



Department of
International Politics

Undergraduate studies in

International Relations and Politics

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Important information

The programme information published in this brochure was correct at time of going to print (June 2025) and may be subject to change. Prospective students are advised to check the definitive programme information, including entry requirements, that is available on our website before making an application, to ensure that the programme meets their needs.

Welcome

Welcome to the world's first Department of International Politics.

The study of Politics and International Relations is indispensable for understanding a rapidly changing world. In a time of political and ideological tensions and uncertainty, social and economic transformation, and increasingly diverse forms of conflict and violence, everyone has a stake in how these crucial global challenges are confronted. The Department's teaching and research remain true to its founding ideals:

- to seek greater security, peace and justice in a disordered world.

As the world's first department of international politics, established in 1919, an innovative ethos drives our commitment to excellence in research and teaching, and in the overall student experience. Our research focuses on developing new ways of understanding the world around us, and 87% of this research was rated as world leading or internationally excellent in the last research assessment exercise (2021). We're ranked in the Top 5 in the UK for Student Experience for the subject of Politics (Good University Guide 2025, The Times and Sunday Times).

At the department, staff from around the world provide a supportive environment for students to explore the big questions and concepts of our time, such as power, democracy, war and peace, intelligence and security, populism and authoritarianism, climate change, covert operations and strategy, inequality, trade and international organisations, ethics, gender and human rights. This intellectually diverse and vibrant community gives students the confidence to grow their knowledge and challenge assumptions about the way that the world works and how it can be changed for the better.

Our degree schemes provide an outstanding education and excellent preparation for successful careers. Some of our graduates embark on politics-related professions such as the civil service, diplomacy and governance at different levels, including international organisations, or in the non-profit and NGO sectors, and in defence and security. Other graduates succeed in journalism, policy or intelligence analysis, in teaching, or progress to working for top companies via graduate programmes.

So if you're interested in exploring the challenges facing international politics, come and study it in the home of the discipline.

Everybody in the Department of International Politics looks forward to welcoming you into our lively community of staff and students.

Alistair Shepherd
Head of Department



Our courses

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Politics and International Relations

BA (Hons) | L248 | 3 years

Politics and International Relations explores the transformation of the world we live in from the local to the global level. The domestic and international order is being reconstructed by powerful new and resurgent political, economic, socio-cultural forces. As the world's first Department of International Politics, we have studied the connections between local and global politics for over a hundred years and continue to focus on tackling the most pressing challenges facing us from individual to planetary level.

The degree in Politics and International Relations offers you the opportunity to study the concepts, practices, policies, histories and regions that make up politics and international relations as a discipline. You will explore the wide variety of political systems and global institutions and explore the challenges and tensions they face, from globalisation and isolationism to war and insecurity, to environmental degradation and climate change, to inequality and intolerance.

Throughout the course, you will explore different arguments, rival theories and alternative explanations, demonstrating the complexities of addressing these challenges, while developing analytical skills that are important in the workplace.

Module list

Below is a list of the core modules for this course.

First year:

- Exploring the International: Central Concepts and Core Skills *
- Politics in the 21st Century *
- Behind the Headlines *

Second year:

- International Relations: Perspectives and Debates *
- People and Power: Understanding Comparative Politics Today *

Final year:

- Dissertation *

For details on the optional modules available, see the current list on our website, or contact us.

* also available partially or entirely through the medium of Welsh.

Key Facts



Typical offer:
UCAS tariff points: 120-96
IB: 30-26



Assessment weighting:
Typically 100% coursework,
or 50% coursework and
50% exams



Also available:
L249 Integrated year
studying abroad

Intelligence and International Security

BA (Hons) | L253 | 3 years

In an increasingly interconnected, contested and complex world, international actors face diverse intelligence and security challenges. As the world's first Department of International Politics, founded in 1919 in the aftermath of World War One, we have shaped the study of international security for over a 100 years.

The BA Intelligence and International Security at Aberystwyth University focuses on the global politics of war and peace and the complex intelligence and security dilemmas and challenges facing governments, militaries, and societies. While drawing on the lessons of the past, we focus on the present – and future – of strategy, secret intelligence and the search for security for individuals, societies, states and for the planet.

You will explore the complexities of how intelligence is gathered and assessed, disseminated to decisionmakers, and examine how this process influence responses to security threats. You will also evaluate the importance of information, secrecy, and surveillance while considering the ethical, moral and legal implications that arise from engaging in intelligence activities through historical case studies.

