**School of Government Undergraduate Modules**

**First Year**

**Semester One**

**Understanding Politics 20 credits**

Module Code 08 26060

About

This is an introductory course designed to familiarise students with a broad spectrum of theories, approaches and issues related to the concept of power and contemporary political ideas. The aim is to provide students with a solid foundation of key skills and knowledge upon which they can build their own perspectives on a number of themes and issues which they are likely to encounter over the course of their degree programme. The course is divided into two main parts - the first part looks at different conceptions of politics and power, whilst the second half of the course examines a number of contemporary ideas and political issues.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module students should be able to:

* Demonstrate a familiarity with a broad spectrum of theories, approaches and issues related to the concept of power and contemporary political ideas
* Distinguish between major theories of power, politics and the state and link these issues of contemporary political debate
* Identify broad trends in the development of political ideas and analytical approaches to the study of politics and power

Assessment

* 1 x 1000 word essay (25%)
* 1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

**Global History 20 credits**

Module Code: 08 34564

About

The course seeks to introduce students to some of the principal problems of the twentieth century in an international context. At the start of the course, the positions of the Great Powers are considered as a prelude to the First World War. The war's course and outcome are then considered, principally the rise of communism and fascism. The nature of the totalitarian state is reviewed in relation to Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia. The debate on the origins of the Second World War, and especially the pursuit of appeasement lead up to the final theme: the Second World War and the rise of the superpowers. The course concludes with a consideration of the Cuban Missile Crisis.  
  
The course also considers the collapse of key empires starting with ancient empires: the Roman Empire and its successor, the Byzantine Empire. The Ottoman Empire, which subsumed the Byzantine Empire, is then reviewed. In the modern period the British, Soviet and American empires are analysed plus the collapse of apartheid in South Africa. Comparisons are made but the focus is on the specific reasons for the decline and fall of particular empires and the surrounding debates thereon.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module students should be able to:

* Demonstrate a familiarity with some key and much debated problem areas of twentieth century international history, in particular the causes of the two world wars, the rise of communism in Russia, the rise and fall of fascism, what determined the outcome of the two world wars and the Cuban Missile Crisis
* Understand the pressures brought by the twentieth century on the maintenance of empires, leading to their collapse, both in terms of the overall context vis-à-vis changes wrought by the century, and through case studies of the demise of particular empires
* Write an informed essay on a specific empire
* Analyse the reasons for the decline and fall of empires
* Engage with the debates on imperial decline
* Demonstrate familiarity with common and empire-specific causes of imperial disintegration

Assessment

* 1 x 1000 word essay (25%)
* 1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

**Debates in World Politics 20 Credits**

Module Code: 08 34532

This module aims to provide students with an applied understanding of prominent ideas and debates within current comparative world politics and international relations. It focuses on the latest dilemmas confronting policymakers, experts and activists, including cooperation and conflict, technological change, social forces and movements, institutions, policies and practices. Students will develop a variety of skills, particularly with regard to case studies and comparative analysis, and offers the necessary grounding for further study in politics, international relations.  
  
The course also considers the collapse of key empires starting with ancient empires: the Roman Empire and its successor, the Byzantine Empire. The Ottoman Empire, which subsumed the Byzantine Empire, is then reviewed. In the modern period the British, Soviet and American empires are analysed plus the collapse of apartheid in South Africa. Comparisons are made but the focus is on the specific reasons for the decline and fall of particular empires and the surrounding debates thereon.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module students should be able to:

* Demonstrate a critical appreciation of the dilemmas facing policymakers in navigating change/changing contexts in current world politics
* Identify and apply specific case studies to investigate dynamics of global politics on different levels of decision-making
* Apply key concepts and methods of comparative politics to analyse challenges in world politics and critically engage with scholarly literature and primary sources

Assessment

* 1 x 1000 word essay (25%)
* 1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

**Politics as a Vocation I (CO-REQUISITE Politics as a Vocation II) 10 Credits**

Module Code: 08 34004

About

This module examines how and why political actors take up particular political occupations. It examines the meaning of vocation as applied to politics. It explores different political occupations such as parliamentarians, lobbyists, journalists, trade unionists, political advisors, researchers, and civil servants. Consideration is given to the context, constraints, skills or capacities, and, especially leadership of the ideal practitioner. It involves guest lectures by external practitioners and alumni to bring the daily experiences and commitment of political actors to life.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module students should be able to:

* Identify relevant skills and traits needed to lead in political occupations within changing contexts;
* Critically evaluate contending perspectives on political roles and leadership.

Assessment

* 1 x 1500 word essay (100%)

**Semester Two**

**Introduction to Political Theory 20 credits**

Module Code: 08 31384

About

This module introduces students of political science to the practice which is known as ‘political theory’. To do so it focuses upon the history of an activity. The module thereby allows students to consider a sequence of historical political thinkers and texts, whilst at each stage we ask: are their recommendations for political life either desirable or persuasive? Why should visions of political life differ so greatly? And are the problems of these historical thinkers still ‘our own’? In the process of introducing political theory by means of its historical development, students are provided with the capacity to begin to use a range of key concepts effectively (including ethics, sovereignty, constitutions, the common good, rights, tradition, liberty, exploitation, and power).

