



**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS
AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**SHAPING
GLOBAL AFFAIRS**

“ I firmly believe that studying Politics and International Relations is essential for understanding and responding to the great challenges we face in today’s world. ”



showyourstripes.info

CHOOSE READING



Dr Adam Humphreys
Head of Department,
Politics and International
Relations

In the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Reading we address some of the most urgent issues facing the world today, from war and terrorism to climate change, peacebuilding, and challenges to democracy.

You will learn from world-leading academics who have personal experience of public policy and of working with governments and with global institutions such as the UN. The modules we offer are informed by our cutting-edge research in international relations, conflict, and public policy. This is combined with small group teaching, giving you the space and time to develop your own ideas and to learn by interacting closely with peers and academic staff. You will also benefit from the global perspectives brought by our diverse staff and student bodies.

I firmly believe that studying Politics and International Relations is essential for understanding and responding to the great challenges we face in today’s world. In my view, this study should be rigorous and challenging, but also engaging and fun. What inspires me is when our graduates describe their time with us as stretching – built around serious study, but providing the opportunity to work with passionate people who make the whole experience transformative and enjoyable.

YOUR FUTURE

Our Master's courses are designed to equip you with the skills that are vital for your future professional career or in further academic research. Essential employability skills are embedded within all our modules.

Recently, our graduates have gone on to work in the Office for National Statistics, Civil Service Fast Stream, Department for International Trade, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and the Cabinet Office.

Shape your pathway

Tailor your degree by choosing from a variety of optional modules to create a course that suits your career aspirations.

Embedded employability

Throughout your course you will establish valuable knowledge and learn to apply it to contemporary issues using analysis, problem solving, communication and presentation skills. For example, in our Contemporary Diplomacy module you will undertake practical assessments, such as policy brief writing and lobbying exercises.

Hands on experience

Work Placement

Enhance your employability skills and build your network with a work placement in an external organisation focused on international relations or international security. You will gain invaluable first-hand experience of independent problem solving and of working within a professional environment.

Capstone Project

We are one of the few universities to offer a Capstone Project, designed to give you professional experience and solve real-life policy problems by working with business companies, government agencies, not-for-profit organisations and NGOs.

Applied Research Project and Placement

Put your academic knowledge into practice with a placement at an external organisation specifically related to the general sphere of public policy. Further develop your independent and critical research skills through a reflective research report.

Expand your network

Build your connections and learn from guest speakers, including diplomats, military personnel, public policy practitioners and UK politicians.



OUR COURSES

MA Conflict and International Security

Taught by academics who work closely with the UK military and with defence and security actors from around the world, this programme analyses contemporary issues of war, conflict and security in the context of politics within and between both Western and non-Western societies.

You will develop a nuanced understanding of the causes and consequences of organised violence and gain an appreciation of the challenges faced by politicians and military personnel. You will also learn to think critically about a wide range of political ideas, institutions and events and how they relate to vital issues of security and conflict.

MA International Relations and Diplomacy

Gain an appreciation of the complex and contested nature of contemporary international politics and of the challenges faced by nation-states and other actors. This course equips you with the analytical tools to understand the key drivers of contemporary international relations and to appreciate how these relate to real diplomatic practice and to the complex process of domestic and international policymaking.

You will learn to think critically about institutions, actors, ideas and events and will develop the theoretical understanding necessary to make sense of empirical developments from around the world, ranging from climate change to the rise of non-Western powers.

MSc Public Policy

Offered jointly by the Department of Politics and International Relations and the Department of Economics, this interdisciplinary degree uses insights from both areas to develop policymaking skills. In addition to developing your general understanding, you can focus on a specialist area including welfare policy, sustainable environments, global governance and international development. You can also undertake a Capstone project, where you will complete a project on behalf of an external client such as a business company or NGO, or an extended placement project.

MRes Politics and International Relations

Our flexible MRes programme gives you a strong foundation for future doctoral study or to pursue a research-orientated career in think-tanks, public service and other fields by enabling you to focus on a particular research area that interests you.



GIVING YOU THE EDGE



Mustafa Aryan

Master's in International Security

Mustafa Aryan previously worked as the Director General of Regional and International Affairs at the High Council for National Reconciliation of Afghanistan. He decided to enhance his understanding of contemporary global security issues and learn to analyse them critically here at Reading.

“The international character of Reading helped me to build professional relationships and expand my network. Politics and International Relations at Reading is an excellent choice for anyone wanting to become a diplomat, political analyst or a public servant.”



Chloe Butcher

Master's in Public Policy

Chloe Butcher's career has thrived since she graduated with a Master's in Public Policy. She is now a Policy and Partnership Manager for the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners. Chloe also works closely with the National Police Chiefs' Council to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of national policing and criminal justice programmes.