The role of intelligence is ever more crucial as security threats are increasingly multifaceted. These include inter- and intra-state conflict, international terrorism, cyber threats, nuclear proliferation, transnational crime, population displacement, natural disasters and climate change. Ideas from strategic, intelligence and security studies enable understanding and analysing these challenges from different perspectives and explore innovative and holistic responses to them.

Key Facts



Typical offer:
UCAS tariff points: 120-96
IB: 30-28



Assessment weighting:
Typically 100% coursework,
or 50% coursework and
50% exams

Module list

Below is a list of the core modules for this course.

First year:

- Exploring the International: Central Concepts and Core Skills *
- War, Strategy and Intelligence

Second year:

- Strategy, Intelligence and Security in International Politics

Final year:

- Dissertation *

For details on the optional modules available, see the current list on our website, or contact us.

* also available partially or entirely through the medium of Welsh.



International Relations and Military History

BA (Hons) | H2VL | 3 years

War, its causes, conduct, and cessation, has fascinated and horrified in equal measure. As the world's first Department of International Politics we were established to address the horrors of war and explore ways toward greater security, peace and justice in a disordered world. We build on this legacy by exploring the key dynamics of past wars and conflict tracing their impact on and learning lessons for today's militaries and societies.

The International Relations and Military History degree will enable you to study the development of warfare since the time of Napoleon, examining how and why the character of war has changed and how it has shaped societies. You will consider how technology has changed warfare, from the age of steam through to nuclear weapons, drones, and cyberwarfare. You will also analyse militaries and military operations from a variety of perspectives including the importance of leadership, the significance of strategic thought, and the role of intelligence, industry, and society.

At Aberystwyth, you will also reflect on the relationship of wars and militaries with political institutions, economic issues and ideologies such as nationalism across key regions such as the Middle East, Russia, the Americas, and Europe.

Key Facts



Typical offer:
UCAS tariff points: 120-96
IB: 30-26



Assessment weighting:
Typically 100% coursework,
or 50% coursework and
50% exams



Also available:
F2VL Integrated
foundation year

Module list

Below is a list of the core modules for this course.

First year:

- Exploring the International: Central Concepts and Core Skills *
- The Making of the Modern World: War, Peace and Revolution since 1789

Second year:

- Warfare after Waterloo: Military History 1815-1918.

Final year:

- Dissertation *

For details on the optional modules available, see the current list on our website, or contact us.

* also available partially or entirely through the medium of Welsh.



International Relations

BA (Hons) | 142L | 3 years

In this turbulent and fascinating moment in international relations, we invite our students to explore the challenges facing world politics and consider how to best shape its future. As the world's first Department of International Politics we have pioneered the study of International Relations for over a hundred years, and we continue to tackle the world's most pressing problems, such as war, nuclear instability, climate change, global inequality and the weakening of international institutions.

In studying International Relations at Aberystwyth, you will engage in debates about the key issues and most significant challenges facing international politics. You will study the concepts, practices, actors, and histories that are central to international relations and explore the ways in which all these factors are undergoing radical transformation.

This degree enables you to explore global challenges from a range of perspectives and to discover the deeper dynamics which drive the actions of countries, leaders and activists. From nationalism to trade wars, from colonial legacies to the re-emergence of geopolitical conflict, you will consider how different perspectives can shape and reshape responses to the turbulence engulfing world politics.

Key Facts



Typical offer:
UCAS tariff points: 120-96
IB: 30-26



Assessment weighting:
Typically 100% coursework,
or 50% coursework and
50% exams



Also available:
642L Integrated year
in industry
242L Integrated year
studying abroad
F42L Integrated
foundation year

Module list

Below is a list of the core modules for this course.

First year:

- Exploring the International: Central Concepts and Core Skills *
- Behind the Headlines *

Second year:

- International Relations: Perspectives and Debates *

Final year:

- Dissertation *

For details on the optional modules available, see the current list on our website, or contact us.

* also available partially or entirely through the medium of Welsh.



Politics

BA (Hons) | L203 | 3 years

In an era of political upheaval and uncertainty, it is more important than ever to understand how politics works and how it shapes the everyday lives of all of us. As the world's first Department of International Politics, we have been studying political power for over a hundred years. On the BA Politics degree, you will develop your understanding of political concepts, regimes and systems, actors and policies, and the processes of political decision-making.

Here you will study and debate how key political concepts are contested in contemporary politics, including power, democracy, freedom, inequality, rights, citizenship, representation and legitimacy.

You will learn about the political institutions and practices within different systems of government and the role and influence of other organisations such as civil society, international organisations and the military. The BA Politics explores current political debates and dilemmas such as the rise of populist nationalism, the future of democracy, migration, inequality, identity. You can explore examples from around the world, as well as study how political power operates in the EU, the UK and at the level of devolved governments.

