

Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

Basic Course Information		
1.	Awarding Institution:	Nottingham Trent University
2.	School/Campus:	School of Social Sciences/City & Clifton
3.	Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study:	MA, MA in International Relations and 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
	<p>The aim of this proposed MA course is to offer an innovative and critical approach to the rapidly developing field of Security Studies combined with the advanced study of International Relations. MA International Relations and Security offers an opportunity to understand complex security problems particularly at the global level 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 you with international IR and Security research community; and, 3) experiential learning via our learning facilities as well as partnerships with private and public sector.</p> <p>The MA International Relations and Security has three main aims:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To provide advanced knowledge of key theoretical frameworks in the interrelated fields of International Relations and Security;2. To enable critical evaluation of the link between theory and practice within the particular area of international security;3. To offer a programme of study that will equip students with the necessary skills and attributes relevant for a successful graduate career in international relations or security-related professional employment. <p>This course offers an opportunity to take part in rapidly evolving contemporary discussions on the links between IR and Security and may serve as an appropriate 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 on the global problems, policies and institutions that influence international politics but have very real implications on everyday lives of individuals and existence of other security actors (societies, nation-states or the entire biosphere). From</p>

this perspective, the course enables you to make sense of the complex interdependence of modern societies and security threats. As most of those contemporary security threats are nearly impossible to be effectively solved on local or national levels, the course puts a strong emphasis on analysing global norms, policies and processes.

The course focuses both on theoretical underpinnings of traditional International Relations and Security as well as more contemporary theorisation of Critical Security Studies and post-structural discussions in international Relations. While the early and more traditional IR scholarship, closely related to the questions of security, focuses on questions of state power, strategies of armed deterrence, or questions of military preponderance, the more critical IR and Security Studies scholarship is concerned with questions of identity, everyday workings of power structures and their disruptions, or the dangers of modern military technology in relation to personal freedoms and security. The course has been designed to feature a combination of theory and practice to reflect the realities of the field and allow students to apply their theoretical knowledge on a variety of security-related issues. A 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 has been designed to students with background in social sciences and humanities who are interested in acquiring advanced knowledge and understanding of contemporary international relations and security issues, policies and actors. The MA in International Relations and Security builds on the success of MA in International Relations that NTU has operated successfully since 1992. By combining IR with Security Studies, the Department of Politics and International Relations aims to follow the developments in the field as well as offer a bespoke course mirroring the expertise of its staff.

Based within the School of Social Sciences which houses the core of relevant MA studies, MA in International Relations and Security will join existing provisions and offer optional modules across the School, with specific collaboration with MA International Relations, enabling students to access a wide range of specialised knowledge, the School's research clusters and promoting participation in a vibrant student community of both home and foreign students from around the world.

4.

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 international relations and global security;
2. Display a comprehensive understanding and knowledge of contemporary debates in the disciplines of International Relations and Security Studies and the relationship between these debates and contemporary problems in global affairs;
3. Synthesise and critique a range of key theoretical assumptions within International Relations and Security Studies scholarship;
4. Critically analyse social, political and cultural understanding of global rules, norms and conflicts and their actors;
5. Critically evaluate the utility of a variety of research methods in understanding contemporary global politics and security issues;
6. Critically evaluate existing and proposed international security measures and policies;
7. Critically reflect on the ethical dimensions relevant for the study and practice of international security;

Skills, qualities and attributes

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

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

5. **Learning and teaching methods**

A wide-range of teaching and learning methods are used on the program, from traditional lecturing to complex role-playing of international institution negotiations. Lectures and seminars will usually be combined in order to offer 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 and discussions.

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 learning through problem solving, sharing ideas, giving and receiving feedback, and peer-to-peer teaching.

In addition to the learning and teaching methods outlined above, students have the option to choose a module that will prepare them for the EuroSim group exercise. This bespoke module (Negotiating in International Contexts) is aimed at training students in negotiation techniques through the use of simulation. The module is co-taught by experts in European politics within the Department of Politics and International Relations who have experience of running negotiation simulations. It aims to teach the skills of negotiation and diplomacy as well as public speaking and briefing papers, the largest and longest running EU simulation in the world, which takes place annually in either the United States or Europe. This bespoke activity aims at creating a community of learners and strong negotiation team that will be able to compete internationally with teams from other European and US universities. This module thus combines content-rich learning with widely transferable skills of diplomacy and negotiation, public speaking skills, ability to construct reasoned arguments and team work. This boosts a student's profile and prepares them for future careers in a wide variety of fields.

