

MA International Relations

Programme Specification

Awarding Institution:

University of London (Interim Exit Awards made by Goldsmiths' College)

Teaching Institution: Goldsmiths, University of London

Final Award: MA International Relations

Programme Name: MA International Relations

Total credit value for programme: 180 credits

Name of Interim Exit Award(s): Not applicable

Duration of Programme: 1 year full-time or 2 years part-time

UCAS Code(s): Not applicable

HECoS Code(s): (100490) International Relations

QAA Benchmark Group: Not applicable

FHEQ Level of Award: Level 7

Programme accredited by: Not applicable

Date Programme Specification last updated/approved: October 2022

Home Department: Politics and International Relations

Department(s) which will also be involved in teaching part of the programme:

Not applicable

Programme overview

This programme specification summarises the MA degree in International Relations (MA IS) offered in the Politics and International Relations Department at Goldsmiths, University of London, identifying learning outcomes and skills that a typical student should have achieved and developed by engaging fully in the learning process that is offered. Further details of the programme can be found on line at www.gold.ac.uk and in the Departmental handbook for the MA International Relations.

At the centre of world politics today are a range of new issues: the global 'war on terror' the need to develop security frameworks which can meet the challenges set by international terrorist networks, and rising levels of ethnic and civic conflict; the ongoing crisis in core units of global governance; the emergence of human rights and humanitarian intervention which challenge taken-for-granted conceptions about international order, and concerns about human security issues which arise from high levels of environmental degradation and the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS. The MA in International Relations

provides students with the opportunity to explore these issues in an interdisciplinary setting, using a strong theoretical basis in order to better understand a range of empirical issues. The programme aims to promote independent critical and evaluative skills as well as an intellectual curiosity in international relations. It seeks to expand students' knowledge of the issues which make up contemporary world politics and provide them with a deep level of understanding into the many facets which lie behind contemporary international politics.

Programme entry requirements

Students should normally have successfully completed an undergraduate programme in a relevant subject and obtained a good grade in their final papers (usually an Upper Second Class Honours). However, the Politics and International Relations Department is committed to widening participation in its degree programmes, including taught postgraduate modules, and welcomes applications from those who have a substantial amount of relevant work experience, but who lack formal qualifications. In such cases entrance is by interview/portfolio or equivalent evidence of research interests as well as the submission of an essay on a topic determined by the department. Applicants who do not have the relevant first degree are encouraged to approach the department informally before submitting an application.

Programme learning outcomes

The learning outcomes for the programme (listed below) include knowledge, cognitive, and transferable skills which are widely sought and generally expected from students who have successfully completed a postgraduate programme of study in the social sciences as well as skills and understandings that are more subject specific.

Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	Develop familiarity with key topics and themes in International Relations.	Re-Thinking the International
A2	Acquire comprehensive knowledge of methods, concepts and terminologies employed in the study of International Affairs and the interpretation of political action in the contemporary world.	Re-Thinking the International, Dissertation
A3	Demonstrate a high-level understanding of the core theoretical tools in International Relations.	Re-Thinking the International, Dissertation

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A4	Formulate and present views, in a coherent and persuasive fashion, about international political behaviour and events.	Re-Thinking the International, Dissertation

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	Critically examine and apply a range of ideas, theories and studies, found in non-academic as well as academic sources, to contemporary international political events, practices and processes.	Re-Thinking the International, Dissertation
B2	Demonstrate an ability to make sophisticated and discriminating use of the language and concepts found in contemporary international politics.	Re-Thinking the International, Dissertation
B3	Accurately present and critically evaluate rival views of international politics.	Re-Thinking the International, Dissertation
B4	Undertake independent research – utilising electronic and conventional library resources as well as material from secondary and primary sources – into global events, issues and processes.	Re-Thinking the International, Dissertation
B5	Produce written work of a standard that fully meets the expectations of assessors and examiners and satisfies the requirement that written work is presented, organised and referenced in ways that accord with established academic criteria and standards in the discipline of politics.	Re-Thinking the International, Dissertation

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	Acquire comprehensive knowledge and understanding of major theories and theoretical works in the field of International Relations.	Re-Thinking the International, Dissertation
C2	Acquire comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the ideologies and theories that have most powerfully shaped and influenced contemporary international political argument and debate.	Re-Thinking the International, Dissertation
C3	Acquire comprehensive knowledge and understanding of contemporary theoretical and empirical debates about such matters as the question of culture and politics, of terrorism and asymmetric conflict, the place of radical forms of protest in the making of the modern world, and the sources of international instability.	Re-Thinking the International, Dissertation
C4	Be able to analyse the relationship between theory and practice as it relates to the study of the international.	Re-Thinking the International, Dissertation

