

Politics and International  
Relations at Edinburgh

# Study **Politics and International Relations** at a world-leading university.



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH  
School of Social and  
Political Science

# Welcome to the School of Social and Political Science

**The School of Social and Political Science is one of the leading schools of social science in the UK and we pride ourselves on our innovative teaching, lively community of staff and students, and pursuit of academic excellence.**

Our research is world class and it informs and shapes our teaching. As one of our students, you will enjoy a challenging, rich and rewarding learning environment, as well as the opportunity to engage in the most current debates from the start of your studies.

The School of Social and Political Science brings together specialists in a wide range of disciplines and is also home to many research centres and groups.

Our school is a vibrant and intellectually stimulating place to study, which will provide you with an education enriched with insights from across the social and political sciences and beyond.

## Why Edinburgh?

### **World-class reputation**

The University of Edinburgh is one of the world's leading universities. We are consistently ranked amongst the 50 best universities in the world, which allows us to attract some of the brightest academics and students. This means that you will learn from and amongst the very best in teaching and research.

### **Invest in your future**

Choose to study at Edinburgh and you'll be investing in an education that will support you to build a successful future. We help students to develop a broad range of skills, grow in confidence and learn more about themselves.

As a result, employers regard Edinburgh as an excellent training ground for high-flyers and value our graduates for their intellectual ability and the attributes they're able to develop while studying with us.

### **Leading lights**

You'll have the opportunity to draw upon the expertise of leading academics and researchers in their field who regularly advise, inform and debate public policy at Scottish, UK, European and international levels. Our staff regularly advise a wide range of organisations, including the Scottish and UK governments, the European Commission and the World Bank amongst others.

### **Flexibility and choice**

The study of Politics and International Relations at Edinburgh allows for multidisciplinary learning. It is offered in a wide variety of flexible degree options that you can tailor according to your interests and aspirations. Through our hands-on and innovative approach, we'll equip you with the skills, insights and perspectives to enhance your employability and career prospects.

### **A supportive environment**

Student support is embedded within the School and you will have a named contact to guide you through university life. There are also a number of student peer-learning opportunities in place to ensure you always feel supported.

# What is Politics and who is it for?

Politics studies the theory and practice of how societies are governed. How do our political institutions create collective rules, who has the power to make them and what are the consequences of political decisions? What is the nature of a just society and how do we achieve it? Politics students explore the origins and present-day contexts of societal conflicts about power, participation and resources. They study not only the processes of governance at the local, national, and international levels, but also the morality of political action and the limits of freedom and justice.

Politics can be studied as a single honours degree or combined with the following subjects as part of a joint honours degree:

**Arabic, Economics, French, German, History, Italian, Law, Philosophy, Quantitative Methods, Russian Studies, Scandinavian Studies, Social Anthropology, Social Policy, Sociology or Spanish.**

# What is International Relations and who is it for?

International Relations (IR) studies actions and challenges that transcend national boundaries, and the resulting conflicts or attempts at cooperation. How do states cope with our highly complex and interconnected world, and how can we tackle problems like climate change, global economic inequality or interstate war? Do our very ideas about state power, sovereignty, democracy, justice, legitimacy and order have to change when we think about the international level?

IR students explore the origins and evolution of the state system, the emergence of global non state actors, the power of international institutions and the driving forces behind international cooperation and conflict.

