International Relations
The most urgent global challenges – war and conflict, poverty and inequality, environmental sustainability, financial instability, terrorism – know no borders. International Relations offers a unique perspective to analyse the causes and implications of the major challenges facing our world today, and what needs to be done to address them.
What makes Sussex special?

**INNOVATIVE APPROACH**

International Relations at Sussex is open, progressive, interdisciplinary and highly critical in its approach to teaching and learning. This is what makes studying with us such a unique experience. As one of the longest established International Relations departments in the UK (established in 1965), and one of the largest specialist IR departments in Europe, we have a reputation for pioneering radical and innovative approaches to the subject that challenge the mainstream.

As an International Relations student at Sussex, you won’t just learn about international institutions; you will be guided to go back to first principles and explore what the international system is, has been and could be. You will have the opportunity to formulate opinions, find your voice and be heard. You will undertake modules that have been designed and taught by world renowned academics to give you a wide intellectual foundation, combining perspectives from history, theory, political economy and security studies to help you develop your understanding of the world today.

**INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT**

You will be part of a vibrant global intellectual community that drives debates and ideas in the field of international relations. Based around our research centres in Conflict and Security, Global Political Economy, International Theory, and Rights and Justice, our research spans the globe. Our leading reputation means we attract high-profile speakers to provide guest lectures and keynote-speaker events that you can attend, helping to shape them with your own questions and perspective. In the past, these have included senior figures from organisations such as the UN, NATO, World Health Organisation, Council of Europe, Amnesty International, US Department of State.

International relations trains you to be intellectually curious and culturally agile. Our staff and students come from a broad range of countries, so your studies will be an international experience in every sense. Furthermore, the University of Sussex is among the top 10 highest ranked international universities in the UK (THE, 2019).
What you will learn

YEAR 1

The first year of the course introduces you to the academic study of international relations, outlining the distinct characteristics of IR as a scholarly discipline. It opens up a critical analysis of historical texts written by authors such as Aquinas, Hobbes, Kant, Machiavelli and Marx, and asks what relevance these authors have had in establishing the discipline of international relations. Can these authors be interpreted in order to provide a radical critique of contemporary international thought and practice? A module on ‘The Local and the Global’ encourages you to connect your everyday local life to global politics. You also cover the historical development of international relations, with particular emphasis on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Finally, a variety of contemporary issues are examined, including the environment, free trade, human rights, social movements and war.

YEAR 2

In the second year, you build your degree to suit your own interests, by choosing to specialise in areas such as Development, Foreign Policy, Globalisation and/or Security.

YEAR 3

The third year is the most flexible of all, when we provide you with a wide range of choice based on the specialist research interests of our teaching faculty. This wide and cutting-edge range is a direct benefit of studying at one of Europe’s largest specialist IR departments. All third year options take the form of intensive three-hour workshops per week. Single honours students write a dissertation in a topic of their choice, under the supervision of an expert in the area of their dissertation research.
Shaping your degree

You can study international relations as a single honours degree or as part of a joint honours degree. In single honours, you specialise in international relations, and either take a number of elective modules from across the university, or a structured ‘pathway’ (e.g. Middle East Studies). For a full list of pathways, see: sussex.ac.uk/study/ug/sussexchoice. Joint degrees enable you to study exciting combinations of different subjects. We currently offer joint IR degrees with Anthropology, Development, Economics, Geography, Politics, Sociology, as well as a degree in IR with a Language. For an updated list see: sussex.ac.uk/ir/undergraduate/prospectus

If you are keen to study IR but lack the qualifications or grades needed for degree study, our Foundation Year will help you bridge the academic gap between school and university. Students who gain the required pass level in the Foundation Year are then able to stay and study at Sussex.

“What I really like about my course is the critical thinking aspect that is constantly being put to students. We’re almost forced to always keep an open mind and look at both sides before reaching a decision.”

HANNAH SVANBERG
BA INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Your student experience

Dedicated study skills sessions are incorporated directly into Year 1 teaching, to help you to succeed. You will also be allocated an experienced member of the teaching team who will be your Academic Advisor and support you through your journey.

You will learn from academics whose passion will help to inspire yours. Our teaching is research based. You won’t just read leading global research: you will debate it with the academics who write it, right from the start of your degree. In the National Student Survey (2018), 93% of our students found their course ‘intellectually stimulating’, with 90% responding that they were able to ‘explore ideas or concepts in depth’.

