

Royal Holloway, University of London
Course specification for an undergraduate award
BA Politics and International Relations (L290)

Section 1 – Introduction to your course

This course specification is a formal document, which provides a summary of the main features of your course and the learning outcomes that you might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if you take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. Further information is contained in the College prospectus, and in various handbooks, all of which you will be able to access online. Alternatively, further information on the College's academic regulations and policies can be found [here](#). Further information on the College's Admissions Policy can be found [here](#).

Your degree course in Politics and International Relations is normally delivered in three stages, each of which comprises one year of full-time study during which you must follow modules to the value of 120 credits. The course comprises mandatory disciplinary modules and 'optional' specialist modules, with an extended essay in the final stage. Whilst the development of disciplinary-specific skills are emphasised in the mandatory modules, the specialist options provide focused opportunities to examine the application of these skills. Moreover, the multi-disciplinary common first year, and the opportunity to take modules offered in complementary disciplines, gives a heightened appreciation of disciplinary distinctiveness.

While Royal Holloway keeps all the information made available under review, courses and the availability of individual modules, especially optional modules are necessarily subject to change at any time, and you are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect your decision to follow a specific course. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform you as soon as is practicable of any significant changes which might affect your studies.

The following is brief description for some of the most important terminology for understanding the content of this document:

Degree course – May also be referred to as 'degree programme' or simply 'programme', these terms refer to the qualification you will be awarded upon successful completion of your studies.
Module – May also be referred to as 'course', this refers to the individual module you will study each year to complete your degree course. Undergraduate degrees at Royal Holloway comprise a combination of modules in multiples of 15 credits to the value of 120 credits per year. On some degree courses a certain number of optional modules must be passed for a particular degree title.

Section 2 – Course details			
Date of specification update	September 2021	Location of study	Egham Campus
Course award and title	BA Politics and International Relations	Level of study	Undergraduate
Course code	1498	UCAS code	L290
Year of entry	2022/23		
Awarding body	Royal Holloway, University of London		
Department	Politics, International Relations and Philosophy	Other departments involved in teaching the course	N/A
Mode(s) of attendance	Full-time	Duration of the course	Three years
Accrediting Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirement(s)	N/A		
Link to Coursefinder for further information:	https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/	For queries on admissions:	study@royalholloway.ac.uk .

Section 3 – Degree course structure

3.1 Mandatory module information

The following table summarises the mandatory modules which students must take in each year of study

Year	Module code	Module title	Contact hours*	Self-study hours	Written exams**	Practical assessment**	Coursework**	Credits	FHEQ level	Module status (see below)
1	PR1400	Introduction to Politics	40	260	40%	0%	60%	30	4	MNC
1	PR1500	Introduction to International Relations	40	260	50%	0%	50%	30	4	MNC
1	PR1520	Classic Readings in Politics and International Relations	40	260	50%	0%	50%	30	4	MC
1	PR1000	Researching Politics and International Relations: Methods, Techniques and Analysis	60	240	40%	0%	60%	30	4	MC
2	PR2000	Researching Politics and International Relations: Analysis, Design and Practice	60	240	40%	0%	60%	30	5	MC
3	PR3000	Undergraduate Dissertation	15	185	0	0	100%	30	6	MC

This table sets out the most important information for the mandatory modules on your degree course. These modules are central to achieving your learning outcomes, so they are compulsory, and all students on your degree course will be required to take them. You will be automatically registered for these modules each year. Mandatory modules fall into two categories; 'condonable' or 'non-condonable'.

In the case of mandatory 'non-condonable' (MNC) modules, you must pass the module before you can proceed to the next year of your course, or to successfully graduate with a particular degree title. In the case of mandatory 'condonable' (MC) modules, these must be taken but you can still progress or graduate even if you do not pass them. Please note that although Royal Holloway will keep changes to a minimum, changes to your degree course may be made where reasonable and necessary due to unexpected events. For example; where requirements of relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies have changed and course requirements must change accordingly, or where changes are deemed necessary on the basis of student feedback and/or the advice of external advisors, to enhance academic provision.

*Contact hours come in various different forms, and may take the form of time spent with a member of staff in a lecture or seminar with other students. Contact hours may also be laboratory or, studio-based sessions, project supervision with a member of staff, or discussion through a virtual learning environment (VLE). These contact hours may be with a lecturer

or teaching assistant, but they may also be with a technician, or specialist support staff. It is intended that these contact hours will face-to-face as far as possible, but in certain unavoidable situations, these may take place virtually.

