

Lancaster
University



International Relations
Undergraduate Degrees 2027



Welcome

We live in a rapidly evolving global landscape. Foreign policy, security threats, international cooperation and rivalry all take place across international borders.

Studying International Relations at Lancaster will develop your ability to think in global terms – and to understand the nature of the political, economic and environmental challenges that confront us in the twenty-first century. Guided by academics who shape national and international policy, you'll emerge inspired and confident to tackle the challenges of our times.

How do AI and cyber technologies change our understanding of politics, security and war? How are emerging powers altering the global order? Can international institutions address global poverty and environmental crises? How is the continued rise of China reshaping the global balance of power? Is the Global South an invention of the North?

International Relations at Lancaster will give you the skills necessary to address these questions and tackle some of the most pressing challenges of our times. You'll gain a comprehensive understanding of contemporary International Relations from top experts in the field, and acquire the necessary skills for a career in local and international politics.

You'll have the opportunity, via work-based learning, our Richardson Institute Internship Programme, or a placement year, to gain experience which will prepare you for your career and to develop skills that will make you more employable. You may also have the opportunity to travel abroad, visiting countries you could be studying as part of your degree, either for short-term visits or for a full year on a study abroad degree.

Many of our students choose to combine the study of International Relations with languages, politics, history or economics. We hope that this booklet provides useful material to inform your own choice, but if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.



International Relations		BA	6T99	3	ABB
International Relations (Placement Year)		BA	6T91	4	ABB
International Relations (Study Abroad)		BA	6T92	4	ABB
Politics and International Relations		BA	L250	3	ABB
Politics and International Relations (Placement Year)		BA	L251	4	ABB
Politics and International Relations (Study Abroad)		BA	L252	4	ABB
History and International Relations		BA	VL12	3	AAB
History and International Relations (Placement Year)		BA	VL13	4	AAB
History and International Relations (Study Abroad)		BA	VL14	4	AAB
Chinese Studies and International Relations	or	BA	T1L2	4	ABB
French Studies and International Relations	or	BA	R1L2	4	ABB
German Studies and International Relations	or	BA	R2L2	4	ABB
Spanish Studies and International Relations	or	BA	R4L2	4	ABB

Visit our website for more information on degree options, scholarships and entry requirements (such as BTECs)
lancaster.ac.uk



Made for *learning*

We employ a diverse range of teaching methods designed to foster active engagement, critical analysis, and independent learning. Our aim is to equip you with the critical thinking skills, in-depth knowledge, and analytical tools necessary to navigate the complexities of global politics, so throughout your studies you will encounter the following learning and assessment methods:

Lectures and workshops: provide foundational knowledge and encourage interactive engagement.

Seminars: foster critical discussion of readings and diverse viewpoints.

Games and simulations: apply theory to real-world scenarios.

Guest lectures: offer practical insights from experts.

Case studies: analyse specific events and policies to understand the complexities of our time.

Collaborative presentations: enhance teamwork and communication skills.

Your learning will be assessed through a variety of methods designed to evaluate different skills and levels of understanding, as well as preparing you for a career in the field of politics and international governance. These range from essays and policy reports, security briefs, reflective journals and case-study analysis, to statistical analysis and independent research projects.

“

I've been able to experience what it's like working in the political and public sector whilst studying.

”



Charlotte, third year

BA Hons Politics and International Relations

My time so far at Lancaster University has been the most amazing experience. Having taken a couple of gap years figuring out what and where I wanted to study my degree, I am so glad I picked Lancaster as my university.

I have been lucky enough to partake in the Richardson Institute Internship, where we are paired with one of the partnered NGOs or think tanks to help with their policy work. Currently I am working with a Canadian NGO called Archipelago of Design. I am helping out with their marketing and social media strategies in promoting their latest securitised board game designed to help military and security personnel to prepare for multi-layered political dilemmas.

I have also been on a trip to Parliament, run by the University, where we were able to watch the current developments in both Houses as well as speaking to our local MP and other parliamentary staff. These incredible experiences have allowed me to experience what it's like working in the political and public sector whilst still studying for my degree, as well as helping me to build on my presenting skills and gaining more confidence with public speaking.