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module students should be able to:

* Know and be able to discuss the central themes, concepts and ideas in the early development of the central tradition of Western Political thought (from Plato to Rousseau)
* Understand and assess the structure and significance of particular texts produced within this tradition and be able to illustrate problems involved in their interpretation
* Be aware and illustrate the complexity, difficulty and contention associated with the activity of theorising
* Be able to address a number of key questions in political theory with reference to texts and arguments introduced in the course.

Assessment

* 1 x 1000 word essay (25%)
* 1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

**Understanding International Relations 20 credits**

Module Code: 08 34202

About

In this module, you are introduced to the study of international politics and the main approaches, theories and debates in the discipline of International Relations. The main aims of this module are both to introduce you to some of the main issues of international politics, such as war and peace, development, regional integration and security, and to make you familiar with different ways to conceptualise and analyse these issues. This means that a substantial part of this module is devoted to the introduction of the main traditional theories of International Relations and the concepts they use.

Studying international politics is theoretical, one of the central messages throughout the course is that different theoretical approaches generate different images of the world that build on particular assumptions. Therefore, while you may think you know what the current problems of international politics are and how to solve them, one of the aims of this course is to alert you to other ways of seeing things. This should allow you to make a more confident decision about your own stance towards particular issues and to analyse these issues more thoroughly, but it should also make you question both your own as well as others’ representations of the world.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module students should be able to:

* Distinguish major theoretical perspectives on international politics and compare their value for the analysis of specific problems of international politics as well as their basic assumptions and the worldviews they generate

Identify main actors in international politics and relate them to the contexts in which they operate

Evaluate analyses of international politics from a theoretically grounded point of view

Assessment

* 1 x 1000 word essay (25%)
* 1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

**Understanding Political Economy 20 credits**

Module Code: 08 34196

About

This module enables students to become acquainted with the style of analysis and the subject matter of the classical political economists. Such work is set within the context of a general introduction to the discipline.  
  
The module enables students to understand the challenge to classical political economy of neoclassical economics, while also studying twentieth century dissenters to neoclassical orthodoxy. This broadens the students’ knowledge of the language and concepts of political economy, set within the context of contemporary political and policy debates.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module the student should be able to:

* Demonstrate a critical appreciation of the scope and contested nature of the study of political economy
* Show awareness of how the study of political economy relates to the academic discipline of political science
* Have an ability to engage with discussions and debates regarding the contemporary context of political economy

Assessment

* 1 x 1000 word essay (25%)
* 1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

**Politics as a Vocation II (CO-REQUISITE Politics as a Vocation I) 10 Credits**

Module Code: 08 34005

About

This module examines how and why political action and resistance emerges. It explores different kinds of activism, including party political, civil rights, student, identity-based and social movements. A strong emphasis will be placed on the type of political commitment that motivates and sustains political action or resistance, grounding this in theoretical debates about commitment, vision, engagement, leadership, responsibility, capability, emotions, and resilience. Consideration is given to the context in which political change is sought and the strategies, capacities and leadership of political activists in effecting transformation. It involves guest lectures by external practitioners and alumni to bring the daily experiences and commitment of political actors to life.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module students should be able to:

* Demonstrate an understanding of what draws people to engage in, and commit themselves to, political action and resistance;
* Identify the constraints within which activism occurs;
* Critically assess the capacity of political actors to lead processes of transformation.

Assessment

* 1 x 2500 word essay (100%)

**Second Year**

**Semester One**

[**Comparative Politics**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-203-comparative-politics-21-22) **20 credits**

Module Code 08 29356

Module Description:

The course examines politics, polities, and policies across the globe. It compares authoritarian with democratic countries, as well as discussing elections and voting behaviour, institutions, political parties, and public policy. The aims of the course are to introduce concepts and approaches central to analysing politics and government and to develop students’ understanding of the commonalities and differences of political institutions. Students will emerge from this course with knowledge of different institutions, political forces and policy traditions, with the analytic skills to examine political processes and institutions, and with experience of applying the methods of comparative politics to the analysis of political phenomena. The course will focus on countries around the world, encouraging students to learn about politics outside the UK.

Assessment:

1 x 1,000 word essay (25%)

1 x 3,000 word essay (75%)

[**International Political Economy**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-205-international-political-economy-21-22) **20 credits**

Module Code 08 20895

## Module Description

A key purpose of university education and the study of political economy is to equip you to question and challenge what is often taken-for-granted. This purpose is often lost when courses are structured so as to simply pass on information from lecturer to student. In contrast, POLS 205 is structured around a series of “big questions” about the world. In the lectures we will draw on a range of theoretical approaches and real life examples. Our central aim however, is not to give you the “right answer” – as if there were such a thing – but to help you engage with and reflect upon the structures of power in the global political economy. In doing this, the course draws upon some of the most recent debates and shifts within the field of international political economy – as well as drawing on more traditional strands of classical political economy.