# What you'll typically study

Your undergraduate degree in Politics or International Relations will cover a comprehensive core of subjects, giving you a sound introduction to the subject and the flexibility to study topics within and outside it.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this booklet at the time of going to press. However, it will not form part of a contract between the University and a student or applicant and must be read in conjunction with the individual degree specifications, which can be found at [www.drps.ed.ac.uk](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk)

## MA (Hons) International Relations

### YEAR ONE

- Politics and International Relations 1A
- Politics and International Relations 1B
- Political Thinkers
- Three further semester-long courses in outside subjects of your choice

### YEAR TWO

- Theories of International Relations
- Introduction to Political Data Analysis
- Four further semester-long courses in subjects of your choice

### YEAR THREE

- Research Design in Politics and International Relations
- Four semester-long courses from a list of Politics and International Relations courses.
- One further semester-long course from a subject of your choice in the arts, humanities and social sciences

### YEAR FOUR

- Dissertation: International Relations
- Three semester-long courses from a list of Politics and International Relations courses
- One further semester-long course from a subject of your choice in the arts, humanities and social sciences

## MA (Hons) International Relations with Quantitative Methods

### YEAR ONE

- Politics and International Relations 1A
- Politics and International Relations 1B
- Political Thinkers
- Introduction to Statistics for Social Science
- Mathematics for Social Science
- One semester-long course in a subject of your choice

### YEAR TWO

- Theories of International Relations
- Doing Social Research with Statistics
- Four courses of your choice

### YEAR THREE

- Research Design in Politics and International Relations
- Statistical Modelling
- Four further semester-long courses chosen in International Relations or Quantitative Methods.

### YEAR FOUR

- Dissertation: International Relations
- Four semester-long courses from a list of Politics and International Relations and Quantitative Methods courses

Our **Politics programmes** focus on politics, political theory and international relations. You'll explore the origins and present-day contexts of power and conflicts, understand the processes of governance and consider how political inequalities can be challenged, the morality of political action, the boundaries of freedom and the limits of justice.

### MA (Hons) Politics

#### YEAR ONE

- Politics and International Relations 1A
- Politics and International Relations 1B
- Political Thinkers
- Three further semester-long courses in subjects of your choice

#### YEAR TWO

- Comparative Politics in a Globalised World
- Introduction to Political Data Analysis
- Four further semester-long courses in subjects of your choice

#### YEAR THREE

- Research Design in Politics and International Relations
- Four further semester-long courses from a list of Politics and International Relations courses
- One further semester-long honours course from a subject of your choice in the arts, humanities and social sciences

#### YEAR FOUR

- Dissertation: Politics
- Three semester-long courses from a list of Politics and International Relations courses
- One further semester-long honours course from a subject of your choice in the arts, humanities, and social sciences

### MA (Hons) Politics with Quantitative Methods

#### YEAR ONE

- Politics and International Relations 1A
- Politics and International Relations 1B
- Mathematics for Social Science
- Introduction to Statistics for Social Science
- Political Thinkers
- One semester-long courses in outside subjects of your choice

#### YEAR TWO

- Doing Social Research with Statistics
- Comparative Politics in a Globalised World
- Four further semester-long courses in subjects of your choice

#### YEAR THREE

- Statistical Modelling
- Research Design in Politics and International Relations
- Four semester-long courses from a list of Politics and International Relations or Quantitative Methods courses

#### YEAR FOUR

- Dissertation: Politics
- One semester-long course from a list of Quantitative Methods courses
- Three further semester-long courses chosen in International Relations or Quantitative Methods

# Summary of Politics and International Relations courses

## **Politics and International Relations 1A:**

Concepts and Debates. PIR1A introduces key concepts such as power, participation and representation. Each week revolves around an important political question, the associated concepts, and the societal and academic debates around it.

## **Politics and International Relations 1B:**

The Global Dimension. PIR1B introduces key concepts such as collective security, multilateralism and human rights. Each week focuses on a key question of international politics today, the associated concepts, and the international and academic debates around it.

**Political Thinkers** aims to introduce students to historical writers whose thoughts on politics - international or domestic - shape the way we understand the global challenges we face today. The content of the course is innovative in two respects: first, it conceives of political thought as a unified discipline encompassing thinking pertinent to both Politics and International Relations; second, it aims to decolonise the canon institutionalised in Western academia by pluralising the voices discussed over the course of the term.

