

Module Details	
Module Title	Understanding the International System
Module Code	PES4018-B
Academic Year	2023/4
Credits	20
School	School of Social Sciences
FHEQ Level	FHEQ Level 4

Contact Hours	
Type	Hours
Lectures	11
Seminars	11
Directed Study	178

Availability	
Occurrence	Location / Period
BDA	University of Bradford / Semester 1

Module Aims
<p>To give you a broad introduction to the context and origins of the present-day international system and current debates about its characteristics and an understanding of contemporary mechanisms of regional and international political and security governance.</p> <p>To give you an understanding of the principal theories of international relations (realism, liberalism, Marxism, constructivism) and how they explain the international system.</p> <p>To encourage you to reflect on the connections between this module and the subjects introduced in the other core modules in semester one.</p> <p>To introduce you to the analysis of complex ideas at first year university level through group discussion oral presentations and a written assignment.</p> <p>To highlight the theoretical and thematic connections between this module and the other two core modules in semester. This will be particularly the case at the start of the module and at the conclusion of the module.</p>

Outline Syllabus

The syllabus will include: the evolution of the international system to WW1; core elements of the principal theories of international relations (realism, liberalism, Marxism, constructivism); the short twentieth century (e.g. San Francisco, Bretton Woods, superpower competition); the post-Cold War multi-polar international system; transnational actors; new wars; and contemporary mechanisms of regional and international political and security governance. The module will conclude by examining debates about the contemporary challenges facing the mechanisms of international political and security governance. The module will also include an immersion day involving an intensive examination of a theme (e.g. gender) relevant both to this module and the other two core Level 4 modules in semester one.

Learning Outcomes

Outcome Number	Description
01	Explain, employ and compare key threshold concepts, theories and approaches in international relations, international history, and associated social sciences.
02	Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the origins, evolution and contemporary dynamics of the international system.
03	Distinguish a range of research designs and methods used in international relations and more broadly across the social sciences and humanities.
04	Formulate and evaluate clear arguments, using knowledge of the different components of argumentation and showing an understanding of scholarly rigour.
05	Gather, manage and interpret evidence, data and information from valid and appropriate sources, both printed primary and secondary, in relation to a given topic.
06	Explain differences between contending theories of knowledge and their implications for problem solving.
07	Use relevant concepts and theories to investigate issues in international relations, and international history-related case studies, to develop insights and perspectives.
08	Produce planned, properly referenced and well-structured written arguments with clear introductions, appropriate use of academic concepts, and effective summary of academic debates in international studies, and showing awareness of the differences between important theoretical approaches in relevant disciplines.
09	Competently present ideas and information.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

Learning will develop through a blended learning strategy. This will be based on lectures (online and face to face) focusing on threshold concepts, and seminar discussion and debates (online and face to face) on particular case studies. Where appropriate, relevant sections of documentaries will be used to broaden the approach to case studies.

Formative assessment will be undertaken through class and individual discussions of planned written work.

Summative assessment will consist of

1. An essay (LOs 1-8)
2. Oral presentation on a topic covered in the module (LO9)

Mode of Assessment			
Type	Method	Description	Weighting
Summative	Presentation	Oral presentation on a topic covered in the module. SUPPLEMENTARY: Written speech of topic	20%
Summative	Coursework - Written	Essay (2800-3000 words)	80%
Formative	Coursework	Supervised small group discussions on planned topics	N/A

Reading List
To access the reading list for this module, please visit https://bradford.rl.talis.com/index.html

Please note:

This module descriptor has been published in advance of the academic year to which it applies. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate at the time of publication, but minor changes may occur given the interval between publishing and commencement of teaching. Upon commencement of the module, students will receive a handbook with further detail about the module and any changes will be discussed and/or communicated at this point.

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