

Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

Basic Course Information

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| 1. | Awarding Institution: | Nottingham Trent University |
| 2. | School/Campus: | School of Social Sciences/City Campus |
| 3. | Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study: | MA, MA in Security Studies, Full Time/Part Time |
| 4. | Normal Duration: | FT 1 year/ PT 2 years |
| 5. | UCAS Code: | |

6. Overview and general educational aims of the course

The aim of this proposed MA course is to offer an innovative and critical approach to the rapidly developing field of Security Studies. MA Security Studies offers you an opportunity to understand the complex security problems on all levels of analysis. The course is built around NTU's learning and teaching philosophy, putting strong emphasis on offering you: 1) personalised learning experience via both personal tutorial stream and dissertation supervision structure; 2) internationalised curriculum that nurtures global citizenship and engages with international research community; and, 3) experiential learning via our learning facilities and partnerships with private and public sector.

The MA Security Studies has three main aims:

1. To provide advanced knowledge of key theoretical perspectives on Security Studies as well as a specialist knowledge of emerging trends developing in the field of Security Studies and Critical Security Studies;
2. To enable understanding of links between theory and practice within the broad security arena;
3. To offer a programme of study that will equip students with the necessary skills and attributes relevant for a successful graduate career in security-related professional employment.

This course offers an opportunity to take part in rapidly evolving contemporary discussions on security and may serve as a pathway to doctoral studies. The course curriculum is designed to promote deep knowledge, understanding and experience of domestic and international security issues, processes and relations between actors that shape our world. Throughout the course, you will gain international perspectives essential to succeed in the global workplace.

The course focuses both on theoretical underpinnings of traditional Security Studies as well as more contemporary theorisation of Critical Security Studies. Traditional Security Studies are mainly concerned with

areas such as threats to state security, military strategy and tactics, utilisation of conventional and unconventional weapons, or great power politics on the international level. Critical Security Studies focuses on the opening up of the referent objects of security from state to individuals, groups, or global environment, and widening of our understanding of security threats from the simple military threats to further include threats of economic, societal, cultural or environmental nature. The course combines the understanding of interrelated global security problems with their local effects. The course will provide you with advanced knowledge of both traditional and critical approaches to the study of security and allow you to choose either or both for study of the problems of your choice. Throughout the course, you will have the opportunity to apply your theoretical knowledge to local security environments and institutions which the Department works closely with to nurture your specialised research focus. You might be working with organisations focusing on providing help and support of refugees, women's charities, or local councils.

The course has been designed to feature combination of theory and practice to reflect the realities of the field. This allows you to apply your theoretical knowledge on a variety of security-related issues. Strong focus of the course will be on critical understanding of variety of issues around: terrorism and anti-terrorism policies and practices; human security; global governance; cybersecurity; political economy; sustainable development etc.

This MA is designed for anyone with wider social science or humanities background who is interested in acquiring advanced knowledge and understanding of contemporary security issues, policies and actors. MA Security Studies builds on the existing research expertise in the department, ranging from regional security structures and organisations to critical security and terrorism studies.

MA Security Studies builds on the success of MA in International Relations that NTU has operated successfully since 1992. Based within the School of Social Sciences which houses the core of relevant MA studies, MA in Security Studies will join existing provisions and offer optional modules across the School, with specific collaboration with MA International Relations, enabling you to access wide range of specialised knowledge. On top of that, you will also have an opportunity to join the existing School's research clusters. The course promotes your participation in a vibrant student community of both home and foreign students from around the world.

7. Course outcomes

Course outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of your course if you take advantage of the opportunities for learning that we provide.

Knowledge and understanding

By the end of the course you should be able to:

1. Critically evaluate existing theoretical perspectives on security;
2. Display comprehensive understanding and knowledge of contemporary debates in Security Studies and Critical Security Studies;
3. Critically analyse the relationship between scholarly debates and contemporary problems in the security arena;
4. Synthesise and critique a range of key theoretical assumptions within Security and Critical Security Studies scholarship;
5. Critically analyse social, political and cultural understanding of conflicts and their actors;
6. Critically evaluate the utility of a variety of research methods in understanding contemporary security issues;
7. Critically evaluate existing and proposed security measures and policies;
8. Critically reflect on the ethical dimensions that are relevant to the study and practice of contemporary security issues.

Skills, qualities and attributes

By the end of the course you should be able to:

9. Master advanced research methods, methodologies, and methodological tools appropriate for conducting security-related research;
10. Plan and generate substantial pieces of research as an independent learner, in a self-directed and autonomous way;
11. Critically reflect on how to position themselves as a researcher in relation to the object(s) of their inquiry.
12. Demonstrate ability to negotiate and apply diplomatic skills in professional contexts.