**The way in which each module on your degree course is assessed will also vary, however, the assessments listed above are all 'summative', which means you will receive a mark for it which will count towards your overall mark for the module, and potentially your degree classification, depending on your year of study. On successful completion of the module you will gain the credits listed. 'Coursework' might typically include a written assignment, like an essay. Coursework might also include a report, dissertation or portfolio. 'Practical assessments' might include an oral assessment or presentation, or a demonstration of practical skills required for the particular module.

3.2 Optional modules

In addition to mandatory modules, there will be a number of optional modules available during the course of your degree. The following table lists a selection of optional modules that are likely to be available. However, not all may be available every year. Although Royal Holloway will keep changes to a minimum, new options may be offered or existing ones may be withdrawn. For example; where reasonable and necessary due to unexpected events, where requirements of relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) have changed and course requirements must change accordingly, or where changes are deemed necessary on the basis of student feedback and/or the advice of External Advisors, to enhance academic provision. There may be additional requirements around option selection, so it is important that this specification is read alongside your department's Student Handbook, which you can access via their [webpage](#).

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
None	Politics and International Relations: Module exploring Comparative Politics	Politics and International Relations: Module exploring International Relations
	Politics and International Relations: Module exploring Political Theory	Politics and International Relations: Module exploring Comparative Politics
	Politics and International Relations: Module exploring Political Communication	Politics and International Relations: Module exploring Political Communication
	Politics and International Relations: Module exploring International Relations	Politics and International Relations: Module exploring Political Theory

3.3 Optional module requirements

In your **second year**, you must take:
Either
 PR2490 Contemporary Political Theory (30 credits) and at least 30 credits from the options available in International Relations
or
 PR2560 Modern Political Thought (30 credits) and at least 30 credits from the options available in International Relations
or
 PR2440 International Relations Theory (30 credits) and at least 30 credits from the options available in Politics.

plus a further 30 credits of appropriate Stage Two modules in Politics and International Relations.

In your third year, depending on what topic is selected for PR3000, you must choose options to the value of 90 credits from available Stage Three options in order to ensure that you take options to the value of 60 credits in Politics and 60 credits in International Relations.

Section 4 - Progressing through each year of your degree course

For further information on the progression and award requirements for your degree, please refer to Royal Holloway's [Academic Regulations](#).

All first year students on single, joint or combined honours courses offered all or in part by the School of Humanities, School of Performing and Digital Arts, or department of Politics, International Relations and Philosophy are required to pass a Moodle-based writing skills quiz in order to progress into the second year of study. The pass mark for the test is 60%. Certificates of Distinction are awarded to students who achieve at least 80% in the quiz. Students may attempt the quiz as often as they wish with no penalties or capping. Students who meet the requirements for progression as stipulated in the College's Undergraduate Regulations (Section: Conditions for progression to the next stage) but fail to pass the Moodle-based quiz will not be permitted to progress into their second year of academic study at the College.

All second year students on single, joint or combined honours courses for which the Department of Politics and International Relations is the lead department are also required to undertake and pass a short 'reflecting on feedback' exercise in order to progress into the final year of study. Students undertaking this exercise will be supported by their personal tutor and will be marked on a pass/fail basis. Students who fail the exercise will have an opportunity to resubmit. Students who meet the requirements for progression as stipulated in the [College's Undergraduate Regulations](#) (Section: Conditions for progression to the next stage) but fail to pass 'reflecting on feedback' exercise will not be permitted to progress into their final year of academic study at the College.

Courses including an International Year

You must take modules at an overseas university nominated through the Erasmus or Student Exchange Programmes. The equivalent of a full academic load at the overseas university must be taken. The modules to be taken overseas are to be agreed with the Tutor for International Studies in the Department. The marks achieved are converted into equivalent College marks and count as a thirteenth unit. This will contribute 20% to the final stage three marks.

Section 5 – Educational aims of the course

The aims of this course are:

- Provides a systematic understanding and knowledge of political theory and institutions in both a domestic and international context
- Encourages critical awareness of current political problems at national and international levels
- Provides theoretical insights and methodological techniques relevant to the development and interpretation of knowledge in Politics and International Relations and to the evaluation of current research and scholarship in the field
- Fosters an independent learning ability for continued intellectual development

Section 6 - Course learning outcomes

In general terms, the courses provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes. (Categories – Knowledge and understanding (K), Skills and other attributes (S), and Transferable skills (*))