I truly can't recommend Lancaster University enough for studying Politics and International Relations.

Gain *real-world* experience

We know you want to graduate confident and ready to progress towards your career. That's why we make it easy to incorporate work experience into your time at Lancaster.

Your ambitions are important to us, and we will help you build the skills you need to succeed by offering a range of placement and internship opportunities.

Placement year

You can opt to take a degree with a placement year (also known as a year in industry). On this degree you spend your third year working in a graduate-level, professional job in a sector of your choice before returning to complete your final year at Lancaster University. Securing a placement is a competitive process and we support you with personalised coaching and professional guidance provided via a series of preparatory workshops and 1:1 appointments with our Placements Team.

Richardson Institute internships

Our School is home to the Richardson Institute, which undertakes cutting-edge peace and conflict research. Research themes include transnational repression, human rights, conflict resolution, and identity and belonging. Typically, the Institute offers 30 competitive internships per year to our students to undertake research projects for external organisations.

Faculty of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Internship Scheme

You'll gain sector-relevant work experience with these internships. Apply in all years of study for opportunities such as research and policy intern, business development strategist, or assistant events producer. The scheme offers you an opportunity to gain access to direct work experience while you study.

The Lancaster Award

The Lancaster Award is a non-academic certificate developed in partnership with employers to help you make the most of your time at Lancaster and to demonstrate the skills you have developed along the way. It is designed to reward the wide range of volunteering activities and placements undertaken by many of our undergraduates. Potential employers increasingly value a profile that includes more than just strong academic results, and the Lancaster Award recognises and validates this.



“

This placement with the Welsh Government allowed me to see what I had learnt in my degree in action.

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Welsh Government
Innovation Team

Lancaster University



Alistair, recent graduate
BA Hons Politics and
International Relations
(Placement Year)

For my placement year, I worked with the Welsh Government Innovation Team in the role of Team Support. This was only made possible thanks to the support from the careers team at Lancaster University. They helped me with mock interviews, practising how to best approach questions on application forms and constantly going over my CV.

Once I'd moved to Cardiff and started my job, I discussed with my manager what I wanted to get out of this placement and experiences I was keen to have. I told her I was really interested in Public Policy and Government Business. As a result of this conversation, I wrote a speech for the Student Innovation Awards to be read out in the Senedd, as well as attending multiple policy training workshops. This was in addition to my everyday tasks of writing and researching for publications as well as helping to organise and attend events for the Innovation Team.

This placement not only allowed me to see what I had learnt in my Politics and International Relations degree in action but also let me utilise my writing skills that I had developed over my degree in the workplace. I would highly recommend the experience of a placement year as I gained valuable lessons in how organisations work, work culture and crucially I discovered what characteristics I will look out for in my future roles after university.



Your global *experience*

Lancaster is a truly international university, with students and staff from over 100 different countries and partner institutions around the world. Your global experience is about living and learning with people from different cultures whether through your course, your college or your students' union.

Study abroad

You can choose to take a degree with a study abroad year. On these four-year degrees, you spend your third year studying at one of our partner universities abroad. Our current partners are in Australia, Canada and the USA, although availability of destinations varies each year.

Living in another country and studying your subject from a different perspective enhances your subject knowledge and develops resourcefulness for life after university.

Vacation travel

You can also discover the world during your vacations. Our Global Experiences team run vacation travel trips to Malaysia which include a mix of academic study and cultural discovery. These trips range from cultural exchanges to studying sustainable practices with world leading experts.

Overseas summer schools

During summer vacation, you can apply to attend a summer school at one of our international partner universities all around the world. Destinations are varied – from Singapore to Italy, Hong Kong to Canada. Explore where you could go: lancaster.ac.uk/overseas-summer-schools

Follow us on Instagram [@GlobalLancaster](https://www.instagram.com/GlobalLancaster)

Find out more at lancaster.ac.uk/your-global-experience

“

The potential for growth is unmatched.

