

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	MRes Politics <i>and pathway exit awards:</i> MRes Politics and International Relations MRes Politics and Public Policy and Management (Level 7)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	PG Dip, PG Cert
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) October
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	N/A
QAA subject benchmark group(s) Higher Education Credit Framework for England	N/A
Birkbeck Course Code	TMRPOLTC_C
HECoS Code	100491
Start date of programme	Autumn 2009
Date of programme approval	Summer 2009
Date of last programme amendment approval	May 2026
Valid for academic entry year	2026-27
Programme Director	Barry Maydom
Date of last revision to document	20.05.2026

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

- Provides quantitative, qualitative and experimental social research methods training
- Flexible programme, allowing students to combine research training with any of the specialisms offered in politics at Master's level. Students can choose from the wide range of modules offered from the School's existing specialist programmes in Politics. They can also opt to follow specialist pathways in International Relations and Public Policy and Management.
- Ideal for students pursuing, or considering, a career in government or advisory bodies where research skills are required, or for students seeking to study for an MPhil/PhD.

Course structure

The programme consists of 180 credits. Students take:

- 60 credits in research methods modules, including training in quantitative, qualitative and experimental research.
- 60 credits in option modules, including substantive modules on various aspects of politics. For the International Relations pathway, the modules must be taken from Emerging Powers in World Politics, International Political Economy, Global Politics, Governance and Security, and Global Political Economy: Structures and Policies. For the Public Policy and Management pathway, the modules that must be taken are Perspectives on Public Services and Public Sector Public Policy: Interests, Ideas, Institutions.
- A 60 credit research dissertation. For the International Relations pathway, the dissertation topic must fall within the field of international relations. For the Public Policy and Management pathway, the dissertation topic must fall within the field of public policy and management.
- Students must take at least one module in each term.

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status	Likely Teaching Term
MRes Politics					
Full-time – 1 year					
7	SSPO239H7	Four from: Introduction to Quantitative Social Research	60 15	Compulsory	1
	SSPO240H7	Applied Social Data Analysis in R	15		2
	SSPO245H7	Experiments in Social Science	15		3
	SSPO242H7	Qualitative Social Research Methods	15		1
	SSPO243H7	Qualitative Research Design	15		2
	SSPO241H7	Advanced Topics in Quantitative Social Research	15		3
7		Any politics module	30	Option	1, 2 or 3
7		Any politics module	30	Option	1, 2 or 3
7	POSO072D7	Dissertation MRes Politics	60	Core	3

Part-Time – 2 years					
Year 1					
7	SSPO239H7	Two from: Introduction to Quantitative Social Research	30 15	Compulsory	1 2
	SSPO240H7	Applied Social Data Analysis in R	15		3
	SSPO245H7	Experiments in Social Science	15		1
	SSPO242H7	Qualitative Social Research Methods	15		2
	SSPO243H7	Qualitative Research Design	15		3
	SSPO241H7	Advanced Topics in Quantitative Social Research	15		
7		Any politics module	30	Option	1, 2 or 3
Year 2					
		Two from the modules below not selected above.	30	Compulsory	1,2,3
7	SSPO239H7	Introduction to Quantitative Social Research,	15		1
7	SSPO240H7	Applied Social Data Analysis in R,	15		2
7	SSPO245H7	Experiments in Social Science	15		3
7	SSPO242H7	Qualitative Social Research Methods	15		1
7	SSPO243H7	Qualitative Research Design	15		2
7	SSPO241H7	Advanced Topics in Quantitative Social Research	15		3
7		Any politics module	30	Option	1, 2 or 3
7	POSO072D7	Dissertation MRes Politics*	60	Core	3*
MRes Politics and International Relations					
Full-time – 1 year					
7	SSPO239H7	Four from: Introduction to Quantitative Social Research	60 15	Compulsory	1 2
	SSPO240H7	Applied Social Data Analysis in R	15		3
	SSPO245H7	Experiments in Social Science	15		1
	SSPO242H7	Qualitative Social Research Methods	15		2
	SSPO243H7	Qualitative Research Design	15		3
	SSPO241H7	Advanced Topics in Quantitative Social Research	15		
7	SSPO120S7	Two from: Emerging Powers in World Politics	60 30	Compulsory	1, 2 or 3 3
	POSO007S7	International Political Economy	30		1
	POSO082S7	Global Politics, Governance and Security	30		1
	SC05001S7	Global Political Economy: Structures and Policies	30		2
7	POSO072D7	Dissertation MRes Politics	60	Core	3
Part-Time – 2 years					
Year 1					
7	SSPO239H7	Two from: Introduction to Quantitative Social Research	30 15	Compulsory	1 2
	SSPO240H7	Applied Social Data Analysis in R	15		3
	SSPO245H7	Experiments in Social Science	15		1
	SSPO242H7	Qualitative Social Research Methods	15		2
	SSPO243H7	Qualitative Research Design	15		3
	SSPO241H7	Advanced Topics in Quantitative Social Research	15		