## **Introduction to Political Data Analysis**

explores how to access relevant data and assess the appropriateness of data. It provides key skills in quantitative data analysis, and shows how using different types of data and different techniques provide different ways to answer the types of questions typically posed by empirical politics and IR scholars.

## **Theories of International Relations**

introduces students to a diverse range of theoretical frameworks for making sense of international politics. It also engages key debates and cutting-edge research about how to understand international politics, and presents theory as a transferable skill, something we never stop using to identify, analyse and understand various international political phenomena.

## **Comparative Politics in a Globalised World**

will provide students with the conceptual knowledge and practical skills to understand comparative politics with a global perspective. It introduces the comparative method and applies that method to core questions and issues of comparative and international politics. These questions will cover political regimes, state formation and institutions, political and economic development, democracy, order and violence.

## **Additional year one and year two options in Politics and International Relations**

Our pre-honours options may vary from year to year, but are likely to include:

- Understanding Gender in the Contemporary World
- Introduction to British Politics
- International Political Economy

## **Research Design in Politics and**

**International Relations** will equip students with the skills necessary to understand, critically assess and undertake the research design process. Students will gain a good grasp of the behavioural assumptions in social science research and knowledge of a range of data collection methods (and how to assess the appropriateness of each), as well as the steps within a successful research project design.

## **Additional year three and four options in Politics and International Relations**

Our Honours options vary from year to year, but have previously included options such as:

- Africa in World Politics
- British Government
- Chinese Politics
- Comparing Scottish Devolution
- Conservatism and the Right
- Contemporary Russian Politics
- Critical Theory and Cinema
- Democracy and its Discontents
- Digital Media and Democracy
- Environmental Politics
- Europe and International Migration
- Europe in the World
- Gender, Peace and Security
- Gender, Power and Representation
- Geopolitics
- Global Justice and Citizenship
- International Politics of Money
- International Relations of the Asia Pacific
- Latin American Foreign Policies
- Model United Nations
- Neuropolitics
- Parliamentary Studies
- Political Islam
- Political Psychology of Global Affairs
- Politics of Oil
- Politics of the Middle East
- Russia's Foreign and Security Policy
- Sport and Politics
- The Politics of the End of Empire
- The Politics of the UK Constitution
- Understanding Indian Politics
- War and Justice

# Teaching

**Year one and two students typically have six to nine hours per week of lectures and three tutorial hours a week. The lectures are large but tutorial groups will normally have no more than 15 students.**

Courses are typically assessed through a combination of essays and exams but can also include tutorial participation and various types of written assignments.

At Honours level (years three and four) teaching most often takes the form of seminars led by staff members. These can feature discussions, simulations, group presentations, or projects. Assessment varies between courses, but typically combines written assignments - such as essays, literature reviews, policy briefs, or blog posts - with marked participation, or presentations.

It is expected that students will engage in independent study and learning throughout their degree, based on the guidance provided by course reading lists.

# Study Abroad

**We offer students an extensive range of opportunities to study abroad as part of their degree. Our exchange partners include a wide range of institutions across the world, including universities in the US, Canada and China.**

In addition, Politics and International Relations has exchange schemes with the University of Leuven, University of Copenhagen, University of Grenoble, Sciences Po Paris, Free University Berlin, University of Cologne, LUISS Rome, Bocconi University Milan, University of Nijmegen, Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Pompeu Fabra University Barcelona, Comillas Pontifical University Madrid, Bilkent University, O.P. Jindal Global University New Delhi, and Akita International University Japan.

International study allows you to immerse yourself in different cultures. You will have the opportunity to try new things, take on new challenges and to make the most of your time at university.

Studying abroad provides you with a different perspective on your degree subject as well as, perhaps, the opportunity to learn a new language.