13. Learning and teaching methods

A wide-range of teaching and learning methods are used on the program, from traditional lecturing to complex role-playing. Lecture and seminars will usually be combined in order to offer you in-depth knowledge as well as an opportunity to participate in and lead discussions. Other ranges of teaching and learning methods involve project-based work leading to presentations as well as simulations.

One of the key pillars of this course is experiential learning, which supports active learning via Student-Centred Active Learning Environment with Upside-Down Pedagogies (SCALE-UP). These sessions are designed to enable you to learn through solving problems, sharing ideas, giving and receiving feedback, and teaching each other.

Furthermore, you have an option to partake in various PIR's events which focus on the practical side of policymaking. Activities range from parliamentary negotiation simulations, guest lectures from politicians and practitioners, to workshops in political communication. The course also benefits from the research activities developed within the School of Social Sciences, with workshops showcasing the School's research activities. On top of this, you will be strongly encouraged to partake in employability events designed specifically for postgraduates in IR and Security Studies. The combination of in-class and extra-curricular knowledge and skills is aimed to prepare you for the competitive 21st century job market.

14. **Assessment methods**

This course is assessed through the University's Grade-Based Marking scheme by a variety of means, including essays, presentations and individual/group projects, together with writing and presenting of policy-oriented works such as reports and negotiation briefs. The course is also underpinned by an overall course-based assessment strategy which ensures a consistent approach to evaluating your knowledge across modules. Moreover, the assessment methods are designed to enable you to develop and strengthen your transferable skills, thus supporting employability profiles. The PIR employability coordinator, together with NTU's employability team, will assist in developing a professional portfolio that can be later used when applying for internships, professional employment, or further study.

The MA in Security Studies includes a dissertation research project or work-based research project which represents one third of the course (60 credits). The dissertation module includes assessed elements of a written outline of the methodology to be deployed, a project plan, as well as an individual preliminary project presentation. It also includes ethics self-assessment.

Core and optional modules also include assessed essays of various length. These concentrate on the knowledge of the subject, giving an opportunity to demonstrate reading and engagement with the required and recommended literature, understanding of key concepts and theories and for students to show they are able to critically apply those to selected case studies.

Individual and group class presentations require the development and demonstration of presentation skills as well as the ability to conduct research on a given topic, analyse key issues, and propose measures for dealing with them. These presentations are designed to assess a range of skills in addition to subject knowledge and understanding. These include:

public speaking, team-work, research, organisation, initiative, analysis and time-management.

The reflective synoptic assessment, a part of Researching Political Issues module, invites students to reflect on the content of the module, referring to their readings, and on what has been learnt/what remains unclear and may need further clarification, investigation or reading. This assignment has three main objectives: (1) to provide a means to reflect on and self-assess the learning experience and personal developmental needs as the module progresses, (2) to be a dialogue between the students and the module leader, (3) to help students make sense of the different topics and identify, for themselves, the overall structure and rationale of a specific module and the skillset gained from the respective module. In this assessment, we aim to nurture creativity and original outlook. Thus, the course team will support in choosing a topic that best fits interests and future career aspirations. The topics may range from analysis of an artistic performance to critical review of security measures adopted by governments following a terrorist attack. Our staff will support students in choosing the topic and mentor on best theoretical and methodological framework that might be used in developing work. This applies to your dissertation as well as majority of the core and optional modules.

15. Course structure and curriculum

The course is designed to offer a contemporary curriculum covering theoretical debates and practical developments in the field of international security. The course is especially focused on critically analysing current security policies and challenges as related to the interconnected nature of threats. This provides a clear sense of development of security thought and analysis and advanced understanding of the methods needed to research any security issue of choice. On top of that, this MA offers an opportunity to participate in the annual international EuroSim competition (as an add-on to Negotiating in International Contexts module). Students interested in developing their diplomatic and negotiation skills as well as their ability to form reasoned arguments and speak confidently in public will be able to do so through an optional module, centred around a simulation of the EU decision making. The best students will then have a chance to participate in the prestigious, annual international EuroSim competition held in either the US or Europe, or any other extracurricular simulation activity (for example Model UN).