The course draws upon a range of theoretical perspectives to understand the contemporary international economic order and to explore the drivers of international economic change. Issues and problems covered across the modules include: the establishment and demise of the Bretton Woods system; the contest of ideas over economic reform; the causes and consequences of economic globalization; and how the globalized international political economy should be governed, issues and problems in international political economy.

Assessment:

1 x 1000 word essay (25%)

1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

[**International Politics of East Asia**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-216-international-politics-of-east-asia-21-22) **20 credits**

Module Code: 08 31213

## Module Description:

This module introduces the students to the international politics of East Asia. The concept of ‘East Asia’ as a region is problematic, but the geographical scope we use in this module includes the Northeast Asian states of Japan, China, South Korea and North Korea and the ten member-states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). While we will also cover Taiwan and the United States, we will not consider Russia, the South Asian states such as India and Pakistan, Australia and New Zealand, although they may feature from time to time in the lectures and seminars.

Why study the international politics of East Asia? East Asia is highly important from the economic, military, political and human security perspectives. A number of key current events concern East Asia: the rise of China; the US interests and alliances in the region; US-China power-transition/competition; the nuclear weapons threat from North Korea; Japan’s slow but unmistakable move towards becoming a ‘normal great power’; conflict or reconciliation between China and Taiwan; the ‘wary but creeping reconciliation’ between the two Koreas; economic dynamism and challenges; security dilemma and arms build-up; multiple territorial and maritime disputes; proliferation of regional institutions; the putative rise of Islamic extremism in areas of Southeast Asia; ethnic conflicts and nationalism; and the increasing incidence and salience of human security challenges, including political repression and human rights violations, environmental degradation, transnational crimes, diseases and pandemics etc. All of these concerns carry huge implications for both the East Asian and global communities. In this module, we will tackle all these bilateral and multilateral relationships and issues in a theoretically-informed series of lectures and seminars.

Intellectually, East Asia is a fascinating region to study from both theoretical and empirical standpoints. On the one hand, inter-state violence is neither an everyday fact of life nor an inevitable possibility, unlike certain other regions of the world. Yet, on the other hand, the region is pregnant with flashpoints with the potential to could unimaginably destructive warfare, unlike in places such as Western Europe and North America.

Assessment

1 x 1000 word essay (25%)

1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

[**International Relations of the Middle East**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-233-international-relations-of-the-middle-east-21-22) **20 credits**

Module Code 08 29292

Module Description

This module aims to provide an introduction to the contemporary Middle East through a rigorous engagement with theories of international relations. Middle East politics display many of the characteristic features of the modern world. Contentious legacies of imperial map-making fuel frontier disputes and throw into question the legitimacy of the territorial nation state. Governments have been repeatedly challenged by populations tired of the old rationales for authoritarian rule and angered by its repressive effects. The politics of national identity, sometimes bound up with ideas of religious identity, have been given new urgency by class conflict, by military occupation and by the growth of the security state. Meanwhile, the long history of external intervention in the states of the region has heightened domestic and regional tensions. The module places the Middle East in its international context, exploring histories of empire and decolonisation, hegemony and resistance, conflict and cooperation, as well as identity and foreign policy. The module links the study of international relations as a subject matter with the empirical understanding of transnational ideologies (e.g. pan-Arabism, pan-Islamism), inter-state conflict (e.g. the Persian Gulf Wars, the conflict in Israel/Palestine etc.), foreign policy of major regional states (Iran, Turkey, Iraq etc.) and “superpower” politics. The course thus investigates both the factors involved in the making of international politics in the area, and the way we can analyse them. To that end, it introduces students to the discourse of “Orientalism”, theories of international relations such as (neo)realism and social constructivism and other approaches in IR. Beyond this conceptual focus, themes such as Islam, gender, democracy, civil society, globalisation, fundamentalism, terrorism, revolution etc. are also covered. Attention will also be paid to key themes in international relations, such as transnationalism, globalisation and regionalism, security and threat, gender and ideology. The debate on the features of a regional sub-system and foreign policy analysis will be examined through the process of Arab regional integration and the Arab-Israeli conflict. By taking this module, students will be able to engage in more specialised study of the region, either in whole or in part.

Assessment:

1 x 1500 word essay (30%)

1 x Take home test (70%)

[**International Relations Theory**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-214-international-relations-theory-21-22) **20 credits**

Module Code: 08 20900

## Module Description:

Following on from your previous studies in international relations (IR) theory, this module explores what we call “critical” theoretical approaches to studying and practising IR. These approaches characterise the so-called third (or even fourth) great debate in the discipline of IR, and they also mark the entry into global political debates of new ideas about identity, power, resistance, and inequality in the international sphere. The module is divided into two blocks of topics: the first of these will introduce you to current theoretical debates through the lens of its newest and most innovative schools of thought, ranging from feminism and queer theory to post-development thought and the Frankfurt School.

The second group of topics covers important themes and problems that are shaping international affairs today—and that are generating new and interesting debates amongst IR scholars. Thus, this module equips you with new and powerful conceptual tools, before examining a series of pivotal and evolving issues (migration, human rights, border control) and inviting you to put your newly acquired tools to use in analysing them.

