

MA in International Studies

Awarding Institution:
Teaching Institution:
Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences
For students entering in October 2003
Programme Director:
Board of Studies:
Accreditation:

The University of Reading
The University of Reading
Programme length: 12 months
Date of specification: 14 August 2003
Dr Andrea Ellner
GIPIS

Summary of programme aims

As a multidisciplinary degree, the programme aims to provide students with a solid understanding of the multidisciplinary nature of most topical problems in international affairs as well as of the complementary and conflicting dimensions of the related but distinct disciplines of International Studies, i.e. International Relations, International Political Economy and International Law. It aims to equip students for critical and informed analysis and research on topical empirical and conceptual problems in International Studies and to prepare them for careers in either further academic research or as practitioners in positions that require awareness of and familiarity with the perspectives, contemporary debates and tools of the three disciplines. The range of optional modules allows students to either specialise in one of the three disciplines or cover a range of selected topics in each discipline.

Transferable skills

Students learn to apply an informed and critical approach to using primary and secondary sources, incl. web-based information, through preparation of all coursework. The programme will enhance students' confidence in and effectiveness of oral and written communication through seminar discussions, presentations and essays. The demands of regular seminar preparation and timely submission of coursework will improve students' time management skills. With the combination of independent research and group preparation of seminars, particularly in the core module, students will be able to develop their abilities of independent learning, teamwork and leadership. Students are guided towards increasingly more independent research, e.g. through encouragement to consider the provided selection of reading materials only as a point of departure. The dissertation component further strengthens students' research skills, 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. This programme provides training for doctoral programmes as part of the ESRC 1 + 3 scheme.

Programme content

The MA in International Studies consists of 180 credits; a taught element (120 credits) and a dissertation (60 credits). The central element is the compulsory core module, 'International Studies' (30 credits), which runs normally for two terms (Autumn and Spring). In addition, students choose optional modules totalling 90 credits from the list below [or one 30 credit option plus the full complement of research training (60 credits)], which run concurrently with the core module. Students may take up to 40 credits in another MA programme subject to the approval of the Director of GIPIS. Students must also write a dissertation (60 credits) which is planned in consultation with a supervisor and submitted for assessment in September.

Mod Code *Module Title*

Credits *Level*

Compulsory Modules

PIM06	International Studies	30	M
PIM12	Dissertation	60	M
	Research Methods (for MA with research training):		
PIM01	Philosophical Issues in the Social Sciences	10	M
PIM02	Data Collection and Analysis	20	M
EDMES1	Essentials of Research Methods for the Social Sciences	20	M
EDMES2	Transferable Skills for Social Sciences	10	M

Option Modules

ECM07	Comparative Management	20	M
PIM03	Conflict & Conflict Resolution	30	M
PIM21	Contemporary Diplomacy	30	M
ECM36	Developing Countries in the World Economy	20	M
PIM19	Domestic Politics and Foreign Policies of the Middle East	30	M
LWM02A	International Human Rights Law	30	M
LWM03A	International Law & World Order	30	M
PIM08	International Politics of Asia–Pacific	30	M
PIM10	International Relations of the Mediterranean	30	M
ECM02	International Management and Business Cultures	20	M
PIM18	Strategic Studies	30	M
MMM004	Strategy, Policy and Impact of Multinational Enterprise	20	M
PIM17	Terrorism & Security	30	M
MMM014	The Emergence and Growth of Multinational Enterprise	20	M
PIM24	Issues of EU Eastern Enlargement	30	M

Part-time/Modular arrangements

The programme can be followed part-time over a period of 24 months. It can also be taken on a modular basis for a period up to but not exceeding 72 months.

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.

The Core Module and most Option Modules are assessed on the basis of 50 per cent course work and 50 per cent examination (though some Option Modules may also be assessed on the basis of coursework only, or of 75 per cent examination and 25 per cent coursework). The pass mark for all modules is 50 per cent.

The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

<u>Mark</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
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 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 50 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 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 Certificate

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 7.0.

Admissions Tutor: Dr R. J. McKeever

Support for students and their learning

University support 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 Programme Directors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union.