The course content is as follows:

- One core Dissertation Module (60 credits) or Dissertation Work-based Experience (60 credits)

Three core modules (30 credits each)

- Approaches and Issues in International Security

- Political Economy of International Security
- Researching Political Issues

One of the following optional modules (30 credits each) (please note that optional module subject to availability)

- Negotiating in International Contexts
- Global Governance and International Institutions
- Sustainability, Citizenship and Identity
- Gender and Security

The MA is achieved on gaining 180 credits in total. Interim awards of Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate are available on the course.

The course is designed to place an emphasis on advanced understanding and learning and research practices from the outset with the two core taught modules (Approaches and Issues in International Security and Political Economy of International Security) reflecting the scholarly debates in the study of security. These modules allow students to explore the key tenets of the major theories of, and approaches to, the policy making of security measures, and to question the linkage between issues, institutions, and actors.

The other two core modules (Researching Political Issues and Dissertation) allow students to develop a sustained grounding in, and working knowledge of, a variety of approaches to social science research, thus supporting their intellectual inquiries in their research or work-based project. Researching Political Issues enables the development of methods skills as well the opportunity to reflect on the educational journey thus far. The dissertation is intended to be the pinnacle of the course, drawing together skills and expertise, as well as providing an opportunity to display creativity, imagination, and originality in the design and execution of a research project. Students will be able to display specialist skills of design and project management, as well as critical, analytic, and synthesising skills that would be transferable to further postgraduate studies or to working in other professional settings. Members of the Politics and International Relations team are available to supervise dissertations in their area of specialism, and where necessary it would be permissible for a dissertation to be supervised by another colleague from the wider Social Sciences team (but with a co-supervisor from the PIR team to ensure that the requirements of the course were met). If a Work-based Dissertation is chosen, students will receive personalised support from a supervisor who will help you to link work experience to the contents of the course and the wider field of study. As the course focuses on the localised securities and insecurities, you will be able to apply your theoretical knowledge on practical aspects of global security threats and their everyday implications through having a chance to study lived experiences of actors in your vicinity.

The role of the option modules is to enable tailoring of the course to suit individual preferences and professional objectives. As such, students have the option to either focus on their negotiation and diplomacy skills in the Negotiating in International Contexts module, or other topical areas such as Global Governance and Institutions or Sustainability, Citizenship and Governance. Students can also choose to focus on the issues of gendered insecurities in contemporary security contexts. This facilitates tailoring of study according to preference in relation to your specific areas of interest and professional career aspirations.

16. Admission to the course

Entry requirements.

Applying with prior qualifications

- You will need an undergraduate degree equivalent to a UK undergraduate honours degree (normally 2.2 or above).

If you hold a first degree but it doesn't meet the entry requirements above, please refer to the information below.

Applying with non-standard entry qualifications/experience

- Applicants with non-standard entry qualifications and/or relevant experience will be considered on an individual basis. You will be required to demonstrate how your experiences and knowledge would enable you to study this course at Masters-level in your Personal Statement.

No references are required when applying for this course.

17. Support for learning

Student support includes the opportunity to work to prepare for the course before it starts with guided reading. A number of supporting systems are put in place to enhance your experience during your academic studies at NTU.

At the start of semester one, an induction period will also help to assess your needs and direct towards particular ways in which to help students prepare for successful completion of the course. This induction is tailored to all students (whether home or international and students coming from a different educational environment than that of the UK) and aims to present and harmonize learning expectations. The induction period will also introduce the research activities of the Department of Politics and

International Relations. Staff-led research projects will be introduced during an induction session and students given the opportunity to liaise with staff from the PIR Department about projects. Students will be invited to contribute to staff-led research projects by designing a dissertation that will be completed during semester three and the following summer to fit with the broader research objectives of one staff-led project. Staff will offer support throughout the year where you might wish to engage with research being conducted in the department. During the induction period there will also be a session on assessment.

Non-English native speakers will benefit from in-session English support to help them with developing and sustaining their writing skills. All students have a personal tutor and support from an experienced course team. Students have the opportunity to work with individual members of staff and to develop learning and writing skills especially through the weaving into the course of diagnostic elements of non-assessed coursework in the first semester. Through the personal tutor system students will be invited to hold a one-on-one meeting per month during term time (starting in the induction period) dedicated to helping identify specific educational and employability needs. In these meetings a tutor will help to develop a personalised strategy of how to maintain a high level of engagement with the course, and to respond to challenges if they emerge.