Throughout, you will be encouraged to debate foundational political questions with your colleagues, consider the impact of IR concepts in both theory and practice on a wide range of actors and institutions, and relate what you are learning to emerging news stories and developments in the world of global politics.

Assessment:

1 x 1000 word essay (25%)

1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

[**Race, Empire and Modern Political Theory**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-202-race-empire-and-modern-political-theory-21-22) **20 credits**

Module Code: 08 32550

## Module Description

This module aims to enhance student understanding of the historical relationship between conceptions of race, imperialism, and the development of modern political thought in Europe and America. It pays particular attention to the largely unnoticed role played by race and imperialism in key theoretical approaches to property, liberty, democracy, and revolution. By reading canonical works of European and American theory alongside canonical works of anti-colonial scholarship and criticism, the module explores topics such as: the connections between theories of property and the “unseeing” of colonial labor, the relationship between theories of civilization and modern notions of democracy, and the role play by supposedly empty geographic space in the liberal imagination.

Assessment:

1 x 1000 word essay (25%)

1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

[**Governing States and Societies**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/idd-governing-states-and-societies)**20 Credits**

Module Code: 08 34589

## Module Description

Weak or failing governance is often at the heart of a range of contemporary development challenges. This module critically evaluates different approaches to improving governance. Governance is understood as a set of formal and informal rules for how states function and how state-society relations are managed. The first part of the module will analyse how some governance dynamics – including corruption, weak accountability relations, lack of co-ordination in the state administration, and contestation between state and non-state actors – can hinder progress on inclusive development. The second part will introduce a range of tools and methods widely used to improve governance, including citizen voice and participation, social accountability, changing public sector incentives, and state reform. Weekly lectures are complemented with participatory weekly seminars, giving students the opportunity to apply a governance lens to key recurring constraints to development, and debate the strengths and limitations of a range of top-down and bottom-up approaches to addressing them.

Assessment:

1 x 2,000 word written assignment (50%)

1 x unseen examination – 2 hours (50%)

[**Understanding Development Assistance**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/idd-understanding-development-assistance)**20 Credits**

Module Code: 08 34446

## Module Description

This module provides an in-depth, critical look at international development assistance, with a special focus on understanding the political economy of aid, and how aid responds to local political dynamics in practice. We will examine the global aid architecture, and the variety of roles international aid actors play, before exploring contemporary debates about aid effectiveness and the potential unintended consequences of aid. We will explore the changing global context for aid - including the emergence of new donors (e.g. China), countries transitioning away from aid, the rise of other forms of finance, and shifting public attitudes to aid in donor countries. At the practical level, we will engage with some of the key tools used by development agencies to analyse and adapt to political economy dynamics, and the effectiveness of these tools. We then turn to the future - beyond aid - and ask whether aid will become less significant, and what, if anything, will replace its role in development. Weekly lectures will be complemented with participatory weekly seminars, giving students the opportunity to research into current aid trends, and critically evaluate aid effectiveness.

Assessment:

1 x oral presentation (25%) mid-term assessment

1 x 3,000 word written assignment (75%) final assessment

**Semester 2**

[**Analysing Political Worlds**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-201-analysing-political-worlds-21-22) **20 credits**

Module Code 08 26957

## Module Description:

This module uses classic and contemporary research about substantive political issues to introduce you to a range of key theories, concepts and debates within Political Science. The module thus allows you to consider a range of approaches to political analysis, to the nature and distribution of power, and to state-societal relations in the contemporary world.

The module is structured in four sections. In the first section, you consider the foundations of political analysis, such as the scope of the political, the definition of human nature and its role in the study of politics, the scientific status of political enquiry, and the potential role of critique and emancipation within the discipline. The second section is concerned with explaining political change and, specifically, the role of structure, agency, ideas and power in political analysis. The short third section introduces you to key approaches in contemporary political analysis – rational choice theory and new institutionalism – while the final section considers various strands of state theory and how best to understand the state, its place within contemporary society and its role in the reproduction of political and socio-economic social relations.

The module’s main purpose is to allow you to answer the question What kind of political analyst am I? In considering this overarching question with regard to the specific topic under consideration each week, you will be able to achieve a number of broader aims. Firstly, you will gain an understanding of why the core of Political Science is contested and why the discipline is characterised by diversity and pluralism. Secondly, you will be able to display a familiarity with a range of contemporary approaches to political analysis and the study of the state. Thirdly, you will be able to utilise particular theories and concepts in the analysis of substantive political issues. This final aim is linked to your second assessment – the independent analysis assignment – where you are asked to use the concepts, approaches and theories covered on the module to analyse a contemporary political issue that is of interest to you. In this way, the module can act as a launch pad for your dissertation both in terms of topic and in terms of theoretical approach and conceptual framework.

