



Department of  
International Politics

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Postgraduate studies in

# International Politics

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## Important information

The programme information published in this brochure was correct at time of going to print (April 2025) and may be subject to change. Prospective students are advised to check the definitive programme information, including entry requirements, that is available on our website before making an application, to ensure that the programme meets their needs.

# Welcome

Welcome to the world's first Department of International Politics.

The study of International Politics is indispensable for understanding a rapidly changing world. In a time of political and ideological uncertainty, social and economic transformation and increasingly diverse forms of conflict and violence, everyone has a stake in how these crucial global challenges are confronted. It is all the more essential, therefore, that the Department's teaching and research remain true to its founding ideals: to seek greater security, peace and justice in a disordered world.

A vibrant student community, working together with a dedicated staff of leading researchers and teachers, provides a dynamic environment in which to study international politics across all levels from the local to the global. As a student in our Department you will be well placed to gain a deep, diverse understanding of these challenges and how we can manage them in the coming decades.

We have a thriving Graduate School that reflects decades of experience producing generations of outstanding postgraduate students. We attract some of the brightest and best students from around the world to study in a highly stimulating intellectual environment. Our academic staff are all active researchers, and the breadth of expertise we offer allows you to engage with the most pressing and stimulating issues and topics in international politics, ranging from the study of war, conflict, strategy and security to the study of global order, international theory, postcolonialism, Welsh politics, and ethics.

We are renowned for providing excellence in teaching and research, demonstrated by 87% of our research being deemed world leading or internationally excellent (REF 2021) and our position in the top 5 in the UK for Student Experience for the subject of Politics (Good University Guide 2025, The Times and Sunday Times).

Our learning environment welcomes staff and students from all over the world, creating a lively interactive community that makes a vital contribution to our innovative research. Whether you are interested in understanding the conceptual underpinnings of international politics or practical policy implications, you will be part of a department at the forefront of understanding and tackling the challenges of 'how we might live' in the 21st century.

Everybody here in the Department of International Politics looks forward to welcoming you into our academic community of students and staff.

**Alistair Shepherd**  
Acting Head of Department

# Our courses

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# International Relations

## MA

Situated between mountains and sea, our Department of International Politics is ideally located to nurture ambitious thinking. For over 100 years, this unique position has encouraged International Relations scholars to open their minds and expand their intellectual horizons. As a student on the MA International Relations, you will join our tight-knit community of scholars who have all come to Aberystwyth University to grapple with the big ideas that shape our nations, our world and our planet.

In the International Relations degree scheme, you'll be exposed to the cutting edge of IR thought, including post-Western thinking, planetary politics, gender approaches and the politics of knowledge in international practice. We take foundational concepts like anarchy, sovereignty and power and explore how they can help us understand today's global challenges and world's future. We investigate conventional IR thinking, and debate whether it is fit for purpose in our increasingly uncertain world.

At this moment, international politics stands on the edge of multiple and intersecting crises. Your MA studies at Aberystwyth will provide the theoretical and empirical tools to help you understand this precarious global situation. You will apply your own independent thoughts and ideas to issues like conflict and security, climate change, international negotiations, and the global refugee crisis. Benefiting from our expert guidance, your MA studies will culminate in an independently researched dissertation, an opportunity for you to combine your critical skills and conceptual knowledge to explore the most urgent questions facing our world today.

## Modules

On this course you will study a core module in International Politics, along with the Dissertation.

You will also choose from a range of optional modules which currently include:

- International Politics (core)
- Futures for International Relations Theory
- Global Politics of Middle Powers
- Indigenous Politics
- Knowledge and Expertise in International Politics
- Race, (Im)mobility and Incarceration
- Refugee Simulation: Knowledge and Application.

For more details and the latest information, see our website.

## Key facts



Course code: L288



Duration: 1 year full-time



Contact time: At least 6 hours a week, including one 2-hour seminar per module.

# International Politics (Dual Degree)

## MA

This exciting two-year MA degree in International Politics enables you to study with leading scholars in two departments with enviable reputations for the quality of their teaching and research: the Department of International Politics at Aberystwyth University and the School of International Service at American University in Washington, D.C. In addition, you will experience living and studying in two very different but complementary cultural and academic worlds.

During the first year, you will be based in Aberystwyth where you will take advantage of the Department's distinctively normative and critical perspectives on the discipline. You will not only explore concepts that typically constitute the bedrock of the study of International Relations (such as sovereignty, anarchy and security) but subject those concepts to rich and multi-layered interrogation from perspectives that unsettle conventional understandings of international relationships and how they function.