”

Carleton University,
Ottawa

Lancaster University



Ben, recent graduate
International Relations
(Study Abroad)

During my undergraduate studies at Lancaster University I opted to study abroad, spending my second year studying at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. This enriching experience provided me with the opportunity of immersing myself within a new culture, climate, people, and educational environment, fostering growth in both my personal and professional development.

At Carleton, I enrolled in a variety of classes under the social sciences including a mixture of economics, politics and international relations content, tailored towards my degree. Outside of lectures and tutorials, I also secured part-time work, giving me valuable international work experience and allowing me to share my passion for everything outdoors.

I built lasting friendships with both Canadians and fellow exchange students - now I have a sofa to sleep on almost anywhere in the world! As an avid outdoorsman, I took every opportunity during reading weeks and holidays to explore the country's natural beauty. From hiking and camping to ice-skating, fishing, kayaking and photography, I immersed myself in Canada's incredible landscapes and outdoor lifestyle.

I'm incredibly grateful to both Lancaster and Carleton for making this possible. To those considering embarking on a similar journey, I could not recommend the experience enough as the potential for growth is unmatched.

International Relations

BA (Hons)

This degree equips you with a unique understanding of global dynamics and the analytical tools necessary to navigate complex international issues.

Your first year provides a comprehensive grounding in the discipline, focusing on the core foundations and origins of international relations, the analysis of contemporary global challenges, and an exploration of fundamental political thought. This crucial stage equips you with the essential tools for advanced study.

As you progress to your second year, you'll have the opportunity to tailor your degree to align with your specific interests. Specialisation pathways allow you to focus on key areas such as international security, in-depth regional studies, or the complex mechanisms of global governance. This focused learning builds upon your first-year knowledge, enabling a deeper engagement with your chosen field.

Your final year culminates in the development of advanced research skills and intellectual independence. You'll undertake a dissertation project, allowing you to contribute original research and demonstrate your understanding of International Relations, preparing you for future academic or professional pursuits.

Enhancing your curriculum

We continually review and enhance our course curricula to ensure we are delivering the best possible learning experience, and to make sure that the subject knowledge and transferable skills you develop will prepare you for your future. Information within this publication with respect to courses and modules is correct at the time of publication, and the University will make every reasonable effort to offer courses and modules as advertised. In some cases, changes may be necessary and may result in new modules or some modules and combinations being unavailable, for example as a result of student feedback, timetabling, staff changes and new research.

Year 1

Core Modules

Origins and Foundations of International Relations

Discover the core concepts, theories and historical contexts that shape the field of International Relations. In this module you will gain an understanding of the state system, sovereignty, power, anarchy and other key concepts that underpin the discipline.

Global Challenges in World Politics

Gain an understanding of the forces driving change in the international system and their impact on global order and human security. Move beyond traditional state-centric perspectives to explore the complex interplay of actors, structures, and processes shaping our interconnected world.

Global Governance and International Institutions

Explore global governance and the role of international institutions in tackling today's challenges. Study the historical development of the international system and the evolution of world order, setting the stage for an analysis of key actors in global politics.

Political Theory for a Troubled World

Explore how the history of political thought can help us make sense of contemporary crises. This module will examine topics such as political instability, economic crises, deepening inequalities, environmental degradation and technological disruptions, whilst debating political-economic order using historical perspectives.

Critical Perspectives on Global Politics

Challenge traditional views of International Relations by exploring critical theories such as Marxism, poststructuralism, feminism, queer IR and postcolonialism. Understand how these perspectives contrast with positivist approaches that emphasise objective facts and values in explaining world order.

Optional Modules

- Parties, Populism and Protest
- Medieval and Early Modern Worlds
- History of Philosophy: Ideas that Shaped the West
- Foundations of Microeconomics
- Thinking Sociologically

Year 2

Core Modules

Reshaping Global Order

Explore the profound transformations reshaping the contemporary international system. This module will build on your knowledge of foundational theories and concepts to examine the dynamic interplay of power shifts, globalisation and evolving security landscapes.

Understanding Political Research

In this module, you'll gain skills for independent research in International Relations. Design your own project, learn qualitative and quantitative methods and analyse a large political dataset to test for statistically significant relationships using various techniques.

