

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	MSc International Relations (Level 7)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	PG Dip International Relations PG Cert International Relations PG Cert Politics
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home school/other teaching departments	School of Social Sciences
Location of delivery	Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Full-time (1 year) Part-time (2 years) September, January
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	N/A
QAA subject benchmark group(s) Higher Education Credit Framework for England	N/A
Birkbeck Course Code	TMSINREL_C TMSINREJ_C (January start)
HECoS Code	100490
Start date of programme	October 2023
Date of programme approval	November 2022
Date of last programme amendment approval	N/A
Valid for academic entry year	2024-25
Date of last revision to document	04/05/23

Admissions requirements

A second class honours degree (2:2 or above) in a related area, or relevant experience combined with an adequate academic background (subject to interview).

We welcome applicants without traditional entry qualifications as we base decisions on our own assessment of qualifications, knowledge and previous work experience. We may waive formal entry requirements based on judgement of academic potential.

Course aims

“International Relations” (IR) is one of the most popular subjects of undergraduate and postgraduate study worldwide. It refers to a dynamic discipline that examines how various actors (including nation-states, multinational corporations, and inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations) interact and pursue often conflicting agendas beyond national borders. This degree programme introduces students to the latest, most influential scholarship in the field of IR by combining a focus on fundamental theoretical perspectives with comprehensive coverage of contemporary topics relating to both the global North and the global South. Teaching draws on the diverse expertise of research-active faculty in the Department of Politics. Core and ‘elective compulsory’ modules address the question of an evolving world order along latest global power shifts in security and political economy. A rich curriculum of option modules allows students to expand their understanding of distinct themes and disparate regional dynamics. International specialisation is reinforced via a research dissertation.

Course structure

The programme balances a disciplinary focus on the field of IR with the topical exploration of some of the most pressing contemporary global issues.

Students must take, and pass, the programme’s core module, “Global Politics, Governance and Security.”

They are then encouraged to choose a pathway of specialisation between two further ‘elective compulsory’ modules: “International Political Economy”, which prioritises political economy dynamics by engaging issues more readily associated with the global North, or “Emerging Powers in World Politics”, which centres on ongoing changes in world order reflecting the rise of new powers from within the global South.

Optional modules are then take from a specific list of options tailored around the programme’s learning objectives.

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
Full-time – 1 year, October route					
7	POSO082S7	Global Politics, Governance and Security	30	Core	1
7	POSO007S7 OR SSPO120S7	International Political Economy OR Emerging Powers in World Politics	30	Compulsory	2 3
7		Option from programme-specific list*	30	Option	1, 2, 3
7		Option from programme-specific list*	30	Option	1, 2, 3
7	SSPO244D7	Dissertation	60	Core	3

Part-time -2 years, October route					
Year 1					
7	POSO082S7	Global Politics, Governance and Security	30	Core	1
7		Option from programme-specific list*	30	Option	2, 3
Year 2					
7	POSO007S7 OR SSPO120S7	International Political Economy OR Emerging Powers in World Politics	30	Compulsory	2 3
7		Option from programme-specific list*	30	Option	1, 2, 3
7	SSPO244D7	Dissertation	60	Core	3
Full-time – 1 year, January start					
7	POSO007S7 OR SSPO120S7	International Political Economy OR Emerging Powers in World Politics	30	Compulsory	Spring Summer
7		Option from programme-specific list*	30	Option	Spring or Summer
7		Option from programme-specific list*	30	Option	Spring or Summer
7	POSO082S7	Global Politics, Governance and Security	30	Core	Autumn
7	SSPO244D7	Dissertation	60	Core	(Summer/Autumn with submission in Jan 1 year after prog start)
Part-time -2 years, January start					
Year 1					
7	POSO007S7 OR SSPO120S7	International Political Economy OR Emerging Powers in World Politics	30	Compulsory	Spring Summer
OR					
7		Option from programme-specific list*	30	Option	Spring/Summer
7	POSO082S7	Global Politics, Governance and Security	30	Core	Autumn
Year 2					
7	POSO007S7 OR SSPO120S7	International Political Economy OR Emerging Powers in World Politics	30	Compulsory	Spring Summer
OR					
7		Option from programme-specific list*	30	Option	Spring/Summer
7		Option from programme-specific list*	30	Option	Spring/Summer
7	SSPO244D7	Dissertation	60	Core	(Summer/Autumn with submission in Jan 1 year after prog start)