Key Facts



Typical offer:
UCAS tariff points: 120-96
IB: 30-26



Assessment weighting:
Typically 100% coursework,
or 50% coursework and
50% exams

Module list

Below is a list of the core modules for this course.

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- Exploring the International: Central Concepts and Core Skills *
- Politics in the 21st Century *

Second year:

- People and Power: Understanding Comparative Politics Today *

Final year:

- Dissertation *

For details on the optional modules available, see the current list on our website, or contact us.

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Joint Honours

Subject	Available with...	Joint Honours
International Relations	Drama and Theatre	42WL
	Economics	21LL
	French	1FRL
	German	22LR
	History	1FVL
	Law	21LM
	Spanish	4FRL
	Welsh	5FQL
Politics	Economics	LL13



Employability

A degree from the Department of International Politics at Aberystwyth University will set you up for a successful future.

Our degree schemes provide opportunities to study topics with real world relevance and develop transferrable skills linked to a variety of dynamic career pathways, complemented by a range of subject-related initiatives promoting your employability, adaptability and interpersonal skills.

Departmental initiatives promoting employability include:

- Personal tutor discussions include skills development, applying for placements and potential careers
- Employability skills embedded in modules, e.g. speaker talks, assessments and simulation modules
- Four-year degrees with an integrated year abroad or an integrated year in industry option
- Departmental Career events with alumni and contacts in different sectors
- Parliamentary Placement Scheme
- Dedicated careers advisor and Careers Service provision
- Year in Employment Scheme



Megan Depper

Senior Intelligence Analyst

My degree set me up well for my career path as I focused a lot in the later stages on where I wanted to take my degree. I definitely felt supported by the department and staff, who were always open for discussions around further careers. Being able to learn about intelligence academically gave me a passion for the sector, which I was able to take forwards.



Jessica Gerken

Programme Manager, Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime

Aberystwyth, most of all, taught me to think independently and to keep a critical mind, always asking 'how come' questions that are critical to any kind of analytic job. I started mostly in a researcher and analyst position before moving more into management. In this area specific expertise and a deeper understanding of issues and contexts is always crucial.

Studying through the medium of Welsh

It is possible to study modules through the medium of Welsh on any of our degree schemes.

Our commitment is to ensure that students have the option of studying at least 80 credits a year through the medium of Welsh. In practice, this means that four of the six modules that students are expected to complete each year can be studied through the medium of Welsh. We also ensure that all Welsh speaking students are allocated a personal tutor and dissertation tutor who can speak the language.

Students are welcome to opt for the Welsh-medium versions of modules every time, if that is their wish. However, it is also possible to be flexible and vary the medium of study from module to module. There is also flexibility in the language that can be used when completing assessed work. Students have the option of presenting their work through the medium of Welsh or English, regardless of the module's medium of instruction. These teaching arrangements mean that our Welsh-medium provision is open to students from a different range of Welsh language backgrounds.

Many of our degree courses are eligible for Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol undergraduate scholarships. There are two different types of scholarship: the Main Scholarships are open to students who commit to studying at least 80 credits (ie 4 modules) through the medium of Welsh each year, while the Incentive Scholarships are open to students who commit to studying at least 40 credits (i.e. 2 modules) through the medium of Welsh each year. For more information about these scholarships and for a list of the eligible degree schemes please see the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol website: www.colegcymraeg.ac.uk/en

Research

At Aberystwyth you will be at the centre of the latest research on international relations and politics.

The Department of International Politics at Aberystwyth is a leading centre of innovative research in international relations and politics in the UK and globally. Staff conduct research into some of today's most important national, international and global challenges from questions of conflict, war, nuclear weapons and security to issues of migration, development, democracy, and environment. We have regional expertise in the Middle East, Russian, Latin American and American politics and also study political processes in the UK and its sub-states.

In our research we seek to develop bold new perspectives on how to understand and negotiate the intense and sometimes troublesome global interconnections around us. We also work with policy makers to develop concrete new ideas for change. From working with civil society actors to informing national and global players we seek to be at the heart of communicating our research to the relevant stakeholders and to the public.

This cutting-edge research expertise at Aberystwyth influences the teaching in the department. Staff bring the most recent research in their field into their modules. Students benefit directly from learning about the latest developments in research, to inform their thinking about the world.

The wide-range of perspectives and interests are reflected in the department's research groups, bringing postgraduate students and staff together.

Important new research is produced by our students too. Students graduating from our PhD programme, for example, have won numerous national and international prizes for their research theses. Undergraduate students and Masters students also contribute to research at Aberystwyth through their work on their dissertations, participation in research seminars and events such as organising student conferences.