During the second year in Washington, D.C., the optional modules that you take will have a more policy-orientated character and be combined with core modules in social science methodology and economics. You will have the opportunity to connect your studies with practical experience and interaction with the policy community, which American University's School of International Service is uniquely positioned to provide. You will also have the opportunity to apply for internships with government or non-governmental organisations in Washington, D.C. under the Optional Practical Training Scheme after you complete your degree.

## Modules

Core modules you may study at Aberystwyth include International Politics along with the Research Paper, which gives you the opportunity to produce an in-depth piece of research through a guided, structured process.

You will also choose from a range of optional modules, which currently include:

- International Politics (core)
- Futures for International Relations Theory
- Global Politics of Middle Powers
- Indigenous Politics
- Knowledge and Expertise in International Politics
- Race, (Im)mobility and Incarceration
- Refugee Simulation: Knowledge and Application

Optional modules will be chosen from one field of specialisation and include:

- Energy and Environment
- International Development
- Social Enterprise
- US Foreign Policy.

For more details and the latest information, see our website.

## Key facts



**Course code:** L286A



**Duration:** 2 years full-time



**Contact time:**  
At least 6 hours a week, including one 2-hour seminar per module at Aberystwyth.

# War, Strategy and Intelligence

## MA

This degree will provide you with the necessary conceptual and empirical tools and knowledge to understand, debate and critique the interconnected phenomena of War, Strategy and Intelligence.

The question of war has been at the heart of the human experience since the beginning of political communities and remains an enduring feature of the international system. Understanding the causes and consequences of war is a complex task that requires an interdisciplinary approach. Throughout the course, you will engage with a diversity of fields from the social sciences and humanities to understand the phenomenon of war and the perennial quest for security that characterises international relations. As you explore fields such as military history, security, intelligence, strategic studies, and international relations, you will develop the knowledge and analytical instruments needed to understand the concepts of war and warfare, the various strategies used to wage it and the intelligence apparatuses that inform those strategies.

From Sun Tzu to 'Shock 'n' Awe' this degree develops your conceptual and empirical understanding of the use of force in international relations. In the 21st century, with the post-Cold War hopes for a 'New World Order' having faded, fears of major regional and even global wars are growing. This degree examines the most pressing strategic issues facing the world today and analyses the evolving nature of war and conflict from traditional great power competition to modern forms of hybrid warfare. Renewed friction between Russia and the West, escalating tensions in the Middle East and South Asia, growing Chinese military assertiveness, and ongoing intra-state violent conflicts around the world demonstrate the continuing need for an in-depth and critical understanding of the dynamics of war, strategy and intelligence.

## Modules

Core modules you will study on this course include Warfare in the Twenty- First Century and the Dissertation.

You will also choose from a range of optional modules, which currently include:

- Warfare in the 21st Century
- Intelligence, Security and
- International Relations in the 20th Century
- Security Policy in the European Union
- War and Peace in the Middle East
- Critical Security Studies: Emerging Issues
- Thoughts of War: Strategic Theory and Thinkers.

For more details and the latest information, see our website.

## Key facts



**Course code:** L254



**Duration:** 1 year full-time



**Contact time:**  
At least 6 hours a week, including one 2-hour seminar per module.

## PhD, DProf, MPhil

The Department of International Politics has an excellent record of training PhD students.

Students undertaking PhD research are integral to the Department's renowned research culture. The considerable achievements of Aberystwyth PhD graduates are indicated in a significant number of prize-winning theses, high quality published work and conspicuous success in the job market, including in academia, government departments, NGOs and international organisations.

PhD students design and carry out a major piece of research that makes an original contribution to knowledge in their chosen discipline. You will be supervised by subject specialists within the Department, who will advise you carefully throughout the planning, research and writing process. Students who have not already completed a programme in research methods as part of their Masters degree will undertake an ESRC recognised package of social science research training modules during the first year of their PhD.

Our areas of supervision expertise include:

- International relations theory and political theory
- War, strategy, security and intelligence
- Democracy, devolution and territorial politics
- Migration and global development
- Conflict and post-conflict reconciliation
- International political economy
- Global health and the environment
- International and military history
- The politics of the UK and its regions
- Regional politics: Europe, Russia, Middle East, Latin America and the USA.

The Department also offers an MPhil degree, which is a research-based Masters, comprising a 60,000 word thesis. The MPhil is completed in one year full-time, or two years part-time.

### Supervision and progression

Both our PhD and MPhil students enjoy the very best supervision in the field. Each student is assigned two supervisors and supervision meetings take place every three weeks during term time. The exceptionally close working relationship encouraged by this system translates into an excellent completion rate.