Assessment:

1 x 1000 word essay (25%)

1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

[**Feminist Political Ideas**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-234-feminist-political-ideas-21-22) **20 credits**

Module Code 08 29303

## Module Description

Feminist political ideas are hugely diverse, critical, and necessarily engaged: they seek to change our thinking, how we look at the world and the way we live. This module explores the development, richness, and diversity of western feminist political ideas in their own terms. The module concentrates on the way in which feminist ideas (1) challenge and revise traditional political thinking, (2) have made rich contributions to our understanding of political concepts, knowledge and the nature of oppression, and (3) can inform how we live and do things.

Although the module proceeds chronologically in its examination of the development of feminist political thought, each session will examine the contributions that feminists have made to the understanding of specific concepts, such as equality, sex, power, work, family, emotion, care, difference, intersectionality, body, gender, subject, presence, inclusion, representation, freedom and agency. The module also pays attention to the (continuing) disagreements between feminists. In so doing, you will consider the issue of what constitutes feminist thinking, and who or what forms the proper subject of feminist analysis.

We explore exciting and important topics and questions, including: Is pornography inherently oppressive? Does equality mean treating people the same or differently? Why is caring a political matter? How should we understand sexual violation and rape? How can we understand rising rates of male suicide? Is femininity the biggest obstacle to women’s freedom? Where and why can we see white privilege and racism in feminist political ideas? How should be power exercised in feminist classrooms? Are women still treated as Other? Is feminism compatible with respect for cultures? Why are some women so preoccupied with their appearance and beauty? Why are women (and other marginalised groups) underrepresented politically, within business, and at senior levels within universities? What do we mean by freedom? Is there no necessary connection between sex and gender? Can feminists claim to speak for all women?

If you take this module you will learn about feminist ideas but you will also practice them yourself. You will be encouraged to share personal experiences and connect those experiences to feminist political ideas. As such, students will build and participate in a feminist classroom, which is intended to provide an open yet safe space in which everyone can speak and be heard. You will also be encouraged to think about how your background, status, identities and experiences shapes your approach to feminist ideas. This means that you will develop a practical as well as theoretical understanding of the vibrancy and challenge of feminist ideas, especially in relation to method and pedagogy.

Assessment:

1 x 1000 word essay (25%)

1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

[**Globalisation, Capitalism & Welfare**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/globalisation-capitalism-and-welfare) **20 credits**

Module Code: 08 37042

## Module Description

This module will be at the intersection of comparative politics and comparative political economy. It will employ the comparative method and theories of analysing and classifying advanced economies (varieties of capitalism) and welfare states. The module will be of interest mainly for comparative politics and political economy students. Its focus will be global by focusing on advanced economies of the West (USA and EU).

The module will discuss how we can conceptualise and understand different configurations of economies and welfare states in Europe. We will focus on issues of inequality, poverty and competitiveness. We will discuss different configurations in favour or against redistribution, cooperation and competition. We will explore how different countries set up their economic and public policy models to achieve economic, social and political prosperity.

The module fills a gap in the existing offering of modules by providing an in-depth analysis of two key theoretical models of comparative political economy and comparative politics covering a wider range of case studies.

Assessment:

1 x 1000 word essay (25%)

1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

[**Global Governance**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-227-global-governance-21-22) **20 credits**

Module Code: 08 27732

## Module Description

Global Governance is a very salient issue on the international agenda: it refers to the rule making efforts to sustain cooperation in order to address global problems or concerns. Increasingly the world has to deal with security threats, financial breakdown, development concerns and deteriorating environmental conditions. States try to coordinate their efforts to respond to these challenges through the establishment of international institutions like the UN, the WTO and the treaties governing environmental change. However, states have enjoyed a varying degree of success in setting up institutions to govern common problems, and therefore non-state actors have increasingly been involved in providing intellectual and financial resources to deal with international problems.

This course reviews both state and non-state structures and efforts to resolve common problems of mankind in the areas of security, economy, development and environment. The first few weeks will be focused on conceptual and historical issues. How do we understand governance? How do international institutions and other actors contribute to the provision of governance? We then move on to examine specific areas of governance and focus on the drivers of progress and the constraints encountered by relevant stakeholders in the areas of security, economy, development and ecology. Common themes throughout feature: conflict between North and South; the ability of institutions to contribute to successful cooperation between states; the role of non-state actors in contributing to governance solutions and their relationship to states; the ability of states and non-state actors to show leadership and to overcome challenges.

Assessment:

1 x 1000 word essay (25%)

1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

[**International Security**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-218-international-security-21-22) **20 credits**

Module Code: 08 20903

Module Description

This module will examine how polities pursue security on the international stage. Our study of security will straddle international relations and history. As an organising idea, this module will focus particularly on the possibility of war as the context in which choices are made. Though the module has a ‘hard security’ core in its themes, it also incorporates critiques of classical ideas of security and is designed to provoke debate.

We begin by surveying the different theoretical and conceptual approaches to security: what we mean by security and how it can be effectively pursued, and how far societies can transcend competition to achieve truly “international” security.

We then focus on one major security problem each week, from the security dilemma to humanitarian intervention to deterrence, as well as the causes, avoidance and termination of conflict.

Questions addressed include:

* How do we obtain security?
* What causes insecurity and war?
* Can international institutions make the world a safer place?
* Should powerful states intervene in crises abroad?
* How far does technology from nuclear weapons to cyber change international relations?
* Does globalisation make us safer or more vulnerable?

Assessment:

1 x 1000 word essay (25%)

1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

[**US Politics**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-213-us-politics-21-22) **20 credits**

Module Code: 08 36023

Module Description

This module provides students with an introduction to the nature of the U.S. Political system. This course examines the political thought underpinning the formation of the American Republic. It then examines the key institutions of this system. Finally, the image of American Politics is tested through the examination of several on-going political issues.

By the end of the module students should be able to:

* Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key institutions of US politics
* Provide a critical understanding of the dynamic and unique nature of US politics
* Realise the centrality of the US Constitution in US political processes
* Understand the key role that Federalism plays in the dynamics of US politics

Assessment:

1 x 1000 word essay (25%)

1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

**Economic Perspectives on Development 20 credits**

Module Code: 08 34586

## Module Description

How is economic development measured? What are the key determinants of inclusive growth? This module introduces students to some of the key principles and tools used in development economics. The emphasis is on applying an economic approach to understanding recurring development challenges, including the persistence of poverty, inequality, low rates of economic growth, and conflict. The first half of the module will introduce students to some of the key debates and latest thinking on measuring economic development and basic principles on how to interpret economic data, before examining a range of economic challenges that inhibit development, including the management of natural resources, capital, and economic policy. The second half will explore the effectiveness of a range of economic interventions, including behavioural economics, market interventions, microfinance, trade, private sector development, and the role of global financial institutions in development financing. Weekly lectures will be complemented with participatory weekly seminars, giving students the opportunity to debate and apply different economic theories on what supports and inhibits inclusive development.

Assessment:

1 x 2,000 word written assignment (50%)

1 x unseen examination – 2 hours (50%)

**Final Year**

**Semester 1**

[**Contemporary International Political Economy**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-312-contemporary-international-political-economy-21-22) **20 credits**

Module Code: 08 20911

Module Description

I am very aware that many of you are sick and tired of talking about the global financial crisis (GFC). There are two reasons though why this course begins with the GFC:

* One is that the crisis has sparked a major period of self-reflection in International Political Economy. Many scholars think that the crisis has revealed major weaknesses in IPE; others simply suggest that IPE should be doing more to shape the post-crisis world.
* The other reason though is that whilst many fields (comparative politics, economics, sociology and so on) have examined the causes of the crisis and what has since changed, IPE offers unique insights into issues of finance, and explains why finance might be the most important factor shaping the world we now live in.

The term therefore starts with a look at Contemporary IPE and finance.

Then we look at the US/UK and China, before examining other big issues (tax havens, human trafficking, debt, and resistance).

In short, POLS 312 is all about crisis and change.

In the first half of the course, we will address the theoretical aspect to the lack of change in the global political economy after the 2007 financial crisis. We will take a fairly comprehensive look at the state of IPE as a discipline to examine what it has or has not had to say as the financial crisis hit. We begin by asking big questions about what theory is, what an academic discipline is, and what role they should or should not play in shaping political and social change.  
  
In the second half of the course we will apply some of these theoretical insights to empirical case studies (the EU and the UK). This part of the course seeks to examine the resilience of neoliberalism, an important factor explaining the type and degree of continuity and change. To re-emphasise, our overarching aim is to explore the role that a political economy analysis has and should have at the current historical conjuncture.

Assessment

1 x 1000 word essay (25%)

1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

[**Corruption & Clientelism**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-316-corruption-and-clientelism-21-22) **20 credits**

Module Code: 08 36018

## Module Description

The module examines a ubiquitous dimension of politics: corruption and clientelism. The module explores corruption and clientelism in order to assess the scale and nature of corruption and the role of clientelism in different political systems. The module will combine theoretical, empirical and applied components: understanding corruption and clientelism is necessary for effective anti-corruption strategies. The module will focus on: first, theory and practice of corruption (e.g. what is corruption? what causes it? how do we measure it?) and, second, different forms of political clientelism that generate corruption. The module will offer a global perspective, including a range of case studies, such as China, Russia, Africa and Europe as well as analyse the role of the West both in combating and facilitating corruption around the globe

Assessment:

1 x 1500 word essay (40%)

1 x 2500 word essay (60%)

[**Debates in Political Theory**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-308-debates-in-political-theory-21-22) **20 credits**

Module Code: 08 36019

## Module Description

Political Theory is powerful because ideas about how to organise societies also influence, and are influenced by, the struggles that create and re-create our world. In this module, you will look at theory, and how theory drives activism and policy. As such, you will look at theory and its implications for how people live their lives. There are radically different views about what makes a society just, and about the actions that should be taken in order to achieve a just society. In this module, you will interrogate these positions, examine the debates between them, and analyse the policies that claim to promote them. You will explore disagreements about what makes a government legitimate or a society fair, and about how to organise societies made up of people with diverse interests and belief systems. You will study arguments that presume that international society should be organised according to the states we have today, and those that challenge this arrangement. You will look at how these ideas function theoretically, and at how these theoretical approaches travel internationally. Finally, you will look at how these theoretical frameworks affect and are affected by policy, at national, regional, and global levels.

