BA Politics and International Relations Year 1 – Module Information

Over the year as a whole you must take 6 modules. Three modules in each semester. Some of your modules are core (compulsory) but you will also have some optional modules to choose from.

You will be required to select your optional modules using Online Module Selection before you arrive. Please read the information below so you know which optional modules you would like to take.

Module Structure

Semester One
Core Modules:
PL1015 Cold War, Crisis and Confrontation: International Relations, 1945-89
PL1019 Politics, Power and Ethics

Optional Modules:
You MUST select ONE of the following -
PL1020 Classics of International Relations
AM1003 Introduction to American Politics

Semester Two
Core Modules:
PL1011 Political Concepts

Optional Modules:
You MUST select TWO of the following -
PL1012 Comparative European Politics
PL1016 Order and Disorder: International Relations from 1989 to the Present
PL1021 Power in the World Economy

Optional Module Descriptions

Semester One

PL1020 CLASSICS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
This module will cover some of the fundamental concepts and debates in International Relations scholarship through an examination of a series of ‘classic’ sources. These sources will be contextualised, critically analysed and compared, allowing students to engage with some of the writers, thinkers and decision makers that have shaped the discipline over the last 100 years. The module will cover issues such as power and morality, the anarchical nature of the international system, the possibilities and limits of international cooperation, and the gendered structures of much of international life.
AM1003 INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN POLITICS
The module serves as an introduction to contemporary American politics and the American system of government. The course begins by examining the implications of the American Constitution and then moves on to discuss the formation of the modern political system. It then moves on to look at the development of the major institutions of government in the United States. We will also reflect on the interaction and influence of the media, money and interest groups before concluding with discussion of foreign policy making.

Semester Two

PL1012 COMPARATIVE EUROPEAN POLITICS
The aim of this module is to introduce participants to the major theoretical, empirical and substantive issues in contemporary European (as distinct from European Union or UK) politics. This module takes a broadly comparative approach, focusing on significant topics of cross-national concern in a large number of European countries. A recurring theme throughout the module is the degree to which European countries are institutionally and politically similar but at the same time different.

PL1016 ORDER AND DISORDER: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS 1989 TO THE PRESENT
This module identifies and analyses the key events, issues and themes in international relations since 1989. It focuses on assessing the extent and limits of order, integration and cooperation in the post-Cold War world. We look at examples of disorder, disintegration and conflict, including civil war, genocide and state breakdown, and at the power of the United States, the United Nations and human rights norms. The module also applies a range of International Relations theories, using these as ‘lenses’ through which to analyse and understand the world since the end of the Cold War.

PL1021 POWER IN THE WORLD ECONOMY
The nature of the world economy is a crucial part of the current system of international relations. Economics is central to the evolution of the world economy. In one sense the narrative of the Cold War is the story of the decline and collapse of state communism and the triumph of market capitalism. In the contemporary world economic power remains crucial to military power. Economics is related to political instability and conflict in individual nation-states and at the international level. This module aims to examine the development of the world economy and the ideas about it: how it should run, how power operates, the connection between economic and political power and the role of economic crisis in changing world politics. This module examines the issue of economic development at the state level, still the core way to organise economic resources for growth and therefore the module examines the relationship between states and markets. However the world economy is not anarchic – it is managed and it is managed by states with interests. The course examines the power and influence of states and the role if international institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in international economic affairs. It also examines the rise of neoliberalism and the role of crisis in the global economy and looks at the ‘dark’ side of development.