The PIR team also utilises E-learning components as integral parts of the course. As such, lecture slides and supportive documents are available for you to access on the Nottingham Trent University Online Workspace (NOW) Learning Rooms for each module. NOW is a space for programme and module information, resources for study, news and email and is utilised by members of the course team to support and enhance module delivery and to assist with the dissemination of course information. This allows students to grasp the fundamentals of the course at their own pace. Students can replay lectures (recorded and placed on NOW by Lecture Capture) as many times as they want, while having access to all supporting materials such as required and recommended readings, videos, examples of best practice, etc. Additional learning support will be provided by linking respective modules to Lynda.com videos and other available resources.

All written work is submitted online through NOW and discussion threads within modules will enhance standards. The PIR team, and more broadly colleagues across the School, offer a series of research seminars throughout the year which MA students are encouraged to participate in and to offer presentations to. These include student-run sessions for graduate students which cut across the PhD/MA divide, as well as a regular course of visiting speakers for the IR team.

Because of the nature of Security Studies as a discipline, many lectures and seminars integrate international and global perspectives, thus

allowing non-UK students to share their experience and knowledge about the world in an inclusive way. Specific support is available for students as they come to write their dissertation research project or work-based research projects. All students will have a supervisor, and all students will want to meet with course team members from time to time including during the summer months.

Specific support is available for students as they come to write their dissertation research project or work-based research projects. All students will be able to meet with course team members from time-to-time, including during the summer months. Depending on which pathway chosen for the Dissertation module, students will be assigned a specific supervisor to support throughout this final aspect of their degree. Here, students will either be assigned a supervisor whose academic expertise suits their chosen research topic, or they will receive the guidance of a dedicated tutor who will provide regular assistance in completing both the period of work-based learning and/or chosen work-based research project.

18. Graduate destinations/employability

Graduate employability is fundamental to the strategic aim of NTU, as reflected in the fact that NTU is consistently placed close to the top of the league table of all UK Universities for graduate employment.

As MA Security Studies graduates, students will have the opportunity to reflect on the subject and transferable skills learnt while preparing coursework. These include expertise in writing complex, yet concise, analytical pieces, develop and implement projects, diplomatic and negotiation skills, and the ability to present in-depth ideas with confidence. Students will also have been helped and encouraged to articulate those skills in relation to particular occupations that they may be interested in pursuing. Course learning outcomes and assessment strategies are designed, in part, to help students to develop transferable skills and attributes as outlined in section 7 above. While the primary aims of a university course has traditionally been intellectual in nature and specific to the subject(s) under study, NTU realises the importance of the role of higher education in training graduates to move into the labour market. This course, therefore, focuses on developing the following skills: analysis, communication, time-management, team-working, problem solving, and IT/modern technologies. Each module on this course is designed to engage in developing these skills, which often form part of assessed assignments.

In addition to the expertise available within the School of Social Sciences, the University has a comprehensive careers service open to all students to assist in securing employment – you can access the Career's Service pages of the NTU website here: <http://www.ntu.ac.uk/careers>. Support

is especially provided by the Career Development Centre as well as more specific aid from our careers consultants experts for international students, and through various initiatives such as the 'Succeed in Social Science', which includes an annual event on 'Early careers with Politics and International Relations degrees'.

A number of students seek internships and placements during the summer months and are assisted by the PIR team to find relevant posts. This allows graduates from this course to undertake a wide range of careers and professions. In addition to successful applications to relevant government departments, graduates have also joined international aid and development agencies. In the private sector, businesses are increasingly looking for graduates with an understanding of policy making and implementation, institutions, and processes.

19. **Course standards and quality**

Course standards are monitored in a variety of ways:

1. A course committee of staff and students monitors student feedback on module delivery and the learning experience.
2. An external examiner supports the course team and ensures quality in the delivery and assessment of the course.
3. Students are given detailed feedback on each piece of assessed work, and on non-assessed diagnostic work.
4. Students also have a personal tutor with whom they can discuss their progress and gain additional feedback or advice on learning.
5. Student feedback is captured via module and course student evaluation surveys (EvaSys, PTES).
6. Finally, the course is lodged within the School of Social Sciences and is managed within the guidelines and standards set and assured by the School.

20. **Assessment regulations**

This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in Section 16 of the Quality Handbook). Any course specific assessment features are described below:

This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in its [Academic Standards and Quality Handbook](#)).

Student work will be assessed via the University's [Grade-Based assessment](#) scheme, and in-line with university policy all assessed work will be graded and returned within 15 working days. Feedback is provided either electronically or in person, depending on the nature of the

assessment. Some modules will also encourage students to engage in self and peer feedback.

21.

Additional information

Collaborative partner(s):

Course referenced to national (QAA) Benchmark Statements:

Course recognised by:

Date this course specification approved:

Any additional information: