

MA International Security Studies (full-time)
For students entering in 2017/8

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Programme length:	12 months
Date of specification:	14/Sep/2017
Programme Director:	Dr Christina Hellmich
Board of Studies:	GIPIS

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. Opportunities for specialisation are offered in various areas of strategic studies, diplomacy and conflict resolution, and the international relations and politics of particular regions.

Transferable skills

This module will enhance students' capacity for independent study by requiring them to prepare weekly discussions using recommended bibliographic materials (print and electronic). It will help them to develop further use of their IT skills by using a variety of internet sites and public access databases in the preparation of assignments. It will enhance their presentation 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 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 MA in International Security Studies consists of 180 credits; a taught element (120 credits) and a dissertation (60 credits). There are three compulsory core modules, 'International Relations Theory' (20 credits) and 'International Security Studies' (20 credits) and at least one of '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). In addition, students choose optional modules 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 are also required to write a dissertation (60 credits), which is planned in consultation with a supervisor and submitted for assessment in September. Optional modules are subject to change and may not run year to year.

The optional list below is indicative:

<i>Code</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
<i>Compulsory Modules</i>			
PIM63	International Relations Theory	20	7
PIM64	International Security Studies	20	7
PIM12	Dissertation	60	7
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 Modules</i>			
PIM62	The Political Economy of Civil War	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
PIM80	Building Peace After Civil War	20	7
PIM81	Themes & Issues in Contemporary International Relations	20	7
PIM82	Seminar Series on Case Studies in Politics & IR	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	10	7
LWMTUM	The Use of Military Force	20	7
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' and 'International Security Studies'. 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 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 good 2.1 Honours degree or its equivalent. Students whose first language is not English should also have obtained an IELTS score of 6.5.

Admissions Tutor: Dr Andreas Behnke

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

The degree prepares well for many careers as in the civil and foreign service, non-governmental and international organisations, private firms, journalism, teaching and research. A number of students also go on to further post-graduate studies at the PhD level, at the University of Reading or other institutions.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

The Graduate Institute has exchange arrangements with Charles University, Prague, and with the université libre de bruxelles. It organises annually a weeklong study trip to Brussels, which includes visits to numerous institutions located there.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:

- (a) 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 Module introduces students to 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 Option modules provide students with opportunities to gain in-depth knowledge of particular areas and issues including strategic studies, diplomacy, conflict resolution, terrorism, and the politics of specific regions.

The Research Methods module introduces 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 visa 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 and the ability to apply research methods appropriate to the field of security studies.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

These intellectual skills are taught in the Core and Optional Modules, in the work on the Dissertation, and (for the MA with research training) Research Methods. The teaching takes the form of seminars with student presentations and structured discussions, individual tutorials, and the preparation of essays and a dissertation.

Additional training is available, as needed, through the support of Study Advisors and a variety of library and research resources.

Assessment

These intellectual skills are assessed throughout the programme in essays, examinations and the dissertation.

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.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

- The Induction Programme at the beginning of the academic year, as well as the Core and Optional 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.

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

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

present it and one's arguments effectively orally and in writing;

(d) manage time effectively in the completion of work assignments.

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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.