# Careers Service

**The University's Career Service looks to enhance your university experience from the moment you arrive, not just in your final year, so use us from day one. We're here to inspire and empower you to be the best you can be and fully develop your potential. We support you to gain experience that will enhance your personal development and employability, alongside your academic studies. In an increasingly competitive employment environment, we offer many opportunities to gain the skills and experience that will ensure you are as well prepared as possible to achieve a satisfying and rewarding future.**

## Our Services

- A dedicated careers consultant for your School offering targeted information resources, newsletters and one to ones. [www.ed.ac.uk/careers/schools](http://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/schools)
- Information and advice in person via our drop in centre in the Main Library, and available 24/7 via our websites, blogs and social media: [www.ed.ac.uk/careers](http://www.ed.ac.uk/careers)
- Careers consultations
- CV and applications advice
- Careers events: job fairs, themed events, volunteering, creative careers, sustainability, IT and much more

## Information and advice

- Volunteering opportunities within the University and beyond
- Opportunities to go overseas with the University's Go Abroad scheme
- The Edinburgh Award - get recognition on your final transcript for additional work and extracurricular activities you've been part of during your time with us.
- Part time and vacation jobs, internships, graduate jobs and more, via our dedicated job site: [mycareerhub.ed.ac.uk](http://mycareerhub.ed.ac.uk)

# Getting ready for Edinburgh

**If you'd like to get ahead with some background reading, we recommend the following books.**

Blom, Philipp (2010) *The Vertigo Years: Europe, 1900–1914*, Basic Books.

Bregman, R. (2017) *Utopia for Realists: And How We Can Get There*, Bloomsbury.

Chandrasekaran, R. (2008) *Imperial Life in the Emerald City*, Bloomsbury Publishing.

Cowley, P. and Ford, R. (2014) *Sex, Lies and the Ballot Box: 50 things you need to know about British elections*, Biteback Publishing.

Criado Perez, C. (2020) *Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men*, Vintage.

Eddo-Lodge, R. (2018) *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race*, Bloomsbury Publishing.

Enloe, C. (2017) *The Big Push: Exposing and Challenging the Persistence of Patriarchy*, Myriad Editions.

Epstein, D. (2019) *Range – How Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World*, Macmillan.

Klein, E. (2020) *Why We're Polarized*, Simon & Schuster.

Levitsky, S. and Ziblatt, D. (2018) *How Democracies Die*, Penguin.

Lewis, J. (2018) *The 2020 Commission Report on the North Korean Nuclear Attack on the United States*, WH Allen.

Piketty, T. (2014) *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, Harvard University Press.

Purdy, J. (2015) *After Nature: A Politics for the Anthropocene*, Harvard University Press.

Sandel, M. (2010) *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?*, Penguin Books Ltd.

Sayer, A. (2016) *Why We Can't Afford the Rich!*, Policy Press.

Sobolewska, M. and Ford, R. (2020) *Brexitland: Identity, Diversity and the Reshaping of British Politics*, Cambridge University Press.

Zuboff, S. (2019) *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, Profile Books.



# Undergraduate degrees in Politics and International Relations

- International Relations
- International Relations with Quantitative Methods
- Politics
- Politics with Quantitative Methods

Joint honours programmes combining Politics with Arabic, Economics, French, German, History, Italian, Law, Philosophy, Russian Studies, Scandinavian Studies, Social Anthropology, Sociology and Spanish are also available. Please see the University of Edinburgh degree finder for details:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/degrees>

For further information on entry requirements visit: [edin.ac/entry](https://www.ed.ac.uk/entry)

Read more about our programmes at: [edin.ac/ourdegrees](https://www.ed.ac.uk/ourdegrees)

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this booklet at the time of going to press. However, it will not form part of a contract between the University and a student or applicant and must be read in conjunction with the individual degree specifications, which can be found at [www.drps.ed.ac.uk](https://www.drps.ed.ac.uk).

No part of this publication may be reproduced without the written permission of the University.

The University of Edinburgh is a charitable body, registered in Scotland, with registration number SC005336