Optional Modules

- War, Peace and Modernity
- Global Capitalism and its Discontent
- Authoritarianism, Repression and Resistance in the 21st century
- Global Superpowers
- Politics of the Global South
- Employability, Purpose and Social Impact
- Global Challenges and Collaborative Solutions
- Taking an Idea and Making it Happen

Study abroad degrees

You will study abroad at a partner university in your third year. The grades you achieve at your host university will be translated back and be credited to your Lancaster degree.

Placement year degrees

Your third year is spent in a graduate-level work placement and assessed via assignments reflecting on your experiences.

Final Year

Core Modules

International Relations Dissertation

Investigate an International Relations topic of personal interest through a detailed research project. Your chosen subject may stem from previous modules or reflect a unique area you're passionate about beyond your coursework.

Optional Modules

- Critical Studies of War and Security
- Environment and Development
- Security, Strategy and Technology
- Parliamentary Studies
- The Politics of Crises and the Future of Governance
- Politics of the Middle East and Asia Pacific
- Politics of Latin America and Africa
- Russia and China
- Europe and America
- Democracy Under Pressure
- The Politics of Borders and Migration
- Critical Political Theory
- Policymaking in the Real World
- Queer Futures
- People Power and Collective Action
- Confronting the Climate Crisis
- Artistic Fusions



Politics and International Relations

BA (Hons)

Explore how major global challenges impact politics and society at a national, regional and global level.

The first year provides you with grounding in critical analysis of major global challenges from climate change to global security to the rise of electoral populism and authoritarian states.

The second year will provide you with opportunity to explore these critical global challenges in more depth through key regional case studies of the USA, China, Africa and Latin America. We will also provide you with the critical research skills to direct your own analysis.

The final year gives you the freedom to specialise in exploring the topic areas and regions that interest you most in more depth. From cyber security and geopolitics to elections and policymaking to development studies and the Middle East you will be using research skills to contribute to these key debates.

Study abroad degrees

You will study abroad at a partner university in your third year. The grades you achieve at your host university will be translated back and be credited to your Lancaster degree.

Placement year degrees

Your third year is spent in a graduate-level work placement and assessed via assignments reflecting on your experiences.

Year 1

Core Modules

Origins and Foundations of International Relations

Discover the core concepts, theories and historical contexts that shape the field of International Relations. In this module you will gain an understanding of the state system, sovereignty, power, anarchy and other key concepts that underpin the discipline.

Global Governance and International Institutions

Explore global governance and the role of international institutions in tackling today's challenges. Study the historical development of the international system and the evolution of world order, setting the stage for an analysis of key actors in global politics.

