

**COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT**

**Academic School/Department:** Social Sciences and Humanities

**Programme:** MA International Relations

**FHEQ Level:** 7

**Course Title:** Thesis Research

**Course Code:** INR 7500

**Student Engagement Hours:** 400

Independent / Guided Learning: 400

**Credits:** 40 UK CATS credits

20 ECTS credits

8 US credits

**Course Description:**

For students working independently on their Masters thesis. The dissertation encourages students to study intensively a topic agreed with a supervisor, and so develop skills and experience which can be applied in work placements or further graduate work. The course is comprised of independent research and writing, overseen by a thesis supervisor, resulting in production of a 10-12,000 word thesis. Collaborative and supportive dialogue with the supervisor and fellow 'junior research colleagues' will involve advice on the research and writing process, suggestions for resources and research directions, and comments on draft chapters of the thesis.

**Prerequisites:** MA International Relations students only

**Aims and Objectives:**

- For the supervisor to guide the student, as a junior research colleague, through the research, writing and production of an MA level thesis of 10-12,000 words
- For the student to undertake independent/autonomous research on a topic which makes a valuable contribution to the field
- To develop skills and experience which can be applied in work placements or further graduate work

**Programme Outcomes:**

At the end of this course, the students will have achieved the following programme outcomes.

A; B; C; D; E; F; G; H

A detailed list of the programme outcomes are found in the Programme Specification.

This is maintained by Registry and located at:

<https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

**Learning Outcomes:**

At the end of this course, the students will have achieved the following learning outcomes.

- Demonstrates a deep and systematic understanding of key texts, thinkers, intellectual paradigms, themes and debates in a specific topic in International Relations, and reflecting on their relationship to empirical evidence.
- Develops and utilises theory and methodology appropriate to substantive inquiry of an empirical subject area within International Relations.
- Demonstrates a deep, systematic and innovative ability to adapt and apply knowledge in the discipline of International Relations to a highly focused research question.
- Designs and undertakes a substantial investigation of a significant areas of theory and/or practice in International Relations, using selected advanced methodological approaches.
- Engages with and evaluates complex, incomplete or contradictory evidence while critically reflecting on the different theoretical and methodological tools used .
- Demonstrates the ability to exercise initiative in organising and pursuing a supervised project, while accepting full accountability for outcomes.
- Demonstrates the ability to gather, organise and effectively communicate complex and abstract ideas and diverse information with regard to a complex and specialised thesis topic.
- Demonstrates the ability for innovative and autonomous learning, normative and ethical reflection, self-evaluation and engagement with disciplinary benchmarks.

**Indicative Content:**

- production of a 10-12,000 word thesis, suitably illustrated, evidencing: intensive autonomous study of a topic agreed with a supervisor primary research making a valuable contribution to the field
- a coherent argument
- appropriate, critical use of secondary sources footnotes and a bibliography complying with either Harvard or Chicago referencing system
- satisfactory presentation and scholarly apparatus

**Assessment:**

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/university-policies/>

Note: the required thesis word count is 10-12,000 words.

**Teaching Methodology:**

**AUTONOMOUS RESEARCH AND RESEARCH SUPERVISION**

The Course will require independent research overseen by a thesis supervisor, tutorial opportunities including with specialist faculty for more specific academic guidance, including comments on draft materials, and faculty and peer review feedback at a thesis conference.

**Indicative Text(s):**

- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Oxford University Press, Oxford).
- Bell, J. (2010). *Doing Your Own Research Project: A Guide for First Time Researchers in Education and Social Sciences*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (London, Open University Press).
- Berg, B. (2011). *Qualitative Research Methods for Social Sciences*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. (Pearson, London).
- Burnham, P., Gilland, K. et al. (2008). *Research Methods in Politics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan).
- Landman, Todd (2008). *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge)
- George, Alexander L. and Bennett, Andrew (2005). *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. (Cambridge: MIT Press).
- Davis, James (2005). *Terms of Inquiry: On the Theory and Practice of Political Science*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press).

**Journals**

**Web Sites**

See syllabus for complete reading list

**Change Log for this CSD:**

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or LTPC)	Change Actioned by Academic Registry
Revision – annual update	May 2023	

