

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

FUELLING DEBATE

“ There’s very little that’s ‘black and white’ in Politics and International Relations, and we operate in the grey areas where the real learning happens. We learn through evaluating evidence and drawing inferences from an ever-changing mix of theory, models, data and lived experience. As a social science, we exist in a world where we’re continually testing ideas, challenging concepts and inching towards greater insight into the political world. That demands interesting people with curious minds – exactly what we’re looking for in our students.

You will find us a safe space for learning, but an argumentative place where you’ll be challenged, supported and be given the opportunity to thrive.

I firmly believe studying Politics and International Relations must be rigorous and engaging – but it also must be fun. What inspires me is when our graduates describe their time with us as stretching; built around serious study; but with the opportunity to work with passionate people who make the whole experience enjoyable. ”



DR ADAM HUMPHREYS

Head of the Department of Politics and International Relations

www.reading.ac.uk/politics



KEEPING THE PEACE



Dr Sarah
von Billerbeck



The United Nations (UN) is undoubtedly a force for good – but could they be more effective? Dr Sarah von Billerbeck’s research examines how the UN can overcome challenges while helping war-torn countries rebuild.

Sarah’s interest in post-conflict reconstruction was ignited during her time as a political officer in the UN’s peacekeeping mission in Congo. Inspired to take a step back to reflect on the bigger challenges, she focused her academic career on peacekeeping. One strand of her research focuses on local ownership – the role of the local

population – and the difficulties the UN faces in translating local ownership into reality. A sustainable peace needs local people to play a role in its creation, rather than simply UN-imposed solutions.

Sarah’s experience of working for the UN, and her research, directly feed into her postgraduate modules at the University of Reading: ‘Building Peace After Civil War’ and ‘Diplomacy’. Sarah uses real examples from the field, and challenges her students to compare these to theory and scholarly literature, bringing research and real-world experiences together.

Sarah is proud that her research is policy relevant and that she is merging the academic and policy worlds. She champions open dialogue between academics and policymakers; Sarah has cultivated an impressive network and frequently speaks at conferences with participants from the UN and governments. This enables Sarah to communicate her research to policymakers, while also giving her an overview of current concerns to keep her work relevant. Sarah believes that together we can help the UN be more effective in the crucial work they do.



**BEWARE
THE
WOLF
WITHIN**



Dr Daphne Halikiopoulou

Dr Daphne Halikiopoulou is fascinated by why ordinary people engage in extreme acts. This sparked her research into the rise of populism and the far-right across Europe, which has since become a global phenomenon.

Daphne is passionate about what leads people to take extreme action, such as voting for a far-right party. Typically, we expect the far-right to hold Nazi ideologies like the Golden Dawn in Greece; however, Daphne focuses on the parties who hide their extremism behind a liberal narrative, such as the French Front National, or the Dutch Party for Freedom. By doing so, they blur the line and appear legitimate, thus persuading people who don't consider themselves far-right to vote for them. Daphne is on a mission to expose these parties and raise awareness of their true nature.

One way in which Daphne is drawing attention to this phenomenon is through her teaching at the University of Reading. Daphne's research informs the third-year undergraduate module 'The Far Right', both in terms of the causes of far-right populism and how these extreme parties appear legitimate and attractive to voters. Students frequently inform Daphne's research, sharing their own experiences of extremism from around the world – everyone can relate to her research in one way or another.

Daphne is also achieving her goal of raising awareness on a global public and political scale. There has been a rapid increase in the reaction to her work and she is regularly invited to talk about her research, averaging 15 talks per year around the world. She has also written reports and policy briefs for organisations on the development of policies to encourage more constructive means of political participation. Daphne is successfully informing the debate that these groups engage in, while seeking solutions to put a stop to their rise under false pretences.



“ I am so proud of the proliferation of my work. I get invited to do so many interviews and talks around the world, meaning my research has a global reach and is achieving my goal of raising awareness. ”

RISK

“My academic work doesn’t always give me a neat answer, but it changes the way I think about politics – it helps me see more clearly and critically what is at stake in political debates.”



Dr Alice Baderin

We live in an uncertain world, a world full of risk – from economic insecurity to threats associated with climate change and the development of new technologies. At the University of Reading Dr Alice Baderin is bringing problems of risk and insecurity to the forefront of thinking about social justice.

Risk is everywhere and is high up on the political agenda, but it raises hard political and ethical problems. Informed by her research, Alice has designed a third-year undergraduate module called ‘Risk’ to address these questions. For example, what do we mean when we say, ‘it’s better to be safe than sorry’? Should we take a precautionary approach to the regulation of new technologies, such as artificial intelligence or gene editing?