Parties, Populism and Protest

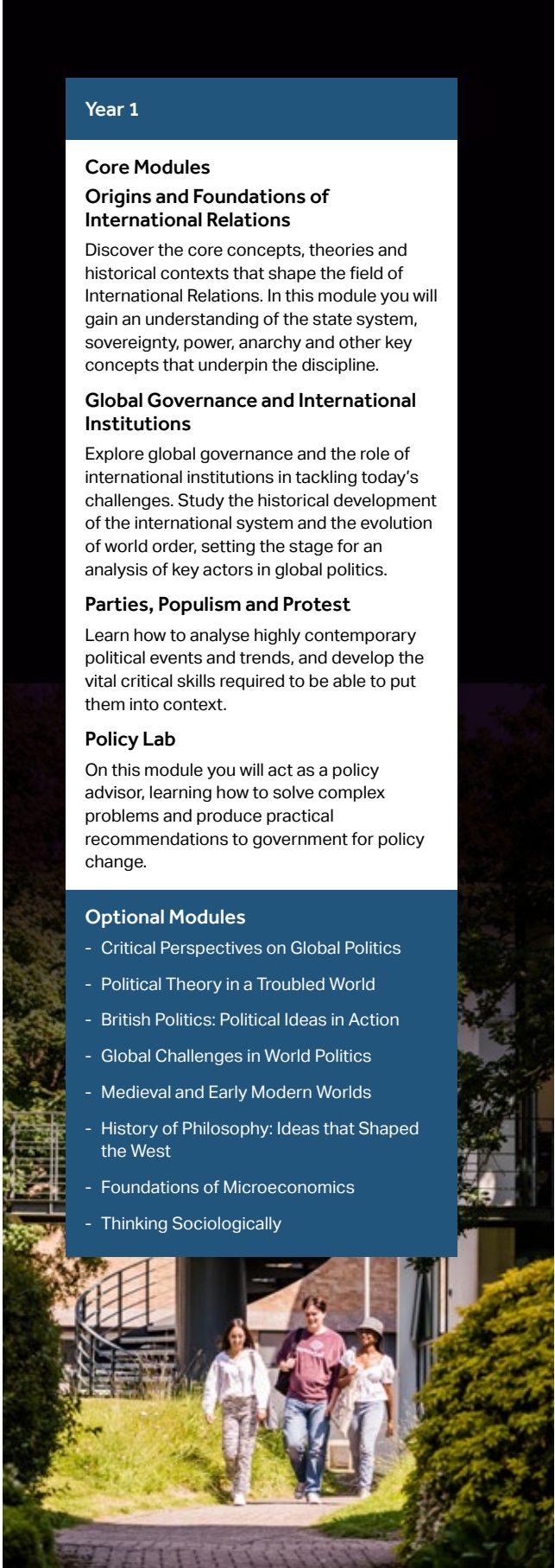
Learn how to analyse highly contemporary political events and trends, and develop the vital critical skills required to be able to put them into context.

