

INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



**Dr Sam Raphael
Module Handbook (2021-22)**

MODULE SUMMARY

Welcome to IR! You have chosen a fascinating and exciting subject to study. Like you, your lecturers and seminar leaders are passionate about how to understand an ever-changing world—a world that is sometimes dangerous and conflictual, sometimes cooperative and inspiring. Your degree here at the University of Westminster will give you the tools and knowledge to navigate that world: to grow and develop as scholars and citizens. We are glad to welcome you on that journey, and this module will be one of your starting points.

One of the central concerns of the field of IR, ever since its inception in the early 20th Century, has been the question of war: why do states go to war and, given how awful the experience of war is for all of us, how can we build a world in which war is obsolete (or at least heavily regulated and contained)? This will be the starting question for this module, but it will very quickly become clear that we need to think critically about the concepts of ‘state’ and ‘war’, and that – if we are to fully understand why the world can sometimes be so violent – we need to bring in a number of other key concepts, including imperialism, colonialism, gender and race. Indeed, we will need to, collectively, “decolonise” International Relations, and decolonise our understandings of war, before we can make headway in developing our capacity to understand – and challenge – violent structures and practices. This is a tricky thing to do, and it will take a while to get there – but there is an urgency to this journey, and it is one which we must all embark upon. Because, at the end of the day, we should not think of ourselves as passive recipients of knowledge handed down to us, but as active citizens who are ready and able to challenge – to challenge received wisdom, challenge existing power structures, and challenge the violence which is often conducted in our name. Let’s do this together!

Our **module aims** are to:

- Introduce you to International Relations (IR) as an academic discipline;
- Introduce you to the key theories of IR and outline the importance of theory to the study of IR;
- Identify the key concepts in IR, their meaning and contemporary importance;
- Identify the practical manifestation of both theoretical and conceptual debates in international politics;
- Develop your understanding of the research methodology and analytical skills required to study IR.

Your **learning outcomes** (what you can expect to have learned by the end of the module) will be to have:

- Identified the primary characteristics of IR as a distinct academic discipline;
- An understanding of the key theoretical perspectives on IR and the importance of theory to the study of IR;
- An understanding of the key concepts associated with IR, their meaning, importance and the differing perspectives on each;
- Identified empirical examples of the key IR concepts in international politics;
- Developed the methodological and analytical skills required to study IR.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching and learning on the module takes place through weekly lectures (1hr) and seminars (2hrs). Lectures are taken as one large group, in Portland Hall. They will be recorded and uploaded to Blackboard, although it is important to attend in person if you can make it. Seminars are in smaller groups, and these sessions will not be recorded – this is where you will come together to discuss the readings and the issues for each week. In preparation for the seminars, you will be expected to read the essential readings and complete any other preparatory work which is set. This preparation will be assessed via the Learning Portfolio.

In seminars we will generally focus on the lecture topic from the same week, and you will be expected to take an active part in the discussion and undertake small-group work. The titles of the lectures are given below.

Lectures are on Thursdays, 1-2pm, in Little Titchfield Street, Portland Hall (LG.14)

**Seminars are on Thursdays, at 11am and 2pm, in Regent Street
(please see your timetable for your class)**

Teaching Staff

This module is team taught, with a number of academics contributing to lectures and seminars. The module leader is Dr Sam Raphael, and he will give the first few lectures. Your seminar tutor will be your first port of call, and they will give you their details in the first week. If your tutor cannot answer any question you may have, then come and see Sam – he always likes to chat!

All staff are here to help you in your studies as much as possible, so please reach out to us whenever you need. We all have office hours each week – both onsite and online – and you can also email us if you would like to book an appointment at a different time.

STAFF	EMAIL	OFFICE HOURS
Dr Sam Raphael (module leader)	s.raphael@westminster.ac.uk	Onsite: Fri, 10-11am, Wells St 509 Online: Mon, 10-11am, via this link
Dr Matthew Fluck	m.fluck@westminster.ac.uk	Onsite: Thu, 10-11am, Wells St 411 Online: Mon, 2-3pm, via this link
Dr Dan Conway	d.conway@westminster.ac.uk	Onsite: Thu, 11am-1pm, Wells St 508 Online: Thu, 11am-1pm, via this link
Dr Jac St John	j.stjohn1@westminster.ac.uk	Onsite: Thu, 10-11am, Wells St 509 Online: Thu, 10-11am, via this link
Dr Frands Pedersen	f.pedersen01@westminster.ac.uk	Onsite: Mon, 10-11am, Wells St 514 Online: Thu, 9:30-10:30am, via this link

WEEKLY OVERVIEW

(Including assessment deadlines in red)

Week 1	Welcome to International Relations! (Dr Sam Raphael)
Week 2	Thinking critically about global politics (Dr Sam Raphael)
Week 3	Anarchy, power and fear (Dr Sam Raphael)
Week 4	Liberal peace or imperial peace? (Dr Sam Raphael)
Week 5	Decolonising war (Dr Catherine Charrett)
Week 6	NO CLASSES
Week 7	Gendering state violence (Dr Dan Conway)
Week 8	Borders as violence (Prof Dibyesh Anand)
Week 9	Resisting war (Dr Dan Conway) <i>[Essay deadline: 1pm, Wednesday 24 November 2021]</i>
Week 10	FIELD TRIP: Imperial War Museum
Week 11	Colonialism and state violence in the Middle East (student conference)
Week 12	Essay feedback

ASSESSMENT

There are three assessments for this module:

CW1: Learning Portfolio (30%). A mix of pre-class and in-class work, to be completed weekly.

CW2: Essay (50%). To be submitted electronically via Blackboard, 1pm Wednesday 24 November 2021.