Students also have opportunity to take part in PIR's events which focus on the practical side of policymaking. Activities range from parliamentary negotiation simulations 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 well as the rich programme of extra-curricular activities which involve renowned external speakers. On top of this, students will be strongly encouraged to partake in employability events designed specifically for postgraduates in IR and Security. This combination of in-class and extra-curricular knowledge and skills is aimed to prepare the students for the 21st century job market.

6. **Assessment methods**

This course is assessed through the University's Grade-Based Marking scheme by a variety of means, including essays, presentation 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 students' knowledge across modules. Moreover, the assessment methods enable students to develop and strengthen transferable skills, thus supporting their employability profile. The PIR employability coordinator helped in devising the assessment diets with transferable skills in mind.

The MA in International Relations and Security 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 lengths. These concentrate on the knowledge of the subject, giving students an opportunity to demonstrate that they have read and engaged with the required and recommended literature, understood the key concepts and theories and are able to critically apply those to elected case studies.

Individual and group class presentations require students to develop and demonstrate their presentation skills as well as 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.

Reflective pieces of assessment, a part of Researching Political Issues module, are employed to invite students to reflect on the content of the module, referring to their readings, and on what they have learnt/what remains unclear and may need further clarification, investigation or reading. This assignment has three main objectives: (1) to provide students with a means to reflect on and assess their own learning experience and 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.

All modules allow students to tailor them according to topical preferences. A student, for example, might be interested in the UN's Security Council proceedings when it comes to deploying a peacekeeping mission or the presence of China's forces in the East China Sea. Our staff will support the student in choosing their topic and mentor on the best theoretical and methodological framework to use in developing the idea. This applies both to the dissertation as well as majority of the core and optional modules.

7. 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 students with a sense of the development of security thought and analysis together with an advanced understanding of the methods needed to research an international security issue of choice.

The course content is as follows:

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

Three core modules (30 credits each)

- Approaches and Issues in International Security
- International Relations Theory
- Researching Political Issues

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

- Negotiating in International Contexts
- Political Economy of International Security
- Gender Difference and International Development
- Intercultural Communication

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 core understanding and core learning and research practices from the outset with the two core taught modules (Approaches and Issues in International Security, and International Relations Theory) reflecting debates in the study of IR and security. These modules allow students to explore the key tenets of the major theories of, and approaches to, policy making of security, 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. The dissertation is intended to be the pinnacle of the MA, drawing together skills and expertise, as well as providing students with the 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 research (PhD) 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).

The role of the option modules is to enable students to tailor the course to suit their individual preferences and professional objectives. As such, students have the option to either focus on their negotiation and diplomacy skills in the EuroSim module or develop expertise in Political Economy of International Security, Gender Differences and International Development, or Intercultural Communication. The EuroSim module offers an opportunity to participate in the annual international EuroSim competition. 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 and international EuroSim competition.

8. **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.

9. **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 help assess individual needs and direct support in specific ways in which to help preparation 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 week will also introduce the research activities of the Department of Politics and International Relations. Staff-led research projects will be introduced to students during an induction session and they will be given the opportunity to liaise with staff from the PIR Department about their projects. They will be invited to contribute to staff-led research projects by designing the dissertation that they will complete 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 students wish to engage with research being conducted in the department. During the induction week the you will also have a session on assessment.

Non-English speakers 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. There is the opportunity to work with individual members of staff and to develop learning and writing skills through the weaving into the course of diagnostic elements of non-assessed coursework in the first semester. Through the personal tutor system students are invited to participate in one one-to-one meetings per month during term time (starting in the induction week) dedicated to helping to identify specific educational and employability needs. In these meetings the tutor will students 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 and lecture-capture are available for student to access on the NOW Learning Rooms for each module. The Nottingham Trent University Online Workspace (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. They 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 are conducted to enhance a student's. 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 IR and Security Studies as disciplines, 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 you choose to take for the Dissertation module, you will also be assigned a specific supervisor to support them throughout this final aspect of your 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 their period of work-based learning and/or chosen work-based research project.

10. **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 IR and Security graduates, students will have had the opportunity to reflect on the subject and transferable skills that they have 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 have 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 students 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 may 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.

11. **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 survey (EvaSys and 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.

12. **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.

13. **Additional information**

Collaborative partner(s):
Course referenced to national
(QAA) Benchmark Statements:
Course recognised by:
Date this course specification
approved:

Any additional information: