

ISSU9IR- International Relations

10 Stirling credits, equivalent to 3 US or 5 ECTS credits

Teaching: This module is taught over a four-week period with one three-hour class per week. The tutor will, offer a brief introduction to the issues (with use of supporting film/news material), followed by short informal student presentations and interactive group discussion tasks.

Assessment: The assessment strategy is based one essay of 1.200-1.500 words worth 40%, a one hour class test worth 30% and 30% based on seminar presentation/study excursion. The essay topics are those used in the seminar as student presentation topics.

Excursion:

This module includes a day trip to Edinburgh where we will undertake a historical/political tour of the city as well as a tour of the Scottish Parliament.

Module Outline

This module explores contemporary issues and debates that shape world politics today. It starts by introducing International Relations (IR) theory before turning to two broad themes that dominate IR: conflict and peace. We will apply these themes to a case study of the Northern Ireland conflict exploring the key political developments and the transition to a post conflict settlement. This module will also include a workshop that examines the use of wall murals to articulate conflict/post-conflict identity in Northern Ireland.

Transferable skills: The module will help develop critical, written, analytical and oral communication skills through seminar participation, written coursework and study visit to Belfast, (Northern Ireland).

Further, students will benefit from the following: they will be able to –

- utilise appropriate information sources, especially via the internet;
- deploy evidence based analysis of major issues;
- assess data, information and ideas critically;
- participate in group discussions on specific topics, issues and ideas with peers; exercise autonomy by preparing individually for such participation;
- manage and execute a small scale group presentation.

Key Reading: The tutor will provide targeted reading for each seminar.

Indicative Seminar Programme

Theories of IR: Realism and Liberalism What are the main ‘focusing events’ that have helped shape international politics? What are the main assumptions and criticisms of a realist perspective on international politics? What are the main criticisms of the liberal approach to achieving lasting ‘democratic peace’?

War and Conflict Why do wars/conflicts occur? How has war and conflict changed since the end of the Cold War? Do nuclear weapons, if responsibly used keep the peace? Should all states be allowed to have nuclear weapons?

Peace and Stability: On what grounds would it be legitimate to use armed intervention? Is peace possible? How can we achieve a permanent peace?

Case Study: Northern Ireland and the ‘troubles’. What was this conflict and how did it end? What can the wall murals tell us about changing perceptions of conflict in Northern Ireland?