Assessment:

1 x 1000 word essay (25%)

1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

[**Environment & Climate Politics: From Global to Local**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-318-environment-and-climate-politics-from-global-to-local-21-22) **20 credits**

**Module Code: 08 36020**

## Module Description

Environmental deterioration is a huge challenge facing humanity. Climate change, habitat destruction, pollution and overconsumption are causing poverty, hunger, migration and the spread of disease for millions. Worse is expected in the future if we don’t act swiftly and decisively.

This module interrogates the politics and practices of human interaction with the environment, focusing on both theoretical debates and case studies. The theory covered in the module focuses on how our relationship with the planet is socially constructed, and interrogates different approaches to solving environmental problems, including market based approaches and more radical green theories. The module also examines case studies in environmental politics; these may change from year to year but usually include issues like climate change, animal rights, sustainable development and the relationship between poverty and environment. These issues are covered from a global, national and local perspective.

Assessment:

1 x 1000 word essay (25%)

1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

[**Gender & World Politics**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-341-gender-and-world-politics-21-22) **20 credits**

Module Code: 08 36021

## Module Description

This course is comprised of two inter-linked modules. There are a range of perspectives and related literatures on gender in international politics, which collectively provide novel approaches to and critical insights into a range of issues and areas conventionally regarded as falling within the domain of international relations and international politics. These include the state; citizenship, constructions of identities and boundaries of political community; ethics; war, peace and security; international institutions; political economy and development and human rights. Contemporary constructivist and approaches in IR, including feminist and queer theory have also expanded the field of study to include, for example, the role of emotion in politics and the significance of aesthetics and the visual in understanding the domain of world politics. In this course, an eclectic approach to gender that draws upon out a various strands of contemporary IR scholarship is utilised to interrogate a range of discrete areas and issues within the ambit world politics.

Assessment

1 x 1000 word essay (25%)

1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

[**Global Security**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-309-global-security-21-22) **20 credits**

Module Code: 08 36022

## Module Description

This module investigates different approaches to analysing security dynamics and issues in International Relations. It seeks to encourage students to reflect on the analytical and ethical assumptions that shape the ways in which security is thought about and practised in contemporary global politics. Furthermore, the module encourages students to think critically about how security functions in global politics. It explores the key concepts of critical security studies (security, identity and representation), and looks at a variety of critical perspectives on security (war, poverty and religion) in IR. Students are asked to think about security – and related issues – from different perspectives through engagement with aesthetics, post-colonial thought, and through the study of emotions, thereby encouraging reflection on diversity, inclusion and internationalisation. These insights are then examined in light of contemporary security issues (including militancy, intervention, movements, human rights, militaries).

Assessment:

1 x 1000 word essay (25%)

1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

[**Parties & Voters across the Globe**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-311-parties-and-voters-across-the-globe-21-22) **20 credits**

Module Code: 08 36025

## Module Description

This module examines three central components of political systems: parties, elections and voters. The module examines how parties are organized, financed and regulated before focusing on a variety of party systems from across the globe seeking to explain why they vary and what explains party system change. The module then examines different electoral systems and theories of electoral behaviour, before exploring the role played by political marketing and campaigns. The module concludes by reflecting on the role and future of political parties in modern democracies.

Assessment:

1 x 1000 word essay (25%)

1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

[**Strategy, Leadership & Foreign Policy**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-313-strategy-leadership-and-foreign-policy-21-22) **20 credits**

Module Code 08 36028

## Module Description

This module examines how individuals and groups make foreign policy decisions and the real world effects that flow from these processes.

It combines insights from leadership studies, social psychology, military strategy, public policy and cultural analyses. Typical questions include: what makes a good leader? Why do smart people make bad decisions? How does strategy differ according to national and regional contexts? How can we evaluate strategic success or failure? How can global decision-making be improved?

As far as possible, it aims to combine theoretical insights with practical case studies and input from policymakers and practitioners.

Assessment:

1 x 1000 word essay (25%)

1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

**Semester 2**

[**Challenges to Liberal Democracy in Europe**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-314-challenges-to-liberal-democracy-in-europe-21-22) **20 credits**

Module Code: 08 36016

Module Description

This option covers various ideological and political challenges posed to liberal democracy in the 21st century. A variety of case studies will be considered, such as, for instance, radical left and radical right parties and their impact, changing levels of support for traditional mainstream parties, new trends in political participation, and/or the emergence of non-liberal authoritarian regimes across Europe. The module will discuss the reasons behind these trends and the current crises of Liberal Democracy, and the impact of radical/authoritarian parties and new patterns of political participation today.

Assessment:

1 x 1000 word essay (25%)

1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

[**Conflict & Peace: Theory & Practice**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-307-conflict-and-peace-theory-and-practice-21-22)**20 credits**

Module Code: 08 36017

## Module Description

This module examines the main theoretical approaches to the study of violent conflict between states and within states and considers a variety of methods to promote peace. It presents a variety of case studies in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East and encourages students to apply their insights to contemporary events.