Indicative options – programme specific list					
7	SSPO120S7	Emerging Powers in World Politics (if not taken as a comp)	30	Option	3
7	POSO007S7	International Political Economy (if not taken as comp)	30	Option	2
7	SSPO121S7	Geopolitics, Environment & Resources	30	Option	1
7	POSO035S7	War, Politics and Society	30	Option	2
7	SSPO266S7	European & International Public Policy	30	Option	1
7	POSO023S7	Political Sociology of the Modern State	30	Option	2
7	POSO020S7	Power and Politics in the UK	30	Option	1
7	SSPO144S7	Food, Politics & Society	30	Option	1
7	SSPO267S7	Political Communications: Media, Campaigns, and Citizens	30	Option	2
7	POSO022S7	Political Theory & Contemporary Politics	30	Option	1
7	POSO025S7	Public Policy: Interests, Ideas & Institutions	30	Option	2
7	SSPO245H7	Experiments in Social Science	15	Option	3
7	SSPO236H7	The Political Economy of the Public Sector	15	Option	3
7	SSPO019S7	Masterclass in Social Research	30	Option	3
Note: Student may be able to take other relevant option modules from within or outside of Politics on the agreement of the programme director.					

T1=Autumn, T2=Spring, T3=Summer

Core: *Module must be taken and passed by student*

Compulsory: *Module must be taken but can be considered for compensated credit (see CAS regulations paragraph 24)*

Option: *Student can choose to take this module*

* The programme-specific list of option modules will change from year to year depending on available modules.

Students may opt to take up to 30 credits outside the programme list from any module available across College, but this must be approved by the programme director.

How you will learn

Your learning and teaching is organised to help you meet the learning outcomes (below) of the course. As a student, we expect you to be an active learner and to take responsibility for your learning, engaging with all of the material and sessions arranged for you.

Each course is divided into modules. You will find information on the virtual learning site (Moodle, see Academic Support below) about each of your modules, what to expect, the work you need to prepare, links to reading lists, information about how and when you will be assessed.

Teaching on this course is a combination of lectures (pre-recorded) and seminars. Lectures are designed to provide you with an outline or overview of the topic, to engage you with the material and direct you to other resources. They are a springboard for your own learning. Seminars are group sessions where you will be asked to contribute to discussion or group work around the topic, with material set in advance for which you need to prepare.

How we will assess you

The course will use a variety of assessment methods. Assessment is used to enhance your learning rather than simply to test it. For most of the modules associated with this course, your assessment will mainly be through essays and online examinations (usually completed at home or in a workspace in college), but may also involve short written exercises, quizzes and multiple-choice questionnaires, practical assessments, case studies, learning journals, or problems to solve.

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

'Learning outcomes' indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what your teachers will expect and also the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed.

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Demonstrate advanced familiarity with the founding theories, conceptual toolkit and research directions in the academic field of International Relations (IR)
- Demonstrate an ability to engage contemporary scholarship on major trends in current international and global politics;
- Demonstrate postgraduate-level understanding of either the subfield of international political economy or the ongoing scholarship on the rise of new powers in world politics;
- Undertake specific case studies relating to the broad field of international politics from either a political economy or security studies perspective and focusing specifically or comparatively on distinct geographical regions of the world; and
- Demonstrate skills of analysis and critique that can be transferred to further study in the social sciences and humanities

Careers and further study

You will find International Relations graduates in the following kinds of roles:

- specialist jobs in public bureaucracies including national foreign ministries and diplomatic missions as well as international organisations;
- jobs in local government, trades unions, political parties and NGOs;
- research positions in universities and other public and private research bodies;
- teaching in higher, further, and secondary education;
- (political) journalism
- political/ civic activism
- political consultancy

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on [the careers pages of our website](#).

Academic regulations and course management

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its [Common Award Scheme Regulations](#) and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle and this will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

Support for your study

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

[Please check our website for more information about student support services.](#) This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is [available online](#).

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