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, online, flexible
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Full-time (1 year) Part-time (2 years) October, January
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	N/A
QAA subject benchmark group(s) Higher Education Credit Framework for England	N/A
Birkbeck Course Code	October start: TMSINRIP_C - on-campus study TMSINRMX_C - flexible study TMSINRON_C - online study January start: TMSINREJ_C - on-campus study
HECoS Code	100490
Start date of programme	October 2023
Date of programme approva	November 2022
Date of last programme amendment approval	June 2025
Valid for academic entry year	**2025-26**
Date of last revision to document	19/06/25

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	International Political Economy **OR**	30	Compulsory	1
	SSPO120S7	Emerging Powers in World Politics			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

2

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 Emerging Powers in World Politics	30	Compulsory	1 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 Emerging Powers in World Politics	30	Compulsory	Autumn 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 Emerging Powers in World Politics	30	Compulsory	Autumn 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 Emerging Powers in World Politics	30	Compulsory	Autumn 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) (hyflex)	30	Option	3
7	POSO007S7	International Political Economy (if not taken as comp) (hyflex)	30	Option	1
7	POSO035S7	War, Politics and Society (hyflex)	30	Option	2
7	SC05001S7	Governing Global Capitalism (hyflex)	30	Option	2
7	SC05004S7	International Negotiations and Conflict Resolution (in-person)	30	Option	3
7	POSO020S7	Power and Politics in the UK (hyflex)	30	Option	2
7	SC05003S7	Perspectives On Public Services & The Public Sector (hyflex)	30	Option	TBC
7	SSPO242H7	Qualitative Social Research Methods (hyflex)	15	Option	1
7	SSPO240H7	Applied Social Data Analysis In R (in-person)	15	Option	2
7	POSO044S7	Nationalism, Religion, & Conflict (in-person)	30	Option	2
7	SSPO263S7	Investigating The Social World (hyflex)	30	Option	2
7	SSPO243H7	Qualitative Research Design (hyflex)	15	Option	2
7	SSPO241H7	Advanced Topics In Quantitative Social Research (hyflex)	15	Option	3
7	SSGE107S7	The Politics Of Race & Diaspora (hyflex TBC)	30	Option	2
7	SSGE128S7	Rebels, Riots & Revolutions In International Development (hyflex)	30	Option	3
7	SSPO267S7	Political Communications: Media, Campaigns, and Citizens (hyflex)	30	Option	1
7	POSO022S7	Political Theory & Contemporary Politics (hyflex)	30	Option	3
7	POSO025S7	Public Policy: Interests, Ideas & Institutions (hyflex)	30	Option	2
7	SSPO245H7	Experiments in Social Science (hyflex)	15	Option	3
7	SSPO019S7	Masterclass in Social Research (hyflex)	30	Option	3
Note: Students may be able to take other relevant option modules from within or outside of Politics (e.g. History, economics modules etc) on the agreement of the programme director. This list of options is indicative only, and may vary by academic year.					

T1=Autumn, T2=Spring,T3=Summer

All compulsory modules are delivered via hyflex allowing in-person and online attendance.

Options planned for online or hyflex delivery for 2025/6 are indicated.

Note: option choices for students taking a fully online route through the programme are restricted to those being offered with an online/hyflex seminar.

MSc International Relations 2025-26

* 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 (subject to some disciplinary restrictions), but this must be approved by the programme director.

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

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. Your learning for this course will be organised around the activities outlined below.

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.

The programme is offered in person and there is also a fully online route. Students may also select to take some modules in-person and some online. Options for students taking the fully online route are restricted to modules offered in the School with an online/hyflex seminar. Pre-recorded lectures are provided online for both in-person and online modes. In-person and online classes run once a week.

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.