Should we leave these questions to the experts, or should the general public play a role in decisions about how to regulate risks? Underlying these questions are issues of justice, fairness and democracy that are core to the discipline of political theory.

This module shows students recent developments in the ethics and politics of risk and helps them to think through the implications for how we ought to lead our political lives. Alice’s students will gain a new perspective on everyday political events, exploring the values that underlie some of the important political choices that face us.

Coming from an applied social research background, Alice’s work in political theory is empirically informed. By bringing together political theory with evidence from opinion surveys, Alice hopes to generate new perspectives on issues in the field. What better place to start than with the next generation?



A large, powerful nuclear explosion is shown in a desert landscape. A massive, bright orange and yellow fireball rises from the ground, with a thick plume of smoke and debris trailing behind it. The explosion is centered in the frame, with the text 'AFTER SHOCK' overlaid in the middle. The background shows a vast, flat desert under a cloudy sky.

AFTER SHOCK



Dr Joseph O'Mahoney

In 1974 India exploded a nuclear weapon, blowing up all preconceptions about the spread of nuclear technology. Dr Joseph O'Mahoney's research examines how this weapons test had far-reaching consequences for nuclear politics as we know it today.

Joseph is interested in what happens when international norms are broken – norms are an understanding that there is a rule of behaviour – and India's nuclear test provides a prime example. This test had global public and governmental implications: the public realised the dangers of having nuclear fuel available in nuclear power stations, while at governmental level, it spurred restrictions on the export of nuclear materials and led to an increase in countries signing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. India's explosion therefore strengthened the international norm regarding nuclear conduct, because it caused restrictions on the spread of nuclear technology.

Joseph explores this research and the present-day outcomes of historical events in his second-year undergraduate module 'Politics and Nuclear Weapons' at the University of Reading. He aims to inform his students about the reality of nuclear weapons – many people believe the nuclear threat has vanished since the end of the Cold War, but Joseph believes that is incorrect. This module looks at historical events to see how they influence the modern-day, for example, North Korea's nuclear tests, and the border tensions between India and Pakistan, both of whom possess nuclear weapons. This module draws on real world events and is informed by the very latest research and developments.

Joseph is passionate about both his research and teaching and enjoys combining them. He recently had an Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme (UROP) student work with him on his project, cataloguing and analysing Canadian archival diplomatic documents relating to the India test. UROP enables students to gain an in-depth knowledge of a subject and research experience. Joseph's student was so inspired by his UROP placement that he has chosen to continue his journey as a researcher on a master's degree.

“ I hope that if we better understand the dynamic that caused India's nuclear explosion to strengthen that norm, rather than weaken it, then we can better appreciate the likely impact of any future violations. ”



LEARN FROM POLITICIANS

At Reading, you will learn from active participants in the political world.

Our academics

Our academics regularly feature both in academic literature and the media, offering their expertise on current issues. It's natural that our teaching is research-led and relevant, with our academics being so active in modern-day politics.

Our staff offer particular expertise in UK, EU and American politics and in the UN, and ~~we have been ranked 6th in the UK for research outputs and~~ 97% of our research outputs are rated 4* (world-leading) or 3* (internationally excellent), meaning that the University of Reading is 6th in the UK for Politics research outputs.¹

Our visiting speakers

To complement our academics' expertise, we have hosted a variety of guest speakers including:

- John Bercow, former Speaker of the House of Commons
- Alastair Campbell, former political aide
- Sir Vince Cable, former Liberal Democrat Leader
- Matthew Barzun, former United States Ambassador to the UK

Interacting with our regular visitors provides an insight into the different opportunities available to you after graduation and gives you the chance to build your network.

“The University hosted BBC Radio 4's 'Any Questions?', at which I helped and met panellist David Lammy MP. It's amazing experiencing first-hand politics and talking to those who really make a difference.”

Cait Pilkington
BA History and Politics

¹ Times Higher Education analysis of the REF 2021, unit of assessment Politics and International Studies, when scoring by 'GPA Output'

IMMERSE YOURSELF

We offer pioneering modules so you can approach the subject from different angles, and focus on small-group teaching to achieve direct engagement between our students and staff.

Sample modules: undergraduate

- **Model United Nations** – test your academic skills in the political arena through a simulation of the UN in action.
- **The Media and Politics** – prepare, host and run a weekly politics radio show, which has previously featured special guests including Eddie Izzard and Alastair Campbell.
- **The Middle East** – participate in a crisis simulation, involving negotiation and conflict resolution.

