	10	7
LWMTPI	Israel/Palestine: International Law & Human Rights Questions	10	7
LWMTAC	Law of Armed Conflict	20	7
LWMTUM	The Use of Military Force	20	
LWMTPU	Public International Law	10	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 core modules in 'International Relations Theory' and 'Themes and Issues in Contemporary International Relations' and at least one of 'Introduction to Quantitative research methods in Politics and International Relations' or 'Introduction to Qualitative research methods in Politics and International Relations'. 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**

#### **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 August/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:

<b>Mark</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
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.

### **Admission requirements**

**Admissions Tutor:** Dr Adam Humphreys

### **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, In-sessional English Support Programme, the Study Advice and Mathematics Support teams and IT Services. 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 Support Centres. If a student has a general enquiry and is unsure where to seek help, they should visit their Support Centre. There are five Support Centres across the University, including one based at the London Road Campus. The Support Centre will be able to advise on matters such as extenuating circumstances, module selection, suspensions, withdrawals, timetable queries and transferring programme. The Support Centre will also be able to signpost students to Carrington building where other University services related to disability, financial support, counselling and wellbeing, accommodation and careers can be found. More information on what student services are available can be found here: <http://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials>.

### **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**

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:**

1. the principal concepts and theories associated with the academic discipline of International Relations;
2. the major issues and debates in contemporary world politics and the relevance of International Relations theory to these questions;
3. specific aspects of International Relations;
4. research methods

##### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

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 modules, students will become familiar with either quantitative or 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.

#### *Assessment*

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

### **Skills and other attributes**

#### **B. Intellectual skills - *able to:***

1. analyse and interpret patterns and processes of world politics in a theoretically aware manner;
2. identify and employ relevant scholarly literature in support of one's own research;
3. demonstrate a sound understanding of research methods and techniques appropriate to the study of International Relations;
4. structure complex arguments;
5. criticise and defend intellectual positions in a well-reasoned and empirically substantiated fashion;
6. express oneself orally and in writing in a cogent and effective manner.

#### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

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.

#### *Assessment*

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

#### **C. Practical skills - *able to:***

1. cull relevant material from select bibliographies for the preparation of oral presentations and written assignments;
2. use library and electronic resources, including databases and websites, for the purpose of conducting research;
3. budget one's time satisfactorily for the completion of weekly assignments, exam preparation and the writing of a dissertation;
4. memorise and recall key concepts, theories and historical data in support of one's work.

#### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

The Department'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.

#### *Assessment*

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.

#### **D. Transferable skills - *able to:***

1. engage in independent study;
2. evaluate evidence using reasoned arguments;
3. structure complex arguments;
4. articulate one's own thoughts in a coherent fashion;
5. give oral presentations;
6. write effectively;
7. manage one's time efficiently;
8. 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 process or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.**