

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 University prospectus, and in various handbooks, all of which you will be able to access online. Alternatively, further information on the University's academic regulations and policies can be found [here](#). Further information on the University'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 a 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 units 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	March 2024	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	2026/27		
Awarding body	Royal Holloway, University of London		
Department or school	Politics, International Relations and Philosophy	Other departments or schools involved in teaching the course	N/A
Mode(s) of attendance	Full-time	Duration of the course	3 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:	https://royalholloway.ac.uk/applicationquery

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	Credits	FHEQ level	Module status (Mandatory Condonable MC or Mandatory Non-Condonable MNC)
1	PR1400	Introduction to Politics	30	4	MNC
1	PR1500	Introduction to International Relations	30	4	MNC
1	PR1520	Classic Readings in Politics and International Relations	30	4	MC
1	PR1000	Researching Politics and International Relations: Methods, Techniques and Analysis	30	4	MC
2	PR2000	Researching Politics and International Relations: Analysis, Design and Practice	30	5	MC
3	PR3000	Undergraduate Dissertation	30	6	MC
<p>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'.</p> <p>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.</p>					
3.2 Optional modules					
<p>In addition to mandatory modules, there will be a number of optional modules available during the course of your degree. 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,</p>					

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; please contact the Department for further information.

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](#).

Progression throughout the year/s is monitored through performance in summative or formative coursework assignments. Please note that if you hold a Student Visa and you choose to leave (or are required to leave because of non-progression) or complete early (before the course end date stated on your CAS), then this will be reported to UKVI.

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%. 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 [Academic Taught Regulations](#) but fail to pass the Moodle-based Academic Integrity module will not be permitted to progress into their second year of academic study.

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 [University'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 University.

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 University 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 (*)*)

Theme	Course learning outcome	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Knowledge and Understanding	Demonstrate understanding of developments in political science and International Relations.	Demonstrate introductory knowledge of Politics and International Relations.	Demonstrate knowledge of Politics and International Relations.	Apply demonstrable knowledge of Politics and International Relations.
	Demonstrate principal theories of Politics and International Relations.	Demonstrate a knowledge of classical theories in Politics and International Relations.	Demonstrate growth of theoretical knowledge of Politics and International Relations.	Apply advanced theoretical or comparative knowledge of Politics and International Relations.
	Demonstrate an understanding of methods and research in Politics and International Relations.	Demonstrate a basic knowledge of research methods in Politics and International Relations.	Demonstrate a more advance knowledge of research methods in Politics and International Relations.	Apply advanced knowledge of research methods in Politics or International Relations through a research dissertation.
Application of Theories	Apply theories in Politics or International Relations to new cases.	Apply theory at an introductory level in Politics and International Relations.	Analyse advanced theory in Politics or International Relations.	Apply theory at the highest level for an understanding of new cases in Politics or International Relations.
	Using theory, assess the merits of new developments in Politics or international affairs.	Assess current problems in Politics and International Relations in a theoretical context.	Apply theory to context in Politics or international affairs.	Use of theory at the highest level for analysing new developments in the study of Politics or International Relations.
Knowledge of Methods	Deploy qualitative methods to analyse developments in Politics or International Relations.	Analyse basic qualitative material in the context of Politics and International Relations.	Analyse more advanced qualitative material in the context of Politics and International Relations.	Deploy qualitative methods at the highest level for analysing developments in political or international affairs.
	Deploy quantitative methods to analyse data in Politics or International Relations.	Analyse basic quantitative data in the context of Politics and International Relations.	Analyse more advanced quantitative data in the context of Politics and International Relations.	Deploy quantitative methods at the highest level for analysing developments in political or international affairs.

	Gather, process, interpret and communicate a range of data in Politics or International Relations.	Communicate analysis of data at a basic level in Politics or International Relations.	Communicate analysis of data at a more advanced level in Politics or International Relations.	Gather, process, interpret, apply, and communicate a range of data at an advanced level in Politics or International Relations.
Skills for Learning	Gain skills to explore novel questions in Politics or International Relations.	Knowledge to explore basic topics in Politics and International Relations.	Knowledge to explore more advanced topics in Politics or International Relations.	Exploration of topics at the most advanced level in Politics or International Relations.
	To take responsibility for one's own learning in Politics or International Relations.	Improve independent learning in Politics and International Relations.	Gaining more advanced academic study skills in Politics or International Relations.	Achieving skills for analysis and writing at the highest level in Politics or International Relations.
	Learn how to work collaboratively with others or autonomously.	A taste of experience in working with others or alone.	Enhancing the ability to work alone or with others.	Mastering the ability to work alone or with others.
Transferrable Professional Skills	Recognise current issues in Politics and International Relations that are of use in public service, the media, the voluntary sector, or NGOs.	Learning to recognise political or international questions of importance.	Enhancing capacity to analyse political and international questions of importance that can be deployed in the workplace.	Mastering the capacity to analyse political and international questions of importance of use in public service, the media, the voluntary sector, or NGOs.
	Learn to write analytical work on current issues in Politics or international affairs.	Development of writing skills in political and international affairs.	Enhancing the capacity to write analytical work on Politics or international affairs.	Mastering the capacity to write analytical work based on research in Politics or international affairs.
	Deploy theoretical or methods-based skills in the workplace.	Development of thinking about theory and methods.	Enhancing the understanding of theory and methods for application in the workplace.	Successful deployment of theoretical or methods-based skills in the workplace.

Section 7 - Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning on your course is closely informed by the active research of staff, particularly in the areas of Politics and International Relations. In general terms, the course provides an opportunity for you to develop and demonstrate the learning outcomes detailed herein.

Teaching and learning on the courses draw on the methods and concepts used to investigate political phenomena at both national and international levels. 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](#).

Contact hours come in various 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.

The way in which each module on your degree course is assessed will also vary. Assessments designated as 'summative' will receive a mark 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.

More detailed information on modules, including teaching and learning methods, and methods of assessment, can be found via the online [Royal Holloway Curriculum 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.

Section 8 – Additional costs

There are no single associated costs greater than £50 per item on this 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– 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