7	SSPO120S7 POSO007S7 POSO082S7 SC05001S7	One from: Emerging Powers in World Politics International Political Economy Global Politics, Governance and Security Governing Global Capitalism	30 30 30 30 30	Compulsory	1, 2 or 3 3 1 1 2
Year 2					
7	SSPO239H7 SSPO240H7 SSPO245H7 SSPO242H7 SSPO243H7 SSPO241H7	Two from the modules below not selected above. Introduction to Quantitative Social Research, Applied Social Data Analysis in R, Experiments in Social Science Qualitative Social Research Methods Qualitative Research Design Advanced Topics in Quantitative Social Research	30 15 15 15 15 15	Compulsory	1,2,3 1 2 3 1 2 3
7	SSPO120S7 POSO007S7 POSO082S7 SC05001S7	One from: Emerging Powers in World Politics International Political Economy Global Politics, Governance and Security Governing Global Capitalism	30 30 30 30 30	Compulsory	1, 2 or 3 3 1 1 2
7	POSO072D7	Dissertation MRes Politics*	60	Core	3*
MRes Politics and Public Policy and Management					
Full-time – 1 year					
7	SSPO239H7 SSPO240H7 SSPO245H7 SSPO242H7 SSPO243H7 SSPO241H7	Four from: Introduction to Quantitative Social Research Applied Social Data Analysis in R Experiments in Social Science Qualitative Social Research Methods Qualitative Research Design Advanced Topics in Quantitative Social Research	60 15 15 15 15 15 15	Compulsory	1 2 3 1 2 3
7	SC05003S7	Perspectives on Public Services and the Public Sector	30	Compulsory	2
7	POSO025S7	Public Policy: Interests, Ideas, Institutions	30	Compulsory	1
7	POSO072D7	Dissertation MRes Politics	60	Core	3
Part-Time – 2 years					
Year 1					
7	SSPO239H7 SSPO240H7 SSPO245H7 SSPO242H7 SSPO243H7 SSPO241H7	Two from: Introduction to Quantitative Social Research Applied Social Data Analysis in R Experiments in Social Science Qualitative Social Research Methods Qualitative Research Design Advanced Topics in Quantitative Social Research	30 15 15 15 15 15 15	Compulsory	1 2 3 1 2 3
7	POSO025S7	Public Policy: Interests, Ideas, Institutions	30	Compulsory	1

Year 2					
		Two from the modules below not selected above.	30	Compulsory	1,2,3
7	SSPO239H7	Introduction to Quantitative Social Research,	15		1
7	SSPO240H7	Applied Social Data Analysis in R,	15		2
7	SSPO245H7	Experiments in Social Science	15		3
7	SSPO242H7	Qualitative Social Research Methods	15		1
7	SSPO243H7	Qualitative Research Design	15		2
7	SSPO241H7	Advanced Topics in Quantitative Social Research	15		3
7	SC05003S7	Perspectives on Public Services and the Public Sector	30	Compulsory	2
7	POSO072D7	Dissertation MRes Politics*	60	Core	3*

*In term 3 of year 1, part-time students undertake initial preparatory work for their dissertation which is completed at the end of the second year.

Indicative politics options: Research Methods modules above which have not been taken as compulsory modules can also be taken as options.

7	SSPO120S7	Emerging Powers in World Politics	30	Option	3
7	POSO007S7	International Political Economy	30	Option	1
7	SC05003S7	Perspectives on Public Services and the Public Sector	30	Option	2
7	POSO025S7	Public Policy: Interests, Ideas, Institutions	30	Option	1
7	POSO082S7	Global Politics, Governance and Security	30	Option	1
7	SSPO267S7	Political Communication: Media, Campaigns and Citizens	30	Option	1
7	POSO044S7	Nationalism Religion and Conflict	30	Option	2
7	POSO035S7	War, Politics and Society	30	Option	2
7	POSO020S7	Power and Politics in the UK	30	Option	2
7	SSPO263S7	Investigating the Social World	30	Option	2
7	POSO022S7	Political Theory and Contemporary Politics	30	Option	3
7	SC05004S7	International Negotiations and Conflict Resolution	30	Option	3
7	SSPO019S7	Masterclass in Social Research	30	Option	3

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.

Teaching on this course is a combination of pre-recorded lectures, seminars and computer lab sessions. 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. Lab sessions take place in the quantitative research methods module and involve live demonstrations

of statistical techniques and working through exercises using statistical software with the support of lecturers and lab session leaders.

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 be through research projects, research designs, critical reviews, quantitative problem sets and essays. Written feedback on assessments is provided within four weeks of submission, and students have the opportunity to clarify any feedback by contacting their lecturers and seminar leaders.

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 will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of the main approaches to research design in politics, the issues they present and their implications for doing political research.
- Design and conduct social scientific research on political phenomena using a range of quantitative, qualitative and/or experimental methods.
- Critically evaluate existing empirical social scientific research.
- Contribute to key debates on ethics and integrity in social scientific research.

For those taking MRes Politics and International Relations, you will also be able to:

- Demonstrate advanced understanding with theories, concepts and research in the academic field of International Relations.
- Critically engage with – and contribute to - contemporary scholarship on major trends in contemporary international and global politics

For those taking MRes Politics and Public Policy and Management, you will also be able to:

- Critically apply the key theories, models and concepts used in the study of public policy to the analysis of policymaking and policy implementation in Britain.
- Demonstrate substantive knowledge of the organisation of the public sector at the national and subnational level and a comparative and historical understanding of public management in contemporary Britain.

Careers and further study

On successfully graduating from this MRes Politics, you will have gained an array of important transferable skills, including:

- data analysis
- research design
- project management
- critical evaluation.

Graduates of MRes Politics usually begin or continue careers in research-related roles in the public, private or third sector, or pursue PhD study. Recent graduates are working in the following roles:

- Civil Service fast-streamer
- survey research firm manager
- government social research officer
- charity policy officer
- newspaper journalist

- university lecturer
- public relations officer

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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