

Germany's Foreign Policy since the end of the Cold War

Modular value: 20 credits

Teaching: 2 hour weekly seminars

Duration: Spring term

Germany's foreign policy has undergone significant changes since 1989. Once described as being guided by a general "culture of restraint" and a set of firm bonds with its European neighbours, recent events have called these traditional parameters of Germany's post-WW II foreign policy into question. Most notably Germany's "no" to NATO's interventions in Lybia and the dominance of Germany during the Eurocrisis have led some analysts to believe that Germany, yet again, strongly pursues its national interests at the expense of its neighbours. At the same time, German elites have portrayed the aforementioned changes as legitimate responses to the new challenges and objectives confronting Germany in the 21st century, whilst trying to reassure its neighbours that the fundamental parameters of German foreign policy remain unchanged. In line with this, scholarship on post-Cold War German foreign policy has been divided over whether German foreign policy is best described as one of "change" or of "continuity".

Against this background the course asks a number of research questions: What structural factors shape Germany's national interests, and how these factors play out with regard to real-world events? How do national actors perceive Germany's national interests, and how do such perceptions inform the worldview of Germany's elites? And do domestic factors, such as the ideas and perceptions of political leaders, public opinion, Germany's political system, the impact of lobby groups, history, and other factors, have to be considered? And has the influence of the aforementioned factors changed significantly throughout the last two decades?

Whilst it is not required for students to take the proposed module on "[Foreign Policy Analysis \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/modules/foreign-policy-analysis.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/modules/foreign-policy-analysis.aspx)", it would certainly serve as an asset for students to take the general module on Foreign Policy Analysis during the first term. It is not necessary for students to have pre-existing knowledge on Germany prior to taking the module. Nonetheless a general knowledge on International Relations and modern European History will certainly serve as an advantage.

Assessment

- One essay of 3,500 words (90%)
- An oral presentation in class (10%).

You may be interested in these modules:

- 20 credits: [Foreign Policy Analysis \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/modules/foreign-policy-analysis.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/modules/foreign-policy-analysis.aspx)

You may be interested in these degrees:

- [Political Science \(with specialist pathways\) MA/PGDip \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/taught/govsoc/political-science.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/taught/govsoc/political-science.aspx)
- [International Relations \(with specialist pathways\) MA/PGDip \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/taught/govsoc/international-relations.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/taught/govsoc/international-relations.aspx)