Chloe looks back on her time at the University of Reading as both rewarding and intellectually stimulating.

“Deciding to do my Master's in Public Policy was the best decision I ever made. I still find what I do so interesting and couldn't see myself doing anything else. The Department of Politics and International Relations at Reading

“The research I conducted for my dissertation on stop and search has undoubtedly led me to the career I am in now.”

will provide you with so many opportunities both in terms of the modules they teach, the amazing lecturers and the close proximity to London will also be of real benefit to you.”

Being able to engage with key figures and practitioners in the field and learn about the world of politics and international relations directly from those who play a role in it were key to her success.

“We had a number of guest speakers join us throughout the year, including MP John Redwood, and a visit to the Houses of Parliament which, as someone with a goal of working in politics, I really enjoyed.”





Professor Sarah von Billerbeck

GIVE PEACE A CHANCE

Since her role as a political officer in the UN's peacekeeping mission in DR Congo, Professor Sarah von Billerbeck has been investigating how the UN could be more effective in achieving lasting peace.

Funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council, Sarah's recent collaborative project explores the ways in which peacebuilding may unintentionally enable authoritarian tendencies. Significantly, this work

provides a groundbreaking framework for policymakers and practitioners involved in peacebuilding, offering key considerations and suggested approaches to planning future interventions.

As co-founder of UN and the Global Order Programme, Sarah champions open dialogue between academics and policymakers to respond to the key challenges faced by the UN and global

governance systems. The programme provides a forum for researchers and practitioners who are studying and working with the UN and other international organizations to explore and learn from in-depth and innovative research and policy engagement.

At Reading students are taught by active researchers and foreign policy professionals, and on Sarah's module 'Building Peace' students evaluate

different approaches to helping fragile and conflict-affected states transition to sustainable peace, exploring implications for both policy and practice. During her module 'Contemporary Diplomacy,' students learn about both the theory and practice of international diplomacy through exchanges with current and former diplomats or other civil servants whilst engaging in a series of hands-on exercises and simulations.

How are policy decisions made and implemented? How much influence do businesses and citizens have on public policy? And what role did different interested groups play in policy change on issues including mobile phone roaming charges, CO2 emissions standards, and data protection regulations?



Dr David Marshall

Dr David Marshall is an international expert in why public policies are made the way they are and the role of informal power in policy-making.

Engaging with decision makers across political systems, David's research covers 21 countries and uses new interconnected datasets from a wide variety of sources. His recent book 'The Political Influence of Business in the European Union' explains the circumstances that lead to business

interests being more or less successful than others. His work contributes to a better understand of how policy is made, and through this improves policy-making more generally.

David leads the Politics of Public Policy module during which students learn about the influence of institutions, ideas and interests in policy-making. Drawing on his research, David encourages students to evaluate why some policy proposals make it onto the political agenda whilst others never materialise.

INFLUENCING CHANGE



Dr Amanda Hall

What happens when terrorists stop having a campaign to fight? What impact does terrorism have on politics and culture across generations? And why are people drawn into terrorist groups?

Through research, Dr Amanda Hall engages directly with these questions as she hopes to not only understand counter-terrorism but to pinpoint the broader processes than can prevent terrorist actions from occurring in the first place.

Involving students in cutting-edge debates and encouraging engagement with these contemporary issues is critical to Amanda. Her module 'Terrorism in a Globalising World' is designed to help students understand the full spectrum of terrorism across a range of motivations, aims, time periods, and locations. The module explores the relationship between efforts to both end on-going terrorist

campaigns and understand why and how they may start in the first place.

Amanda's research feeds directly into her teaching by enabling her to incorporate real-world examples of government policies and of statements from violent actors into class debates. Students can utilise these authentic documents to inform their independent research, helping them to develop a richer understanding of terrorism and counter-terrorism – including how it shapes life well beyond those spheres today. Inspired by Amanda's teaching, recent graduates have succeeded in securing jobs within the field of counter-terrorism including the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and Cabinet Office.

TACKLING TERRORISM



Disclaimer

This brochure was issued in 2024 and is aimed at prospective undergraduate students wishing to apply for a place at the University of Reading (the University) and start a course in autumn 2024. The University makes every effort to ensure that the information provided in the brochure is accurate and up-to-date at the time of going to press (February 2024). However, it may be necessary for the University to make some changes to the information presented in the brochure following publication – for example, where it is necessary to reflect changes in practice or theory in an academic subject as a result of emerging research; or if an accrediting body requires certain course content to be added or removed. To make an informed and up-to-date decision, we recommend that you check reading.ac.uk/study.

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