Assessment

1 x 1000 word essay (25%)

1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

[**Law, Politics & the International System**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-347-law-politics-and-the-international-system-21-22) **20 credits**

Module Code: 08 27837

## Module Description

This module deals with the dynamic, and often conflict-prone, relationship between international law and power in the international system. The overarching question guiding the module is whether power can ever really be subordinated to law. One of the main principles of international law is that it operates with state consent. A state has to sign and in most cases ratify a treaty in order to be bound by it. So why do states sign treaties that limit their powers? Do they abide by what they have signed? And what happens if they don’t? Another problem with international law is that one of the most important law making and law enforcing bodies in the international system is the United Nations Security Council. Its decisions are binding, which means that all states have to comply with them. However, the United Nations Security Council also has five permanent member states with veto powers that can block decisions that they consider contrary to their interests or to the interest of their allies. Can these states be subordinated to law? How?

The module examines available mechanisms that promote and seek to ensure compliance with international law. It also examines law enforcement mechanisms in cases of non-compliance. Students will examine different strands of international law, focusing in particular on international human rights law and its applicability, international humanitarian law, the international law on the use of force for self-defence and for humanitarian purposes, international criminal law, as well as the tension between self-determination and secession, on the one hand, and the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, on the other. Finally, the module will also examine how changes in the international system shape the political and legal global order.

The module is informed by various case studies, including Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya; the wars in the former Yugoslavia and in Kosovo, in particular; the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the continuing instability in the post-Soviet space, including Crimea’s annexation by Russia. In the weeks on international criminal law the module examines the genocide in Rwanda and the wars in the former Yugoslavia and how they contributed to the development of international criminal justice. The final case study is the rise of China and the South China Sea dispute.

Assessment:

1 x 500 word outline (25%)

1 x 3500 word essay (75%)

[**Parliamentary Studies**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-372-parliamentary-studies-21-22) **20 credits**

Module Code 08 32399

## Module Description

This module aims to provide you with a detailed knowledge of how the UK Parliament works (in both theory and practice). Guest speakers from Parliament will complement traditional lectures and seminars to provide you with an in-depth knowledge of how the Houses of Parliament operates both in terms of formal procedures and in terms of informal cultures, traditions and relationships. The main focus of the module will be the UK Parliament but you will be encouraged to adopt a comparative approach when appropriate.

Assessment:

1 x 1000 word essay (25%)

1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

[**Rising Powers & Global Order**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-320-rising-powers-and-global-order-21-22) **20 credits**

Module Code: 08 36026

## Module Description

This module enables students to gain an understanding of the international behaviour of the so-called ‘rising powers’, and their impact upon the governance issues in contemporary international politics. The concept of ‘rising power’ is problematised and examines those states engaged in the BRICS, IBSA, the G20 and BASIC.

Assessment:

1 x 1000 word essay (25%)

1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

[**Topics in British Politics**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-315-topics-in-british-politics-21-22) **20 credits**

Module Code: 08 20912

Module Description

This module will allow students to develop a specialised interest in British politics. Students will examine key trends in British politics, from 1945 to the present. In doing so, it will assess the impact and significance of a number of contemporary political projects, including Keynesian social democracy, Thatcherism, Blairism, Cameronism, Brexit and Corbynism. Students will be asked to consider how these projects can be best defined and what impact, if any, they have made to the overall evolution of British politics. In particular, these projects will be assessed in terms of the extent to which they show continuity or change with previous governing practices.

The course opens with four introductory lectures aimed at providing the groundwork for the later part of the module. In these introductory sessions, we will examine the character of Keynesian social democracy, the impact of neo-liberalism and the use of depoliticisation strategies and modernisation discourses in driving change in contemporary British politics. The aim of these introductory sessions is to provide students with an overview of key developments and conceptual tools for understanding post-war British politics.

After the opening lectures students will be asked to examine six ‘topics’ in British politics. The topics are as follows:

* How Radical was Thatcherism?
* The Conservatives after Thatcher
* The New Labour Project
* Understanding Cameronism
* British Politics in the age of Brexit
* Should we be worried about British Democracy?

Assessment

1 x 1000 word essay (25%)

1 x 3000 word essay (75%)

[**Understanding Migration**](https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/26654/pages/pols-321-understanding-migration-21-22) **20 credits**

Module Code 08 36029

## Module Description

Human mobility has always been an important part of the human experience. As such, it is crucial to gain an understanding of the role of migration in contemporary political, economic and social systems. This module will take an interdisciplinary approach to the study of migration, covering a diverse range of geographic regions, such as the Middle East and Europe. It will engage in a range of theoretical approaches. This will enable the study of different forms of migration (e.g. labour and forced migration) and a variety of topics, including:  mobility, borders, identity, inequalities, agency, and citizenship.

Assessment:

1 x 1000 word essay (25%)

1 x 3000 word essay (75%)