At Aberystwyth Interpol you will benefit from the latest thinking, exploring and testing of new ideas on international politics!



'Creating Safer Space' exhibition at the United Nations, New York, 29.4-3.5.24

Parliamentary Placement Scheme

The House of Commons/Welsh Senedd Placement Scheme provides an exceptional opportunity for some second year students to obtain insight into the practice of politics.

There are limited places, so students apply and attend a departmental interview. We select students who have proven that they are enthusiastic and passionate about the business of politics, can work hard and diligently under pressure, who have good interpersonal skills and who are capable of adapting quickly to working in this very different environment.

Successful applicants are placed with an MP (House of Commons, Westminster) or an MS (Welsh Senedd, Cardiff) for a period of typically 3-4 weeks. Work undertaken may involve drafting reports and speeches, drafting press releases, working with Parliamentary committees, research projects, and assisting with constituency casework. Students have also been involved in election campaigning and responding to various political events. Departmental funding is available to help with costs.

The
Senedd



International Crisis Simulations

The Department of International Politics was the first university in the UK to use crisis simulations to connect classroom learning with the real-world complexities of international politics. The Crisis Simulations are held once a year, and are among the most popular activities in the Department.

Crisis simulations are a political role-playing exercise. Students are given a crisis 'scenario' and allocated to one of several teams representing: national leaders, government departments, transnational corporations, NGOs, international organisations and media organisations. These teams simulate, as realistically as possible, the interactions of the participants in an international crisis. The aim of the exercise is to provide insight into the complexities of national and international politics and a greater appreciation of the difficulties faced by decision-makers when confronted with an international crisis.

During the course of the simulation students learn about aspects of international politics that cannot be taught in lectures and seminars and foster non-academic skills. They provide a more direct perspective on decision-making under the pressures of a crisis situation.

Finally, the crisis games help you to develop and improve career-oriented skills such as project management, diplomacy and negotiation; team-building and leadership, information management, problem-solving, public speaking, presentation, communication and media skills.

Recent scenarios: the North Korea nuclear crisis; Mediterranean refugees; NATO Operations in Afghanistan; A far right march in the United States; A global pandemic (in 2018!); environmental politics in the Arctic.



Student societies and events

International Politics Society: Organising a range of talks and debates on current global political developments and social events. The International Politics Society (IPS) at Aberystwyth is a group of students with a keen interest in, and diverse views on, local, national and international affairs.

Interstate Journal of International Affairs is the student-run journal of the Department of International Politics at Aberystwyth, established in the 1960s. It is a published and citable journal of academic work that looks great on your CV. It also provides good writing practice for students working towards dissertations or thinking about further academic study.

Interstate publishes articles covering a range of disciplines within the department, especially those concerned with current geopolitical challenges and how they impact on international relations.

Student Diversity Group: Reflecting the Department's emphasis on cultivating an inclusive and respectful community, the group promotes and celebrates diversity, including in relation to gender, sexuality, race, religion and neurodiversity. Previous initiatives led by the group include celebrations of Asian Heritage and Black History, neurodiversity meet 'n' greets, a language cafe and film nights.

Student profiles



Ruby Morse

Politics and International Relations

I chose to study at the department of International Politics at Aberystwyth due to its longstanding reputation of being a hub of academic excellence, having fantastic student support services, and being home to the first international relations department of its kind in the world!

The highlights of studying my course so far have been having the opportunity to attend an in-person Q&A panel with Mary Jordan and Kevin Sullivan, co-editors of the Washington Post, and applying to the department's prestigious parliamentary placement scheme.

I absolutely love living in Aberystwyth! It is the perfect balance of vibrant and calm, with a busy campus and nightlife, while also being placed in a beautiful seaside location with access to endless natural beauty. Aber is a safe and tight-knit community, with friendly and familiar faces everywhere you go!



Jacob Allen

Intelligence and International Security

The location of Aberystwyth University along with what the department had to offer made Aberystwyth my firm pick. Beyond being able to study in rural Wales, the Department of International Politics has an amazing reputation for its own history and, the quality of teachers and former students.

I have enjoyed the opportunity to study a variety of topics. My personal highlights are nuclear strategy, Russian intelligence, and the history of propaganda. These modules in particular inspired me to create my best work for my undergraduate degree.



Kividi Ramalya Koralage

Law and International Relations

I picked Aberystwyth's IR department because it's where the whole subject began, and honestly, where better to learn how to shake up traditional politics? Their radical approach and amazing lecturers gave me the perfect space to explore the realm of International Relations.