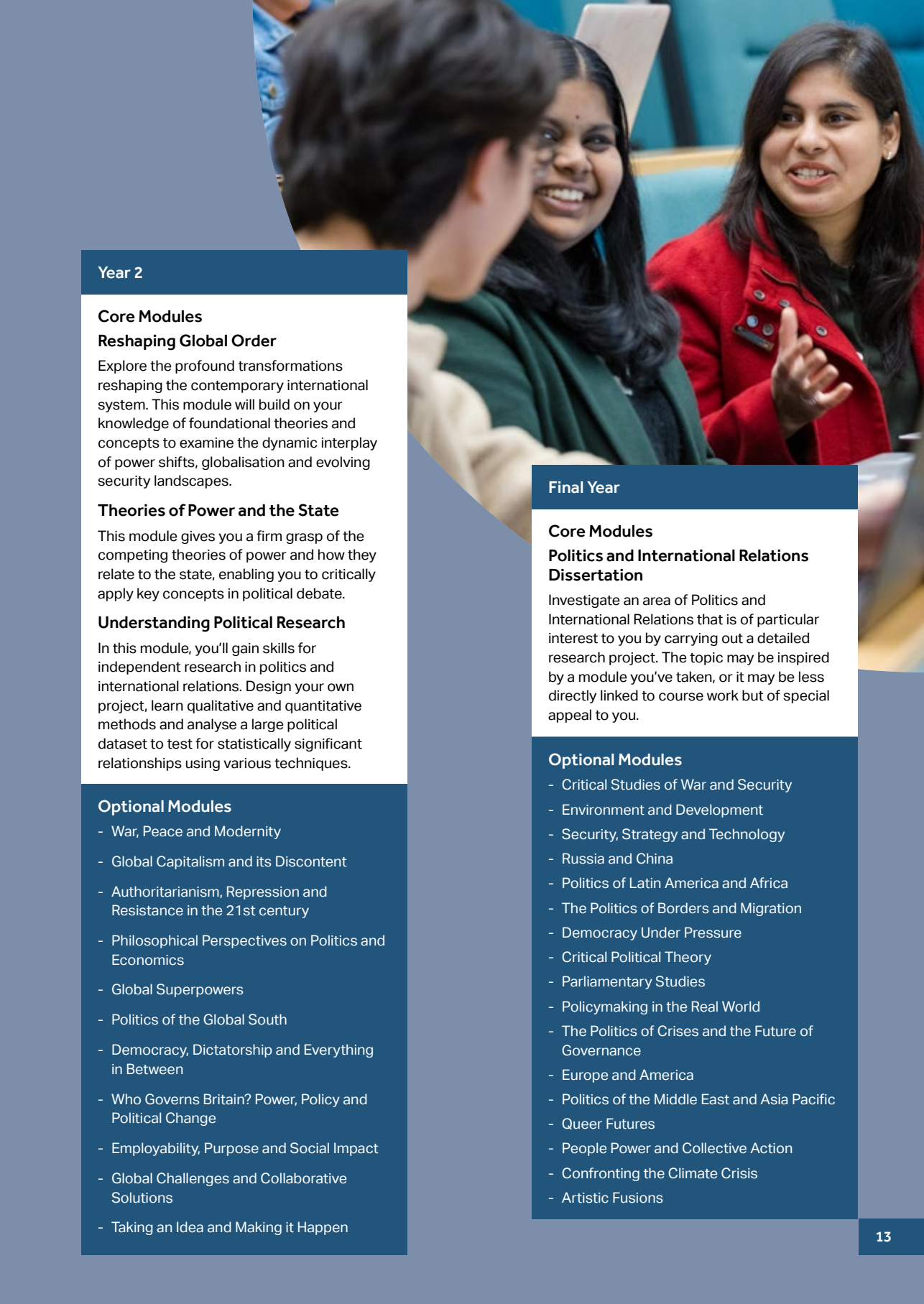
Policy Lab

On this module you will act as a policy advisor, learning how to solve complex problems and produce practical recommendations to government for policy change.

Optional Modules

- Critical Perspectives on Global Politics
- Political Theory in a Troubled World
- British Politics: Political Ideas in Action
- Global Challenges in World Politics
- Medieval and Early Modern Worlds
- History of Philosophy: Ideas that Shaped the West
- Foundations of Microeconomics
- Thinking Sociologically





Year 2

Core Modules

Reshaping Global Order

Explore the profound transformations reshaping the contemporary international system. This module will build on your knowledge of foundational theories and concepts to examine the dynamic interplay of power shifts, globalisation and evolving security landscapes.

Theories of Power and the State

This module gives you a firm grasp of the competing theories of power and how they relate to the state, enabling you to critically apply key concepts in political debate.

Understanding Political Research

In this module, you'll gain skills for independent research in politics and international relations. Design your own project, learn qualitative and quantitative methods and analyse a large political dataset to test for statistically significant relationships using various techniques.

Optional Modules

- War, Peace and Modernity
- Global Capitalism and its Discontent
- Authoritarianism, Repression and Resistance in the 21st century
- Philosophical Perspectives on Politics and Economics
- Global Superpowers
- Politics of the Global South
- Democracy, Dictatorship and Everything in Between
- Who Governs Britain? Power, Policy and Political Change
- Employability, Purpose and Social Impact
- Global Challenges and Collaborative Solutions
- Taking an Idea and Making it Happen

Final Year

Core Modules

Politics and International Relations Dissertation

Investigate an area of Politics and International Relations that is of particular interest to you by carrying out a detailed research project. The topic may be inspired by a module you've taken, or it may be less directly linked to course work but of special appeal to you.

Optional Modules

- Critical Studies of War and Security
- Environment and Development
- Security, Strategy and Technology
- Russia and China
- Politics of Latin America and Africa
- The Politics of Borders and Migration
- Democracy Under Pressure
- Critical Political Theory
- Parliamentary Studies
- Policymaking in the Real World
- The Politics of Crises and the Future of Governance
- Europe and America
- Politics of the Middle East and Asia Pacific
- Queer Futures
- People Power and Collective Action
- Confronting the Climate Crisis
- Artistic Fusions

Combined *honours* *degrees*

You can combine your study of International Relations with a range of other subjects through a combined honours degree. You'll study core modules from each subject, which will enable you to develop the essential knowledge needed for both. You will also have the freedom to tailor your degree further by choosing from a selection of optional modules from both disciplines and the wider Faculty of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences.