### DProf

The Professional Doctorate or DProf is more appropriate for those pursuing professional rather than academic careers and is designed to allow qualified professionals to study towards a doctorate while maintaining their employment. A DProf will be awarded in recognition of the successful completion of an approved taught programme of study, together with the successful completion of an advanced piece of research. The collaborative aspect provided by a work-based research project provides an ideal opportunity to embed new knowledge in the workplace and ensure that your research is relevant to industry.

## Our research

At Aberystwyth you will be at the centre of the latest research on international relations.

The Department is a leading centre of innovative research in politics and international relations. We are renowned for our research activities, with our staff and postgraduate students conducting research on some of the most difficult and important issues facing human communities today. The Department is a leading research department in the UK and globally, and is well known as a place where exciting new understandings of national, international and global politics are being developed.

From the analysis of humanitarian intervention to the future of EU security, from the study of forms of global harm to imagining new planetary politics, from military history to the latest challenges in nuclear proliferation and intelligence gathering, from analyses of the position of Britain in a changing world to

understanding the role of Wales in the world – the Department's world-leading research expertise has been at the forefront of developing new thinking and new policy practices.

In sum, the Department is a vibrant environment in which to study and explore new ideas. Each year we host a range of talks by world-leading experts and opinion formers that students, staff and local people regularly attend. We also host a number of exciting research groups and centres, such as the Centre on the International Politics of Knowledge, the David Davies Memorial Institute, the Centre for Intelligence and International Security Studies and the Planetary Challenges and Politics Centre. These are forums for analysis and discussion of the latest research in the context of a rigorous, but welcoming, research community.



## Employability

### Career prospects

Do you want to make an impact in the world? Going on to further study in the field of International Relations can open doors to many different career opportunities. Popular careers in the field include: government, the military, diplomacy, lobbying, political analysis, international law and intelligence.

### Transferable skills

Our Postgraduate programmes emphasise the development of strong research, writing and analytical skills as well as the capacity to work independently - qualities that are highly valued by employers.

Our postgraduate programmes will also develop the following skills:

- structuring and communicating complex ideas effectively
- writing for and speaking to a range of audiences
- evaluating and organising information
- working effectively with others
- working within time frames and to specific deadlines.

Our graduates work in:

- local and national politics
- the Foreign Office
- the Ministry of Defence
- non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- international organisations
- journalism
- business
- education
- the armed forces.

Many also choose the legal profession. And some love academia so much that they stay on and become eminent scholars!

### Meet one of our alumni: Ian Crook, Intelligence Specialist at Google

In my current role I am responsible for open source intelligence collection and analysis, monitoring of regional and international developments, and providing operational support during incidents and crisis management to protect assets, personnel, and reputation.

I chose Aberystwyth due to the International Politics department being the first of its kind. As such the department has had a deal of prestige since its inception in 1919. When I visited the department I was impressed by both the departmental building and welcoming atmosphere. Also, spending a few days in the picturesque setting of Aberystwyth town made me sure that I wanted to attend the University. It is a great working and social environment!

My postgraduate course enabled me to acquire a more in-depth understanding of a niche area of the subject and helped me to secure employment opportunities that are related to my studies.

I look back on my experience at Aberystwyth as some of the best years of my life. I made great friends, enjoyed the social aspects of university life, met a range of diverse and interesting people, and had a great academic experience. I would recommend Aberystwyth to anybody thinking of pursuing a degree!

## Extra curricular activities

Our internationally renowned research community hosts numerous extra-curricular activities that are intended to enhance the range and depth of the postgraduate experience that we offer.

Specifically for MA students, there is the fortnightly International Politics Masters Seminar Series (IPMSS). This comprises a varied programme of talks each semester by academic members of staff, roundtables on current topics in international politics and documentary and film viewings. It also provides an opportunity for students to discuss their dissertation projects and to receive support and feedback.

There are also several research groups run by PhD students that are active in the Department, organising regular events such as talks and reading groups. All postgraduate students are very welcome to join these research groups, or to set up their own groups on the research areas that interest them.

In addition, we are home to a number of research centres that are run by academic staff and that put on events during the course of the year. These include the Centre for the International Politics of Knowledge, the Centre for Welsh Politics and Society, the Planetary Challenges and Politics Centre, the Centre for Intelligence and International Security Studies and the David Davies Memorial Institute.

Finally, each week during term we hold our International Politics Research Seminar (IPRS), at which a visiting academic, member of staff or PhD student presents their current research. This seminar series is at the centre of our research culture and all PhD students and members of staff attend. We very much encourage our MA students to take part as well, as the IPRS presents an outstanding opportunity to engage with cutting-edge research in international politics.



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✈ = International airport

🚂 = Train station

⚓ = Ferry port



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