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extensive knowledge and critical understanding of recent and current developments in the field of political science and international relations, and of the issues and controversies associated with these developments (K); 2. A sound basic understanding of social science and international relations methodology (K); 3. A critical understanding of result and data relating to the field of political science (K); 4. Familiarity with a broad selection of the principal classic and contemporary texts in the fields of politics and international relations (K); 5. A sound knowledge of the theories, techniques and concepts used to further our understanding of the issues, processes and phenomena associated with the field of politics and international relations (K); 6. A sound understanding of the principal approaches and current issues in a range of options taught during the second and third years of the course (K); 7. Assess the merits of theories, models and explanations in political science, and situate them in a wider disciplinary context (S); 8. Apply the concepts and methods used in political science and international relations to the analysis of political theories and institutions within the international system (S); 9. Analyse qualitative and quantitative data relating to the field of politics and international relations (S); 10. Evaluate current research and scholarship in the field, and evaluate and, where appropriate, develop critiques of the methodologies employed by political scientists (S); 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Gather, organise and deploy evidence, data and information from a variety of sources, and assess their nature and value (S); 12. Carry out an independent investigation of a political topic or issue and produce a coherent written account (S); 13. Communicate complex ideas and present arguments and complex information in a clear and concise manner in writing (S*); 14. Analyse and interpret complex issues, and develop reasoned arguments and make sound, critical judgements in the absence of complete data (S*); 15. Use literature, internet and database searches to gain necessary information (S*); 16. Develop the intellectual autonomy and self-direction needed for independent investigation of intellectual problems, taking responsibility for one's learning, and developing habits of reflection on that learning (S*); 17. Exercise of initiative and personal responsibility (S*); 18. Ability to take decisions in complex and uncertain situations (S*); 19. The ability to work autonomously and collaboratively with others (S*); 20. Self-awareness and self-management of research (S*); 21. Awareness of one's responsibility as a local, national and international citizen (S*); 22. Ability to learn independently and to take advantage of life-learning (S*); 23. Skills of oral presentation (S*);
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Section 7 - Teaching, learning and assessment	
Teaching and learning on the courses draw on the methods and concepts used to investigate political phenomena at both national and international levels. It is also strongly informed by the current research interests of the core teaching team within the Department. The main methods used to develop knowledge and understanding are formal lectures by academic staff within the Department, tutorials and seminar discussions based on a combination of staff led sessions and student presentations.	
Assessment will be by a combination of assessed coursework and examination, as indicated in individual module specifications. The aim through the course is to use a variety of different assessments (essays, examinations, other set coursework, presentations) to gauge your performance in as comprehensive a way as possible. In studying Politics and International Relations, the assessment process culminates in guided independent research/study with the production of a dissertation, which is a compulsory module in the final year.	
Full details of the assessments for individual modules can be obtained from the Department of Politics and International Relations .	

Section 8 – Additional costs	
There are no other associated costs on this degree course.	
These estimated costs relate to studying this particular degree course at Royal Holloway. General costs such as accommodation, food, books and other learning materials and printing etc., have not been included, but further information is available on our website.	

Section 9 – Indicators of quality and standards	
QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Level	4-6
Your course is designed in accordance with the FHEQ to ensure your qualification is awarded on the basis of nationally established standards of achievement, for both outcomes and attainment. The qualification descriptors within the FHEQ set out the generic outcomes and attributes expected for the award of individual qualifications. The qualification descriptors contained in the FHEQ exemplify the outcomes and attributes expected of learning that results in the award of higher education qualifications. These outcomes represent the integration of various learning experiences resulting from designated and coherent courses of study.	
QAA Subject benchmark statement(s)	http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements
Subject benchmark statements provide a means for the academic community to describe the nature and characteristics of courses in a specific subject or subject area. They also represent general expectations about standards for the award of qualifications at a given level in terms of the attributes and capabilities that those possessing qualifications should have demonstrated.	

Section 10 – Further information

This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate when taking full advantage of the learning opportunities that are available. More detailed information on modules, including teaching and learning methods, and methods of assessment, can be found via the online [Module Catalogue](#). The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed regularly by the university, and may also be checked routinely by external agencies, such as the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

Your course will be reviewed regularly, both by the university as part of its cyclical quality enhancement processes, and/or by your department, who may wish to make improvements to the curriculum, or in response to resource planning. As such, your course may be revised during the course of your study at Royal Holloway. However, your department will take reasonable steps to consult with students via appropriate channels when considering changes. All continuing students will be routinely informed of any significant changes.

Section 11 – Intermediate exit awards (where available)

You may be eligible for an intermediate exit award if you complete part of the course as detailed in this document. Any additional criteria (e.g. mandatory modules, credit requirements) for intermediate awards is outlined in the sections below.

Award	Criteria	Awarding body
Diploma in Higher Education (DipHE)	Pass in 210 credits of which at least 90 must be at or above FHEQ Level 4 and at least 120 of which must be at or above FHEQ Level 5	Royal Holloway and Bedford New College
Certificate in Higher Education (CertHE)	Pass in 120 credits of which at least 90 must be at or above FHEQ Level 4	Royal Holloway and Bedford New College

Section 12 - Associated award(s)

BA Politics and International Relations with an International Year	
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