Our combined honours programmes offer you the flexibility to explore multiple interests within one degree and understand how different subjects interact to enhance your learning. You will develop a range of subject and career specific skills as well as transferable skills essential to all career pathways.

History and International Relations (Placement Year and Study Abroad available)

Gain a valuable blend of historical perspective and contemporary analysis, where insights from key moments in history are used to illuminate the complexities of diplomacy in the modern world. From the rise and fall of empires to the challenges of globalisation, the degree provides a fascinating exploration of governance, trade and war.

Combining a critical approach with practical skills, you will explore the origins of global issues and engage with strategies to tackle some of the most pressing challenges of our time. How are new technologies impacting war and conflict? What are the economic and cultural consequences of globalisation? How can we address global inequality and climate change? What role do international institutions play in the promotion of human rights?

Chinese Studies and International Relations French Studies and International Relations German Studies and International Relations Spanish Studies and International Relations

When you study a language at Lancaster you develop both language skills and in-depth cultural knowledge. You explore important world issues and how they affect the countries where your chosen language is spoken - from environmental challenges and climate change, to politics, health and human rights. This deep awareness of cultural contexts enhances the study of International Relations and provides a rich level of understanding.

You can join our combined language degrees at either beginners or intermediate level and will progress to proficiency during the degree. You'll spend year three either studying or working overseas, building your language skills and deepening your intercultural awareness. For Chinese language students, a study abroad year in China or a work placement at a Chinese-speaking organisation in the UK are options for you. For French, German or Spanish language students, you can study abroad or do a work placement in a country where your language is spoken.



“
Choosing
modules
from multiple
disciplines
made a
massive
difference
to my study
experience
”



Aimee, second year

**BA Hons History and
International Relations**

I knew I wanted to study history at a degree level since I was doing my GCSEs, but the international relations part came pretty late into doing my A levels. When I came to Lancaster for an open day not only did I discover I was able to do both, but I could have choice and flexibility whilst doing it. The joint honours degree programme at Lancaster has allowed me use knowledge and skills I have gained in one part of my course and apply it to the other. Choosing modules from multiple disciplines made a massive difference to my study experience. This was the main reason I chose to study my degree at Lancaster.

I am currently in the process of choosing my area of study for my dissertation. In my first year, the core history module gave us the opportunity to study all areas of history and allowed us to meet almost all the members of staff within the department. This included covering from the Romans to the modern day, with WWII, princes in the tower, and the French Revolution all found in-between (When I say all, I mean all!) This led me to decide to do my dissertation on modern British history with a focus on political history in particular. This gives me a historical focus but allows me to use my knowledge from the politics and international relations side of my degree.

Module *spotlight*



We offer a wide choice of optional modules so that you can curate your own path through our degrees. You can choose to focus on one or two areas of particular interest or extend your knowledge across a broad range of topics.

Europe and America

Examine two of the world's most important powers - the European Union (EU) and the United States (US) – and a transatlantic alliance that was forged post-war and remains one of the most important globally despite current challenges. In particular, we will scrutinise the dynamics of EU-US relations. How has the Trump presidency affected the relationship between Brussels and Washington? What are the long-term prospects for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)? As Europe increasingly turns to security issues, how realistic is President Macron's proposal for a European army to replace long-established American hard power?

The Politics of Borders and Migration

In most of the Global North the movement of people across international borders is a key political issue of our time. The public, researchers and politicians across the political spectrum participate in passionate debates about immigration, a key voting issue. This module draws on cutting edge research in political science, international relations and similar fields. It equips you with fact-based evidence so that you can confidently participate in the ongoing societal debate on what it means to inhabit a world on the move.





Policymaking in the Real World

The module includes a placement where you will work on real-world policy-making scenarios. You will gain practical experience and in-depth knowledge of the policymaking process within different political contexts. You will also deepen your understanding of key theoretical frameworks and concepts in policy analysis and development. By the end of the module, you will be able to conduct robust policy research and evaluate the ethical implications of policy decisions.