Transferable skills (Elements)

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	Critical communication and discussion skills.	Re-Thinking the International, Dissertation
D2	Accessing and utilising bibliographical, official and academic resources in both hard copy and electronic form.	Re-Thinking the International, Dissertation
D3	A capacity for independent judgement and open- mindedness.	Re-Thinking the International, Dissertation
D4	Time management skills at a level appropriate for a postgraduate degree.	Re-Thinking the International, Dissertation
D5	The ability to read, listen carefully and critically engage with material appropriate for a postgraduate degree.	Re-Thinking the International, Dissertation

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D6	The capacity to work collaboratively in groups.	Re-Thinking the International
D7	The experience of using research strategies to a level appropriate to progression to doctoral level or in research management.	Re-Thinking the International, Dissertation
D8	The ability to appraise critically existing studies, judge their usefulness, and be able to apply this learning practically.	Re-Thinking the International, Dissertation
D9	Undertake an independent research project through the dissertation.	Dissertation
D10	Employ experience of using research strategies to a level appropriate to progression to doctoral level.	Re-Thinking the International, Dissertation

Grading Criteria (postgraduate – delete as necessary)

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
80-100%	Distinction (Outstanding/ Exceptional)	Represents the overall achievement of the learning outcomes and the skills below to an exceptional level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and logical argument with appropriate linkages • Analytical use of key concepts in exposition • Appropriate location in relevant literature • Relation of theoretical and empirical material • Location of subject within a wider framework of debate • Good use of theory in structuring hypotheses • Skilled application of selected research techniques • Thorough organisation and planning • Location and use of source materials • Implementation of strategies for collecting information • Clarity of expression and appropriate use of language • Accuracy in spelling, grammar and punctuation Consistency and thoroughness in referencing and bibliography
70-79%	Distinction	Represents the overall achievement of the learning outcomes and the skills below to an excellent level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and logical argument with appropriate linkages • Analytical use of key concepts in exposition • Appropriate location in relevant literature • Relation of theoretical and empirical material • Location of subject within a wider framework of debate

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good use of theory in structuring hypotheses • Skilled application of selected research techniques • Thorough organisation and planning • Location and use of source materials • Implementation of strategies for collecting information • Clarity of expression and appropriate use of language • Accuracy in spelling, grammar and punctuation <p>Consistency and thoroughness in referencing and bibliography</p>
60-69%	Merit	<p>Represents the overall achievement of the appropriate learning outcomes to a good level. There will be very good use of many or most of features outlined above. However some aspects will be less fully realised. The work will not be as strongly original, distinctive or individual as a 70%+ grade answer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall structure of the argument is clear and coherent • Evaluative use of key concepts • Location of argument within relevant literature • Awareness of relation between theory and empirical data • Knowledge of position of subject matter in wider debates • Use of theoretical material in structuring hypotheses • Application of selected research techniques • Effective organisation and planning • Accessing relevant sources • Competent implementation of strategies for collecting information • Clarity of expression • Appropriate spelling, grammar and punctuation <p>Consistent use of referencing and bibliography</p>
50-59%	Pass	<p>Represents the overall achievement of the appropriate learning outcomes to a threshold level. There will be good use of some of the features of a 70%+ grade answer. However, some elements will be only partially realised. The work will not contain any serious omissions or irrelevancies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the argument will be clearly structured • Understanding and recognition of key concepts • Recognition of most of the relevant literature • Limited, though fairly sound, use of theory and empirical data • Some understanding of wider debates surrounding the subject • Limited use of theory in structuring hypotheses

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfactory use of chosen research methods • Reasonable organisation and planning • Accessing some relevant sources • Limited use of strategies for collecting information • Reasonably clear expression • Mostly correct spelling, grammar and punctuation <p>Referencing and bibliography broadly in line with guidelines</p>
30-49%	Fail	<p>Represents an overall failure to achieve the appropriate learning outcomes. There may be errors, omissions or irrelevancies and significant elements of the learning outcomes and skills will be unmet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear structure and logical progression • Limited understanding of key concepts • Limited recognition of relevant literature • Uneven use of theoretical and empirical materials • Little understanding of wider debates surrounding the area • Uneven application of theory in structuring hypotheses • Uneven application of selected methods • Limited organisation and planning • Limited accessing of relevant sources • Lack of clarity in expression • Mistakes in spelling, grammar and punctuation which impede clarity • Referencing and bibliography only partially accurate
10-29%	Bad fail	<p>Represents a significant overall failure to achieve the appropriate learning outcomes. Students will show minimal or no evidence of knowledge or understanding of key themes and issues. The work will suffer from one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure and logic are weak and muddled • Very limited understanding of key concepts • Little recognition of relevant literature • Little use of theoretical and empirical material • Very little understanding of the subject in the context of wider debates • Very limited application of theory in structuring hypotheses • Poor application of selected research methods • Disorganised research and lack of planning • Little accessing of relevant sources • Unclear expression which distorts argument • Many mistakes in spelling, grammar and punctuation <p>Little accuracy in referencing and bibliography</p>

