

BA Politics and Economics

UCAS code: LL12

Awarding Institution:	The University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	The University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject benchmarking group:	Politics; Economics
Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences	Programme length: 3 years
For students entering Part 1 in 2003	Date of specification: September 2004
Programme Directors:	<i>Politics and IR:</i> Dr P J Giddings <i>Economics:</i> Dr C Grant
Board of Studies:	BA Politics and International Relations BA/BSc Economics
Accreditation:	Not applicable

Summary of programme aims and learning outcomes

The curriculum gives students an appreciation of the normative, methodological and institutional issues involved in the study of politics in relation to two of the three main sub fields of the discipline: comparative government and politics and either political philosophy or international relations. Students encounter a variety of concepts, approaches and methods for the study of domestic and international politics and are provided with a critical understanding of how societies are and should be governed. They progress from introductory and survey modules to more specialist options involving greater independent study. They also acquire a number of generic intellectual and transferable skills that prepare them for the world of work.

The programme focuses on coverage of economic principles and their relevant application: the areas of economic principles are compulsory in the second part of the degree, and relevant applications are compulsory in the third part. Students taking the degree will be expected to acquire a good knowledge and appreciation of the basic elements of economic theory and of relevant uses and applications.

Transferable skills

The University's Strategy for Teaching and Learning has identified a number of generic transferable skills which all students are expected to have developed by the end of their degree programme. In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to enhance their skills relating to career management, communications (both written and oral), information handling, numeracy, problem-solving, team working and use of information technology. In addition, the programme encourages business awareness, and an understanding of important features of decision making, such as uncertainty, constraints and opportunity cost.

Programme content

The following profile lists the compulsory modules, together with their credit size, for each Part. Students are required to take a total of 120 credits in each Part. Where the compulsory modules in a Part total less than 120 credits, students are required to select options containing sufficient credits to make up the shortfall. Any such options selected must be drawn from the options listed below for Parts 2 and 3; in Part 1 they can be drawn from anywhere in the University subject to any restriction which may be applied to particular module choices. Not all optional modules will necessarily be available in any year. Admission to optional modules will be at the discretion of the Programme Director.

In Economics Part 1 deals with the microeconomic and macroeconomic foundations of the

subject. These are developed in more depth in Part 2. In Part 3, choice over a range of options is available to explore specific sub-disciplines and/or applications.

Part 1 (three terms)	Credits	Level
Compulsory modules in Politics		
Politics II: <i>Comparative Government</i>	20	C
Politics III: <i>Political Theory</i>	20	C
Politics I: <i>International Relations & Strategic Studies</i>	20	C
Compulsory modules in Economics		
<i>Introductory Economics I</i>	20	C
<i>Introductory Economics II</i>	20	C
 Part 2 (three terms)		
In Politics (60 credits):		
<i>Compulsory</i>		
PO2 SOP <i>Study of Politics</i>	20	I
<i>Either</i>		
PO2 CGP <i>Comparative Government and Politics</i>	20	I
<i>Or</i>		
PO2 PHC <i>Political Classics</i>	20	I
 <i>Options (one of)</i>		
<u>Government</u>		
PO2 AMG <i>American Government and Politics</i>	20	I
PO2 BGP <i>British Government and Politics</i>	20	I
PO2 EPI <i>European Political Integration</i>	20	I
PO2 RGP <i>Russian Government and Politics</i>	20	I
<u>Theory</u>		
PO2 THI <i>Political Thinking</i>	20	I
<u>International Relations</u>		
PO2 COS <i>Contemporary Strategy</i>	20	I
PO2 SNA <i>Strategy in the Nuclear Age</i>	20	I
 In Economics (60 credits):		
EC201A <i>Microeconomics I.1</i>	20	I
EC201B <i>Microeconomics I.2</i>	10	I
EC202A <i>Macroeconomics I.1</i>	20	I
EC202B <i>Macroeconomics I.2</i>	10	I
 <i>The following module is compulsory. Its credits are distributed through the 120 credits of Part 2.</i>		
<i>Career Management Skills</i>	5	I

Progression requirements

To proceed to Part 2 students must

- a) obtain at least 40% in each of the compulsory modules taken;
- b) achieve an overall average of 40% in 120 credits taken in the examination;
- c) achieve not less than 30% in any non-Politics module except that a mark of less than 30% in a total of 20 credits may be condoned, provided that the candidate has pursued the course for the module(s) with reasonable diligence and has not been absent from the examination without reasonable cause.

To proceed to Part 3 students must

- a) achieve an overall weighted average of at least 40% across all Part 2 modules totalling 120 credits;
- b) obtain at least 35% in each of the Politics modules taken;
- c) achieve an overall weighted average of at least 40% in Economics modules totalling 60 credits;
- d) achieve not less than 35% in any Economics module at Part 2 (i.e. no marks of less than 35% will be condoned). A mark (or marks) of 35 – 39% will be permitted in Economics modules totalling a maximum of 20 credits.

