BIC3041-A module descriptor	
Module Title	International Relations
Credit Level	10 credits (RQF Level 3)
Session	2026/7 academic year
BDA occurrence	Semester 3 available at University of Bradford
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Transparency notice

This specification for module code BIC3041-A has been generated automatically in advance of the academic year 2026/7. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate at the time of publication, but changes permitted by our Student Contract Terms and Conditions could be made in the interval between publishing and commencement of teaching; where changes impact the terms and conditions of an applicant's or student's offer, these are communicated to them as soon as possible.

BIC3041-A module aims

The module provides you with an introduction to International Relations. It explores the development of International Relations theory and presents key concepts such as: sovereignty, the nation-state, national self-interest, the balance of power and hegemony.

As well as the historical background to current global issues, the module examines the nature of globalisation and the role and influence of supra-national organisations and multi-national companies.

BIC3041-A module learning outcomes

No.	Students completing the module will be able to:
01	Describe the historical background to a current global problem with reference to international relations theory
02	Explain key subject concepts (e.g., sovereignty, balance of power) and the importance of supra-national organisations such as the United Nations.

BIC3041-A module outline syllabus

The concept of international relations - defining theories and examining its critics, along with concepts of realism, idealism and neo-liberalism.

Relations between states - concerning whether conflict or co-operation is the norm. The module explores the identification and pursuit of national self-interest or an appreciation of shared values and concerns.

Historical background - from the end of World War 2. The development of the Cold War is viewed in the contexts of competing ideologies and powers, the relations between two competing power blocs and developments since the end of the Cold War in 1991. The ‘victory’ of the capitalist west is seen against the backdrop of current crises around continuing upheaval in the Middle East and parts of sub-Saharan Africa, the ‘war on terror’ and the need to work together to deal with climate change and the unequal distribution of the world’s resources.

Terms such as sovereignty, power, the balance of power, colonialism and hegemony - attempts to enforce co-operation and international standards of behaviour through the United Nations are reviewed, along with ideas around diplomacy, human rights watch, sanctions and war criminals.

Economic aspects of globalisation, post-war co-operation through the World Bank and WTO, trading blocs such as the EU and NAFTA, the rise and power of multi-national companies - along with problems associated with the global economy, environmental concerns, worries about national sovereignty, opposition to the free movement of labour, worries about the continuing drive for economic growth.

For more information, visit the VLE (**Canvas**) page, go to our **Reading Lists webpage for this module** or search **https://bradford.rl.talis.com** for this module.

BIC3041-A module notional learning hours

- 60 hours Directed Study
- 40 hours Lectures

The overall expected hours may include contact time, scheduled learning activity, directed and independent study and any minimum expectations for placement learning. Most learning at the University of Bradford has some online content and sessions which are delivered fully by virtual means are labelled as "online".

BIC3041-A module learning, teaching and assessment

Groups are small and classes are student-centred, task-based and interactive.

The classroom approach is explicitly designed to help international students acquire new knowledge and skills, to build their confidence and enable them to become more independent learners. By doing this consistently and across all modules, the programme provides them with a strong foundation for further study in their chosen subject area.

The approach is inclusive and recognises that students come from different backgrounds with a range of previous learning experiences and associated expectations, beliefs and behaviours. Teaching and learning methods are clearly explained so students understand why (where appropriate) they need to engage in new ways of learning and why those they have used or relied on up to this point may be less suited to supporting their ongoing development and their chances of success in UK Higher Education.

Formative work is an integral part of the approach. In class, students are set tasks that require them to apply their knowledge and skills, to think critically and to solve problems. The level of challenge is gradually increased as the students grow in confidence and Tutors help them to see that experimentation, trial and error are central to the learning process, providing constructive feedback on both what has been achieved and how.

Students are also expected to engage in independent study, to reflect on their own performance and to discuss this with their module tutor or personal academic tutor, who will provide support and advice and, when necessary, draw the attention of the Academic Management Team to a struggling student using the Students of concern process.

Assessment provides students with an opportunity to explore a contemporary global issue through the application of international relations theory.

The essay (100%) assesses Learning Outcomes 1-2 through analysis of a current international problem and evaluation of relevant concepts and theories.

Formative opportunities include seminar discussions, topic proposals, essay planning sessions and peer feedback.

Success is demonstrated through theoretical understanding, use of evidence and critical analysis of international issues.

To pass the module, students must achieve the University pass mark overall. Students who do not pass the first time will be given an opportunity to complete equivalent assessments that address the failed learning outcomes.

BIC3041-A mode of assessment			
Type	**Mode**	**Assessment description**	**Weight**
Summative	Coursework - Written	An essay about a current international relations problem (LO1, LO2). 1000 words	100%

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