1-9%	Very bad fail	<p>A submission that does not address the specified learning outcomes (shall be deemed a non-valid attempt and the unit must be re-sat). The work will suffer in some degree from most or all of the characteristics below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure and logic are very unclear • Little or no understanding of key concepts • Very poor or no recognition of relevant literature • Very poor or no use of theoretical and empirical material • No recognition of subject in the light of wider debates • Poor application of theory in structuring hypotheses • Very poor application of selected research methods • Very poor organisation and planning • Very poor or no accessing of relevant literature • Very unclear expression which distorts argument • Very poor spelling, grammar and punctuation • No referencing or bibliography
0%	Non submission or plagiarised	A categorical mark representing either the failure to submit an assessment or a mark assigned for a plagiarised assessment

Mode of study

The department is strongly committed to the use of seminars in delivering its curriculum at post-graduate level, and in engaging its students in the learning process. All modules provide students with an opportunity to participate in discussions designed to explore and reinforce the knowledge they have gained through reading and making presentations. Seminars use a range of methods including lectures, student presentations, group work, brainstorming sessions and, on occasion, short quizzes. Specifically, seminars provide an environment in which students will acquire and demonstrate knowledge and understanding skills outlined in A1-4, cognitive and thinking skills outlined in B 1-3, subject specific skills outlined in C1-4, and transferable skills outlined in D1, D3, D5-6.

In addition to timetabled teaching, students obtain support from academic staff by discussing their work with staff during regular office hours and tutorials. Tutorials help to inculcate subject specific learning outcomes C1-4 and provide an environment in which students can demonstrate and discuss the requisite knowledge and understanding skills in A1-4 along with cognitive and thinking skills in B1-4. Tutorials provide a conducive environment for the learning and teaching of transferable skills D1, D3 and D4, focusing particularly on the preparation for, and feedback from, assessed (summative) and (formative) unassessed essays.

Each full-time member of the academic staff offers at least two guaranteed office hours per week during term time. Support for independent study is constantly being developed and improved, and students now benefit from the wide range of facilities available in the Rutherford Information Services Building (RISB). The RISB provides access to and advice on the use of a wide range of library and electronic resources. Students have access to the British Library's social science holdings, and the libraries at the London School of Economics and Senate House which together hold an extensive collection of books and journals in the field of International Relations. The department enjoys corporate membership of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House). This allows students the chance to benefit from the many events hosted by Chatham House as well as use its library which holds an excellent stock of subject specific material. In addition, a wide range of audio-visual materials are available to all postgraduate students within the RISB collection.

Programme structure

The programme is available in full-time (1 year) and part-time (2 years) modes.

All students must complete modules to a value of 120 credits and a dissertation with a value of 60 credits.

Part-time students take the compulsory module Re-Thinking the International (30 credits), plus a further 30 credits* in their first year. In their second year, they take their dissertation (60 credits) plus optional modules to a value of 60 credits*. The dissertation must be completed and submitted by mid-September of the year of completion.

*No more than 30 credits should be taken from outside of the Department of Politics and International Relations across the programme duration.

Optional modules

You choose modules to the value of 90 credits from:

Either a list provided by the Department of Politics and International Relations at the beginning of the academic year. Or

A combination of modules from:

- A list provided by the department at the beginning of the academic year, and
- Other modules from other departments in the college approved by the Department of Politics and International Relations, but not amounting to more than 30 CATS from outside the Department of Politics and International Relations

Progression Requirements

Part-time candidates will normally be required to have passed the compulsory module before proceeding to the second year.