War, Peace and Modernity

How have modern geopolitics and war transformed the ethical, political and strategic conditions of international politics and economy? Through an exploration of key events, technologies and practices that have shaped the modern world, we will interrogate war's contested legacies around the globe while also challenging the field's usual emphasis on war over alternative perspectives such as peace, non-violence, and political action.

Politics of the Global South

Explore how historical, economic and social forces have shaped the complex political landscapes of regions in the Global South. Through examining factors such as colonial legacies, the impact of external interventions, the consequences of neoliberal economic reforms, and challenges faced during democratisation processes, you will develop a sophisticated understanding of power, resistance and development in the Global South.



Careers and *employability*

Our International Relations degrees equip you with a versatile skill set that prepares you for a wide range of exciting careers. Throughout your studies, you will develop strong analytical, research, and communication skills, as well as a deep understanding of global issues. We emphasise critical thinking, problem-solving, and the ability to work effectively in diverse teams.

Careers service

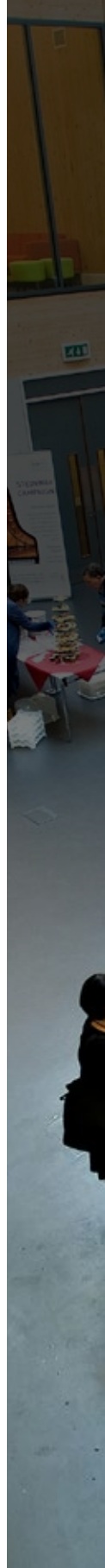
Our careers service has connections with top graduate recruiters, high growth businesses and employers across diverse sectors. There are regular careers fairs, workshops and networking opportunities.

You can be matched with an employer or a graduate for one-to-one advice and take part in workshops such as writing a CV, developing a LinkedIn profile or succeeding at psychometric testing. We have a vast range of online resources as well as an exclusive job search portal. Our team of friendly, experienced careers professionals are always on hand to help and advise.

Graduate destinations

Whether you are passionate about international relations, global politics, security issues, or politics, you will gain the knowledge and skills to make a difference in the world across different sectors, including:

- Government and public sector.
- Civil service: work at the heart of government policymaking, contributing to shaping national and international strategies.
- Diplomatic service: represent your country abroad and engage in international diplomacy.
- International organisations: work for organisations like the UN, EU, or World Bank to address global challenges.
- International aid and development: work with NGOs to alleviate poverty, promote human rights, and address global inequalities.
- Humanitarian organisations: respond to crises and provide humanitarian assistance to those in need.
- Advocacy and campaigning: advocate for social and environmental justice and influence public policy.



“
Being in the same room as high-profile international stakeholders was inspirational.
”



Jack, recent graduate

School of Global Affairs student

I undertook an internship as a Project Assistant for The International Network Against Accusations of Witchcraft and Associated Harmful Practices (TINAAWAHP) Conference.

Working with Lancaster University researchers on this project, I learnt a lot about the ongoing fight for human rights globally and the legal challenges faced in certain hotspots of witchcraft-related harm. Many stories heard were harrowing, but it was reassuring to hear - and meet - those who are dedicated to changing things.

I gained skills in administration and using MS Word and Excel in professional contexts. I was tasked with emailing all delegates to chase up outstanding information for the conference. Keeping a check as to which information I had received from who, as well as sending formal emails, was a great professional experience to gain.

This was also one of the first times that I had communicated with high-profile individuals. Changing communication techniques (such as addressing everyone with their full title, for instance) soon became the norm when contacting or speaking to the conference delegates. My communications skills have developed a lot!

The conference itself was an eye-opening day. Being in the same room as high-profile international stakeholders on this issue (such as UN delegates, barristers and human rights advocates from around the globe) was inspirational.



lancaster.ac.uk/global-affairs/international-relations

The information provided in this publication relates primarily to 2027 entry to the University and every effort has been taken to ensure the information is correct at the time of printing in June 2026. The University will use all reasonable effort to deliver the course as described but the University reserves the right to make changes after going to print. You are advised to consult our website at: lancaster.ac.uk/study for up-to-date information before you submit your application. Further legal information may be found at: lancaster.ac.uk/compliance/legalnotice.