Sample modules: master's

- **Parliamentary Studies** – engage with real-world politics at Westminster and Cardiff, and with political visitors from the UK Parliament.
- **Diplomacy** – undertake practical assessments, such as policy brief writing and lobbying exercises, as well as learning from guest speakers, including diplomats.
- **Capstone** – MA Public Policy students can gain hands-on experience with employers, solving a real-life policy problem.

“The politics modules gave me the opportunity to develop my skills, the freedom to expand my interests, and offered practical experience, empowering me to aim high with my career.”

Fiona Paterson
BA Politics and International Relations, currently on the Civil Service Fast Stream



MAKE AN IMPACT

Our degrees aim to equip you for a rewarding career in government, the public sector, NGOs, not-for-profit organisations and a variety of other fields.

Placement opportunities¹

Boost your undergraduate degree by taking an integrated year in industry, a summer placement, or a two week work experience, supported by our dedicated placement team.

As an MA Public Policy student you can undertake a Capstone project. You will work with an organisation on a real policy problem, or choose an extended placement project.

Past placement destinations have included:

- Cabinet Office
- Department of Health and Social Care
- Office for National Statistics
- Disney
- Microsoft

Career prospects

90% of our graduates are in work and/or study 15 months after the end of their course.²

Graduate career destinations have included:

- Office for National Statistics
- Civil Service Fast Stream
- Department for International Trade
- Association of Police and Crime Commissioners
- Cabinet Office

“Reading is one of the few places in the country which focuses on my area of study. I now work at the Ministry of Defence, and I have my MA in Strategic Studies to thank for that.”

Georgina Austin
MA in Strategic Studies, now working at the Ministry of Defence

¹ Subject to availability, see inside back cover.

² Graduate Outcomes Survey 2018/19, based on first degree/other undergraduate, postgraduate (taught), and postgraduate (research) responders.



ALUMNI PROFILE

Holly Gibbs studied BA Politics and International Relations at the University of Reading, taking advantage of opportunities to set herself up for the competitive world of journalism.

Holly chose to study at Reading because of its focus on the passion and determination of its students. This ethos led to her not only gaining a degree, but also a successful career.

Working on 'The Media and Politics' second-year undergraduate module – which involves producing a weekly politics radio show – gave Holly the confidence to realise that her dream of working in broadcasting was achievable. Holly credits her experiences on this module, and the incredible support from her lecturers, for helping her achieve her job as part of Sky News' weekly debate show, The Pledge.

Holly's job is to research and produce content for The Pledge, ensuring the panellists are knowledgeable of the topics for discussion, as well as producing online creative material. Politics features heavily on the show, so Holly's background really helps and she's confident that her degree is well respected in the industry. Holly is dreaming big with her career and her ultimate goal is to cover a US presidential election.

“I am so grateful I chose to study at Reading – I would not be where I am today if I had gone anywhere else.”



GO INTERNATIONAL

Studying abroad on your undergraduate degree can open up a whole new area and perspective of the world to you.

The international nature of our courses means that spending time abroad perfectly complements your studies, while also enhancing your employability.

You can either spend time studying abroad in your second year, as part of our Model United Nations module, or you can apply to Study Abroad for one semester, one year, or on a summer school.

We have an ever-increasing number of opportunities for studying abroad throughout the world, including in the USA, Canada, Europe, Asia and Australia.¹

“Studying Abroad gives you the unique opportunity to make your subject country specific, such as studying Canadian politics in the capital of Ottawa.”

Grace Diddams
BA English Literature and Politics

A HOME FROM HOME

Our community is made up of people from around the globe and our use of small seminar groups encourages dynamic discussion among you all.

Our community

As a department, we're big enough to make a difference but small enough to know our students as individuals. You will have the opportunity to meet with your academic tutor regularly, to ensure you're getting the best out of your time at Reading. We're informal and inclusive and everyone is part of our close-knit community.

International students

We want to make your transition to university, and to the UK, as easy as possible. The University's International Student Advisory Team offer support on issues such as visas and immigration, and understanding UK culture. You can also benefit from the STaR Mentor Scheme, matching you with a current student mentor at the University before you start here.


If you don't have British A levels or the equivalent, our International Foundation Programme (IFP) is an access course which will provide you with the skills you need to start undergraduate studies in most degrees at Reading. The IFP gives you the option to choose modules in Politics.

“The Politics Society welcomes all students, and we run regular meetings, socials and speaker events in a friendly environment.”

George Dibley
BA Politics and Economics,
President of the Politics Society, 2019–2020

¹ Subject to availability,
see inside back cover.



A close-up of a hand making a peace sign (V-sign) against a blurred background of a large crowd at a protest or rally. The hand is wearing a black sleeve and a beaded bracelet. Several flags, including the Argentinian flag, are visible in the background.