GIPIS has its own handbook as well as a full induction programme at the beginning of the university year. Students whose first language is, or medium of instruction in a first degree was, not English receive in-session English language tuition (writing skills, presentation and reading) from the Language Resource Centre tailored which is specifically tailored to GIPIS students. The University Study Support team conducts one workshop each on presentation techniques and essay writing specifically for GIPIS students during the first half of the Autumn Term.

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

GIPIS aims to work closely with the Careers Advisory Service to assist students in the transition to a professional career.

Students with a postgraduate degree in International Studies 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. GIPIS assists students informally in applying for work placements or internships.

Educational aims of the programme

Upon completion of the MA programme, students will have refined their knowledge of the multidisciplinary nature of international affairs and deepened their understanding of the benefits and problems of a multidisciplinary approach in a systematic way. They will be aware of the analytical value and limitations of a single-discipline perspective as well as the benefits of and barriers to approaching empirical and conceptual problems from a multi-disciplinary perspective. They will have a general familiarisation with the full range of quantitative and qualitative research skills relevant to International Studies and will have practical knowledge of specific methods and research techniques. They will have engaged in a sustained piece of independent and critical research within the context of close and supportive supervision. They will also have acquired non-subject specific research skills and generic skills and knowledge appropriate to a research and other careers.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:

- (a) the multidisciplinary nature of topical problems in international affairs;
- (b) the utility and limitations of single-discipline perspectives;
- (c) the principal concepts and theories associated with the three academic sub-disciplines of International Relations, International Political Economy and International Law;
- (d) the areas of constructive engagement as well as potential or existing conflict zones between the disciplines;
- (e) the major issues and debates in contemporary international affairs and the relevance of mainstream as well as critical theories in each discipline to these questions;
- (f) specific aspects of International Studies;
- (g) research methods

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Students will be taught by means of seminars with student presentations and structured discussion, individual tutorials, and a limited number of lectures. In the **Core module** students will, after a brief introduction to the three disciplines, explore a range of topical problems from each of the three perspectives. Moving from the specific to the general, the examination of these empirical problems aims to progressively enhance students' ability to conceptualise within and across the disciplines. The aim here is to prepare students for the second part of the module, which focuses on salient concepts, such as actors and structures, and explores key theories of International Relations, International Political Economy and International Law. Students subsequently apply these to specific cases.

In the Option modules, students will gain specialised knowledge of different aspects of International Studies, including aspects of international and global security, business, development, diplomacy or human rights. In the Research Methods module, students will become familiar with the full range of quantitative and 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:

- (a) analyse and interpret patterns and processes of international affairs in a theoretically aware manner;
- (b) understand the research focus as well as the benefits and limitations of individual discipline perspectives;
- (c) demonstrate awareness of the need for and utility of a multidisciplinary approach to the study of contemporary international affairs;
- (d) use central conceptual approaches of the three disciplines (IR, IPE, IL) effectively in analyses of international affairs;
- (e) identify and employ relevant scholarly literature in support of one's own research;
- (f) demonstrate a sound understanding of research methods and techniques appropriate to International Studies;
- (g) structure complex arguments;
- (h) criticise and defend intellectual positions in a well reasoned and empirically substantiated fashion;
- (i) 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 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

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

C. Practical skills – able to:

- a) memorise and recall key concepts, theories and historical data in support of one's work;
- b) cull relevant material from select bibliographies for the preparation of oral presentations and written assignments;
- c) use library and electronic resources, including databases and websites, for the purpose of conducting research;
- d) refine techniques for effective communication in seminar discussions, oral presentations and written work;
- e) adapt the presentation of concise analyses and effective arguments to different formats, such as written pieces of various lengths and formal as well as informal presentations
- f) budget one's time effectively for the completion of weekly assignments, term essays, exam preparation and the writing of a dissertation.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

The Graduate Institute'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:

- a) engage in independent study;
- b) evaluate evidence using reasoned arguments;
- c) structure complex arguments;
- d) articulate one's own thoughts in a coherent fashion;
- e) give oral presentations;
- f) write effectively;
- g) manage one's time efficiently;
- h) use IT (e.g., internet sites and electronic databases) and other scholarly resources;
- i) gain confidence in applying both subject specific and transferable skills.

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 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.