CW3: Reflective summary (20%). To be submitted, electronically via Blackboard, 1pm Thursday 20 January 2022.

CW1: Learning Portfolio (30%)

The learning portfolio is designed to reflect the ongoing engagement which is needed for this module to be a success. It comprises the submission of 15 reading notes, via Blackboard, in Weeks 2-5 and 7-11. Each of these notes needs to cover an essential reading for the week – in some weeks there will be one essential reading, and in some weeks there will be two. Details of the essential readings each week can be found in the online reading list, via Blackboard.

The deadline for submitting your reading notes each week is **Thursday at 11am**. You should bring a copy of your notes to class with you, either online or on paper, as you will use these to help you during the seminar discussions. But the submission must happen online.

Each note will be marked on a pass/fail basis, and each will count for 2% of your overall module mark. Each reading note needs to be at least one side of A4, if typed, or at least two sides if handwritten (you can take a photo and upload to Blackboard).

IMPORTANT: You must use the template on Blackboard, which includes the following five elements:

1. **Reading title.** The title of the reading, using Harvard referencing format (see the PIR Red Book for details)
2. **Key concepts.** Note down 3-5 key concepts (ideas) or theories (coherent networks of ideas) that the reading engages with. Some examples: 'imperialism', 'race', 'critical theory', 'democratic peace', 'realism', 'globalisation', 'war', 'anarchy'. If the reading already has keywords assigned, please don't just copy these down – what are the key ideas/terms that YOU think the article is engaging with?
3. **Summary of argument.** Try to summarise the author's overall argument in 1-3 sentences max. Imagine you had to explain it to someone in the street, as they were rushing by....
4. **Key points.** Boil the argument in the reading down to 4-6 points. Try to have no more than six parts. This can sometimes be hard, but it is a really important skill. Think of it as six steps in the argument, each of which is important, and the rest of the material just supports these six steps. Number them so you get an idea of the flow of an argument. You can include additional details, but they have to come under one of the central points.
5. **Questions.** Write down anything you don't understand. Also write down at least three questions you could ask in class to open up the debate – you may be asked to do this!

Remember: we are **not** marking you on the content – just on the fact that you have completed a reading note using the required template.

Learning Portfolio (Absence, Non-Submission and Mitigating Circumstances)

If you are unable to submit your reading notes for a particular week by 11am on Thursday, you can submit them up to one week later and they will be marked as usual. **However, you are only eligible to submit reading notes in this way two times.** Beyond these two late notes, you must apply for Mitigating Circumstances via the usual process – or else, your submissions will not be included in your Learning Portfolio marks.

CW2: Essay (50%)

The essay needs to be 1,500 words (+/- 10%) and submitted via Turnitin by **1pm Wednesday 24 November 2021**.

Choose one question from the list below. To achieve a good mark, you will need to demonstrate sustained engagement with the relevant academic literature (see the online reading list for lots of sources) and build a coherent argument that directly answers the question.

ESSAY QUESTIONS

- 1. What does “decolonising IR” mean, and how should we go about it?**
- 2. Critically assess the concept of EITHER “anarchy” OR “democratic peace”.**
- 3. How can the concept of “imperialism” help us to decolonise the concept of “war”?**
- 4. In what ways is state violence gendered?**

Assessment criteria

In assessing the essay, staff will consider:

- The quality of the content; the breadth and depth of analysis; and the quality of the critical comment;
- The accuracy of research;
- The structure; logical development and coherence of the argument;
- The range of literature used in making the argument;
- The presentation and layout;
- The competence of which sources are used and the adherence to academic conventions in the citation of sources.

The feedback date for the essay will be Wednesday 15 December 2021.

CW3: Reflective Summary (20%)

The reflective summary will focus on the feedback you receive from your essay. This feedback will be both formal (from tutor, via Blackboard and in person in Week 12) and informal (from peers, via in-class peer marking after your submission).

With this feedback in mind, you will need to submit a revised version of your essay, addressing the points raised by further developing your work. This new version will need to have all changes “tracked” (we will show you how to do this), so that it is clear what has changed. This submission will not be marked again from scratch, but will form part of the evidence base to assess the extent to which the you have engaged with the feedback received.

You will also need to submit a short (500 word) “reflective summary”, reflecting on the feedback you received for the essay and summarising the ways in which your resubmission has addressed this feedback. A template for this summary is available via Blackboard.

Assessment criteria

In marking the reflective summary, academic staff will consider:

- the extent to which the reflection addresses the specific feedback from CW2; and
- the extent to which the revisions to the essay address the points raised in the feedback..

The deadline for the reflective summary is **1pm, Thursday 20 January 2022**.

The feedback date for the reflective summary will be Thursday 10 February 2022.

Further Information Regarding Coursework

In addition to the information contained in this Handbook, which is specific to the assessment for this module, you need to be aware of PIR's general guidance and policies for coursework submission. Instructions and guidance relating to these and other procedures can be found in the **PIR Red Book**. You should consider this your 'How To' guide. The PIR Red Book can be found on the [Politics and International Relations Blackboard site](#).

Additional information is contained in the current version of the *PIR Course Handbook*, and includes guidance on:

- Submitting your work
- Late submission
- Plagiarism and referencing
- Mitigating circumstances
- Word limits

The current version of the PIR Course Handbook can be found on the [Politics and International Relations Blackboard site](#).

Other important sources of information. For information about academic progression, condoned credits, referral opportunities and the calculation of degree awards, see the [Handbook of Academic Regulations](#) (section 17). As these are the overarching regulations at Westminster, they are very detailed and quite technical. If you need help interpreting the regulations, please email your Course Leader.