“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.”

Barack Obama

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POSTGRADUATE COURSES

MA DIPLOMACY

This programme provides you with an advanced knowledge of international diplomacy and prepares you for a career in diplomacy or public and private service. You will gain a strong understanding of major concepts and contemporary debates, while our optional modules enable you to explore your interests in politics and international relations, strategic studies, international political economy, international law, and war and peace.

MA INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

This programme provides you with an advanced knowledge, theoretical understanding, and critical analysis of international relations. It will engage you with current debates and you can choose to specialise in various aspects of international politics, strategic studies, international political economy, international law, international organisations, and area studies.

MA INTERNATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES

This programme aims to equip you with a thorough understanding of key theories, concepts and scholarly debates related to international and global security. Opportunities for specialisation are offered in strategic studies, diplomacy and conflict resolution, and the international relations and politics of particular regions.

MA STRATEGIC STUDIES

This programme offers a comprehensive education in both the theory and practice of strategy, which is essential for those who seek to understand modern warfare and how military force can be used to pursue policy objectives. This programme is also suitable for those currently working in, or seeking a career in, the defence profession.

MRES POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

This programme enables you to focus on research as preparation for a PhD or to pursue a research-orientated career in think tanks, public service or other areas. The course is flexible, enabling you to focus on your interests.

MA PUBLIC POLICY

Offered jointly by the Department of Economics and the Department of Politics and International Relations, our interdisciplinary degree uses insights from both areas to develop policymaking skills. You can focus on a specialist area including welfare policy, sustainable environments, global governance and international development. You can also undertake a Capstone project or an extended placement project.

Disclaimer

This brochure was issued in 2022 and is aimed at prospective undergraduate students wishing to apply for a place at the University of Reading (the University) and start a course in autumn 2023. The University makes every effort to ensure that the information provided in the brochure is accurate and up-to-date at the time of going to press (May 2022). However, it may be necessary for the University to make some changes to the information presented in the brochure following publication – for example, where it is necessary to reflect changes in practice or theory in an academic subject as a result of emerging research; or if an accrediting body requires certain course content to be added or removed. To make an informed and up-to-date decision, we recommend that you check reading.ac.uk/study

The University undertakes to take all reasonable steps to provide the services (including the courses) described in this brochure. It does not, however, guarantee the provision of such services. Should industrial action or circumstances beyond the control of the University interfere with its ability to provide the services, the University undertakes to use all reasonable steps to minimise any disruption to the services.

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Modules disclaimer

Sample modules are provided as a taster of some of the modules that may be available on each course. The sample modules listed may be compulsory (core) or optional modules. Information is correct at the time of going to press (May 2022) but the University cannot guarantee that a module appearing in this list will definitely run. Teaching staff on specific courses or modules mentioned in this prospectus may be subject to change.

For optional modules, the University cannot guarantee that all optional modules will be available to all students who may wish to take them, although the University will try to ensure that students are able to take optional modules in which they have expressed interest at the appropriate time during their course. Optional modules vary from year to year and entry to them will be at the discretion of the Programme Director.

Joint courses disclaimer

Our joint courses may have extra requirements, including English language requirements. Please check the individual course pages on our website for further details. Year abroad and placement fees Some courses include an optional or compulsory year abroad or placement year. During this year you will only pay a partial fee which is currently set at 15% of the normal tuition fee. Check the website for the latest information: reading.ac.uk/fees-and-funding.

Placements disclaimer

Programmes with a Professional Placement Year (also known as 'Year in Industry' or 'Placement Year') are fully dependent on students securing their own placement opportunity, normally through a competitive recruitment process. The University provides dedicated career and application support for placement year students. Students who do not secure a placement or who are unable to complete the placement year due to extenuating circumstances, have the option to transfer to a three year variant of their programme with agreement from their School/Department.

Study abroad disclaimer

The partnerships listed are correct at the time of publication (June 2022). For up to date information on the University's partnerships contact studyabroad@reading.ac.uk.

Where Study Abroad is not a compulsory part of the degree programme, the University of Reading cannot guarantee that every applicant who applies for the scheme will be successful. Whilst efforts are made to secure sufficient places at partner institutions, the number of places available and the University's partners can vary year-on-year. In all cases, the University cannot guarantee that it will be possible for applicants to choose to study abroad at a particular institution. Further, certain courses and/or institutions may require you to satisfy specific eligibility criteria. It can be a competitive process. For further information on the University's Study Abroad Scheme please contact studyabroad@reading.ac.uk.



Department of Politics and International Relations

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