Summary of teaching and assessment

Teaching is organised in modules. The delivery of material varies among modules, especially in the proportions of time allocated to lectures, and to classes and seminars. All modules involve coursework, which takes a variety of forms. Final assessment normally involves a written examination, and may also incorporate coursework marks; the maximum proportion of a final module mark allocated to coursework is 25%, other than in special cases.

Admission requirements

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained:

Grade C or better in English in GCSE; and achieved:

UCAS Tariff: 280 points from 3 A Levels or 300 points from 3 A Levels and 1 AS Level

International Baccalaureate: 31 points

Irish Leaving Certificate: BBBB

Two AS grades are accepted in place of one A Level.

Mature applicants Applications from mature candidates are welcomed. A mature applicant is more likely to receive an offer of a place if he or she has undertaken recent study, for example 2 or more A levels or an Access course, but each case is assessed on its individual merits.

International applicants Applications from international candidates are welcomed. If you are not offering A levels we advise you to contact either the EU or international admissions tutor before applying in order to discuss the acceptability of your qualifications.

Admissions Tutor: Dr J S Golub

Support for students and their learning

University supports 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 Personal Tutors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union.

The Department of Economics provides handbooks that outline programme and module content. In addition to lecture and class time, each module lecturer has appointed office hours during which they may be consulted without prior appointment.

Career prospects

Certain combined-subject courses, eg Politics/Economics, might be useful for people interested in market research or the finance divisions of major firms or social science research units such as the Institute for Public-Policy Research, Policy Studies Institute or Chatham House. A combined degree with a national curriculum subject is useful for students wishing to teach in schools and colleges or extra-mural departments and the WEA.

In recent years graduates from this programme have entered a variety of careers in both the private and the public sectors. Examples include jobs in banking and finance, accountancy, the civil service, and universities. Students are given specific vocational training and orientation through a second year Career Management Skills module run in conjunction with the Careers Advisory Service.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

There are no formal arrangements, but opportunities are available at institutes of higher education with which the University of Reading has a Socrates agreement.

Educational aims of the programme

By the end of the economics part of the programme students are expected to have acquired a knowledge of basic economic analysis and its relevant application. They are expected to be competent to apply economic analysis to practical problems and, with further training at postgraduate level (if suitably qualified) to be able to work as professional economists in government, academics, or private sector, especially in contexts relevant to the other part of their degree. Students are expected to have acquired an ability to think analytically, to develop frameworks for considering and resolving complex problems, and to discriminate between good and bad arguments. Students are expected to have developed the ability to express themselves clearly and concisely in both written and spoken contexts.

The Politics component aims to provide a thorough degree level education in government and political theory. It aims to produce graduates who have experience of the sub-fields of the discipline and have acquired appropriate study skills.

Programme outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills, qualities and abilities in the following areas:

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:

1. The fundamental concepts at the core of economic knowledge comprising microeconomics and macroeconomics.
2. Empirical studies in economics, using statistical and other methods.
3. How to integrate and apply economic concepts to real world problems and issues.

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Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Formal lectures, classes and practical sessions, supported by directed and assessed self-study. Feedback and guidance are an important part of the process for all three years of study. Students undertake project work and write essays, in which they learn to apply economic concepts to relevant real world issues.

Assessment

Courses are assessed through a combination of coursework and unseen examinations. Feedback is provided on assessed work.

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills – able to:

1. Structure, analyse and solve problems.
2. Think laterally and explore alternative solutions.
3. Comprehend the evolving state of knowledge in the degree subject areas.
4. Suggest, organise, collect relevant data and compile a report on an economic issue.

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Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Substantive problems are illustrated in lectures and smaller groups. Essays, project work and problem sets provide related opportunities for problem solving. Lectures supported by essays and discussions provide the basis of ensuring the accumulating knowledge base becomes comprehensible.

Assessment

Skills are assessed through examination questions, essays, project work and problem sets.

C. Practical skills – able to:

1. Collect and critically evaluate the major literature on a topic.
2. Obtain data, to use them, and to assess the empirical work of others that use economic data.
3. Use computerised tools for the purposes of research and learning.
4. Draw on the knowledge base in economics and economic research methods to suggest ways to solve problems.

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Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Practical issues are illustrated in lectures and classes, reinforced by problem sets, essays and project work. The tasks required of students involve library and computerised searches to collect references and data, and to use them to complete practical tasks within set deadlines.

Assessment

Assessment is through essays and project work.

D. Transferable skills – able to:

1. Use IT, including word processing, data exchange, graphics, spreadsheets and other such software, and the conduct of web site searches.
2. Communicate orally and in writing.
3. Work as part of a team.
4. Use library and web-based resources.
5. Organise project work from beginning to completion.
6. Manage time to achieve goals.

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Teaching/learning methods and strategies

The learning of IT is encouraged through web site searches, use of library resources, and the presentation of word processed documents including graphics displays. Oral presentations are required at several points in the programme. Preparation for these presentations require working as part of a team at several points in the second and third years. Good time management is essential to organising a timetable to complete essays and project work.

Assessment

Assessment is through the production of essays and project work, and through the critical evaluation of presentation performances.

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 expect 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 module and programme handbooks.