Global opportunities

Aberystwyth's Global Opportunities team offer an exciting range of options for you to go overseas as part of your degree: from short courses and volunteering opportunities in the summer, to a full semester or year abroad studying at one of our partner universities. Our partners include the United States, Australia, Japan, Hong Kong, Canada, Austria and Spain.

If you choose to study with an integrated year abroad, the University enables you to study for one or two semesters during your third year, returning to Aberystwyth for your final year and graduation.

Reports have shown that students who study abroad are more attractive to employers and earn more than their peers. Take advantage of the opportunity of a lifetime while improving your critical skills by choosing to study abroad.



The application process

1

Apply through UCAS.com

Check the UCAS deadline on UCAS.com. Aberystwyth University institution code: A40. **TOP TIP:** You'll be given a 10-digit UCAS ID number. Keep this to hand as you'll be asked for it many times.

2

The University will consider your application

TOP TIP: Use UCAS Hub to keep an eye on your application. At Aberystwyth we aim to make a decision within seven days.

3

The offer will show on UCAS Hub

The University's decision will show on UCAS Hub - if you've been made an offer, it will tell you what grades you need to achieve to secure your place.

4

Decide where to go

Once you've received all your offers, you'll need to decide which university you want to go to, within a set time. This is when you'll need to note which universities will be your Firm and Insurance choices.

5

Accommodation

Once you've chosen your Firm/Insurance choice you'll be invited to apply for accommodation.

6

Results day

UCAS Hub will tell you whether your place is confirmed at your Firm choice. If you don't get the grades you'd hoped for, you may want to consider entering Clearing.

7

Start packing!

Remember to keep an eye on your emails for information about arrival and welcome activities.

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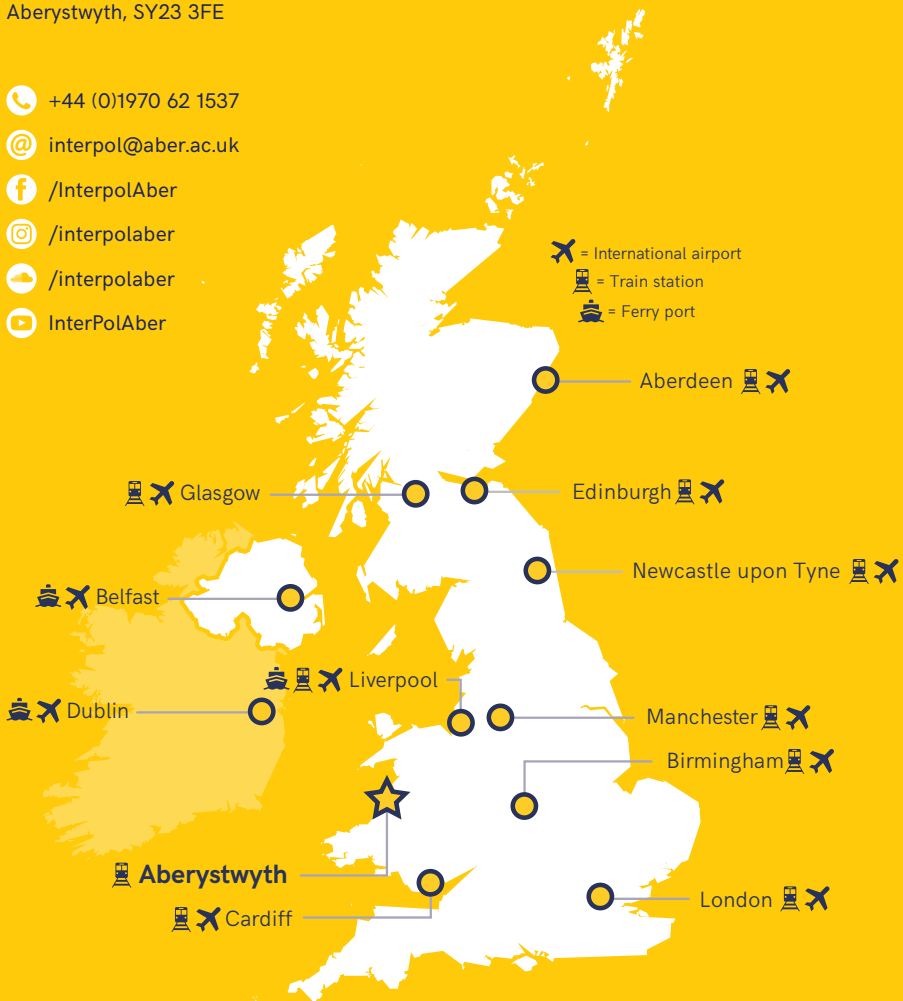
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