Full-time mode

Academic year of study 1

Module Name	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Type	Term
Re-Thinking the International	PO71044C	30	7	Compulsory	1
EITHER: 90 CATS of optional modules from a list provided by the Department of Politics and International Relations	Various	90	7	Optional	1-2
OR: A combination of modules to the value of 90 CATS from: a list provided annually by the Department of Politics and International Relations; other modules from other departments in the College, approved by the Department of Politics and International Relations, but not amounting to more than 30 CATS from outside the Department of Politics and International Relations	Various	90	7	Optional	1-2
Dissertation	P071020B	60	7	Compulsory	3

Part-time mode

Academic year of study 1

Module Name	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Type	Term
Re-Thinking the International	PO71044C	30	7	Compulsory	1
30 CATS of optional modules from a list provided by the Department of	Various	30	7	Optional	1-2

Module Name	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Type	Term
Politics and International Relations					

Academic year of study 2

Module Name	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Type	Term
A combination of modules to the value of 60 CATS from: a list provided annually by the Department of Politics and International Relations; other modules from other departments in the College, approved by the Department of Politics and International Relations, but not amounting to more than 30 CATS from outside the Department of Politics and International Relations over the duration of the programme.	Various	60	7	Optional	1-2
Dissertation	P071020B	60	7	Compulsory	3

Academic support

Support for learning and wellbeing is provided in a number of ways by departments and College support services who work collaboratively to ensure students get the right help to reach their best potential both academically and personally.

All students are allocated a Personal Tutor (one in each department for joint programmes) who has overall responsibility for their individual progress and welfare. Personal Tutors meet with their student at least twice a year either face-to-face, as part of a group and/or electronically. The first meeting normally takes place within the first few weeks of the autumn term. Personal Tutors are also available to students throughout the year of study. These meetings aim to discuss progress on modules, discussion of the academic discipline and reports from previous years if available (for continuing students). This provides an opportunity for progress, attendance and assessment marks to be reviewed and an informed discussion to take place about how to strengthen individual learning and success.

All students are also allocated a Senior Tutor to enable them to speak to an experienced academic member of staff about any issues which are negatively impacting their academic study and which are beyond the normal scope of issues handled by Programme Convenors and Personal Tutors.

Students are provided with information about learning resources, the [Library](#) and information available on [Learn.gold \(VLE\)](#) so that they have access to department/programme handbooks, programme information and support related information and guidance.

Taught sessions and lectures provide overviews of themes, which students are encouraged to complement with intensive reading for presentation and discussion with peers at seminars. Assessments build on lectures and seminars so students are expected to attend all taught sessions to build knowledge and their own understanding of their chosen discipline.

All assessed work is accompanied by some form of feedback to ensure that students' work is on the right track. It may come in a variety of forms ranging from written comments on a marked essay to oral and written feedback on developing projects and practice as they attend workshops.

Students may be referred to specialist student services by department staff or they may access support services independently. Information about support services is provided on the [Goldsmiths website](#) and for new students through new starter information and induction/Welcome Week. Any support recommendations that are made are agreed with the student and communicated to the department so that adjustments to learning and teaching are able to be implemented at a department level and students can be reassured that arrangements are in place. Opportunities are provided for students to review their support arrangements should their circumstances change. The [Disability](#) and [Wellbeing](#) Services maintain caseloads of students and provide on-going support.

The [Careers Service](#) provides central support for skills enhancement, running [The Gold Award](#) scheme and other co-curricular activities that are accredited via the Higher Education Achievement Report ([HEAR](#)).

The [Centre for Academic Language and Literacies](#) works with academic departments offering bespoke academic literacy sessions. It also provides a programme of academic skills workshops and one-to-one provision for students throughout the year.

Placement opportunities

Students on the MA IS programme have the opportunity to take a work placement programme, which constitutes one of the optional modules to the value of 30 CATS. This module gives students the chance to work with a host organisation for two days a week over the Spring term. They then reflect on their experience and the kind of work with which they have been involved in an assessed essay. In the past, students have worked in a wide variety of placements, largely derived from a pool that has been developed by the Politics and International Relations department over recent years. The department works hard to ensure a good link between students' interests and their placement. In recent years, students have worked at a wide range of organisations, from small development NGOs to international consultancies. This enables students to gain invaluable experience and allows them to develop their CVs at a critical time. It has proved a popular module on the course.

Employability and potential career opportunities

The MA International Relations programme is likely to prove especially attractive to those with interests in the field of world politics who are considering further study at the PhD level or careers in areas such as diplomatic service or international organisations where an understanding of international politics is essential. The programme also offers valuable theoretical background and analytical skills for those working in international corporations, NGOs, defence industries and many areas of government.

Programme-specific requirements

Tuition fee costs

Information on tuition fee costs is available at: <https://www.gold.ac.uk/students/fee-support/>

Specific programme costs

Not applicable.