You will benefit from many excellent facilities on campus. These include the impressive University Library and the Global Studies Resource Centre. You will be welcomed into an active International Relations student society, which organises regular social and academic events, as well as fieldtrips across Europe. Our international student body helps you to see and experience things from different cultural perspectives, and provides you with the opportunity to build friendships and connections across the globe. You will also have the opportunity to choose from more than 250 student clubs, societies and sports teams. Our campus is surrounded by the South Downs National Park and is just nine minutes away from the lively city of Brighton & Hove.
You choose from a range of options that enable you to focus on your particular area of interest. The course structure below refers to the single honours degree in International Relations. Joint degrees have a different structure. We continually review and update our module list, so listings are subject to change. For a comprehensive description of each degree structure and specific modules, visit go.sussex.ac.uk/ir

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**YEAR 1**
**AUTUMN**
- Introduction to International Relations
- Rise of the Modern International Order
- The International System Today: Powers and Regions
- Elective/Pathway (including language)

**SPRING**
- Classical Political Theory and IR
- The Local and The Global: IR in Practice
- The Short 20th Century and Beyond
- Elective (including language)

**YEAR 2**
**AUTUMN**
- Contemporary International Theory
- Introduction to International Political Economy
- War in International Politics
- Elective (including language)

**SPRING**
- Four modules from
  - Development and the State
  - Globalisation and Global Governance
  - Politics of Foreign Policy
  - Security and Insecurity in Global Politics
- The Liberal World Order - In Crisis
- Elective (including language)

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**YEAR 3**
**AUTUMN/SPRING**
- Year-long Dissertation in IR
- Arms Trade in International Politics
- Capitalism and Geopolitics
- Contemporary Issues in Global Political Economy
- Dirty Wars
- Development and Geopolitics in East Asia
- Ethics in Global Politics
- Gender and (Global) Politics
- Global Politics of Health
- Global Resistance
- International Relations of Middle East
- Marxism and IR
- Mercenaries, Gangs, Terrorists
- Political Economy of Environment
- Political Economy of Latin American Development
- Politics of International Trade
- Religions in Global Politics
- Russia and the Former Soviet Union in Global Politics
- Sex and Death in Global Politics
- Reign of Rights in Global Politics
- The Politics of Terror
- The United States in the World

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1 These modules are running in the academic year 2019/20. We also plan to offer them in future academic years. They may become unavailable due to staff availability, student demand or updates to our curriculum. We’ll make sure to let our applicants know of such changes to modules at the earliest opportunity.

2 We offer a variety of electives from across the University, from Art History to Physics and a large number of languages are available as electives/pathways e.g. Arabic, Chinese, German, Japanese, Spanish.

3 Available to single honours IR students only.
Study or work abroad

We recognise that our students are keen to develop a truly global approach to their studies. Your ambitions are supported by the range of study opportunities open to you. The University of Sussex maintains student exchange links with almost 100 universities in Europe, Asia, Australia and Latin America and more than 40 universities in North America. Studying abroad is a fantastic opportunity to experience different cultures, see the world from a new perspective and investigate your studies first-hand. Many students can combine study abroad with taking a relevant language, at Sussex, before travelling. This will be of huge benefit to you in understanding International Relations and will enhance your skills, your CV and employment prospects. The University also encourages and supports a range of work placements, ranging from informal summer placements to one that is structured over a full year.

“One of the reasons I chose Sussex was because of its immensely diverse student population. Discussing concepts and issues with people of so many different backgrounds and perspectives has added depth and awareness to my thinking.”

AKASHA LIGERTWOOD
BA INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
After your degree

CAREERS

Our graduates go on to a variety of careers in leading international organisations, international non-governmental organisations and the global media. These have included leading organisations such as Action Against Hunger, the World Bank and the United Nations. Recent graduate posts have included: Consulate Official, British Embassy; Team Coordinator, Red Cross; Fundraising Manager, Child Reach International. Some of our students choose to undertake postgraduate study in the UK or internationally.

HESA (2017) shows 97% of recent Department of International Relations graduates were in work or further study six months after completing their degrees.

LIFELONG SKILLS

With this degree, you will gain the ability to analyse complex information, to reason clearly, to judge evidence, to evaluate theories and to produce clearly structured critical arguments. You will build practical skills to help in your future career, including report writing, presentation skills, constructing policy briefs, managing independent research, and accessing and interpreting international data. These skills, coupled with an in-depth understanding of international relations, will load you with transferable skills and put you in a strong position to get a great job (in a wide range of public and private sectors) after graduating or, if you choose, to continue into further study.
The School of Global Studies, which houses the departments of Anthropology, Geography, International Development and International Relations, provides one of the UK’s most focused centres of expertise for understanding how the world is changing. It offers a broad range of perspectives on global issues, and staff and students who are actively engaged with a wide range of international and local partners, contributing a distinctive perspective on global affairs.