

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	MA
4	Programme Title	International Politics (Critical Geopolitics)
5	UCAS/Programme Code	4088
6	Programme Accreditation	N/A
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	N/A
8	FHEQ Level	Level 7
9	Date written/revised	May 2012

10 Programme Aims

- 1 to offer a research environment in which students can learn about Critical Geopolitics from knowledgeable staff, their own study, and interaction with other students
- 2 to equip students with the conceptual and analytical skills needed to achieve an advanced knowledge and understanding of contemporary critical geopolitics
- 3 to develop students' skills in undertaking and completing self-designed research papers and dissertations
- 4 to provide a conversion course for students whose undergraduate degree is not in critical geopolitics or which did not include a significant component of critical geopolitics
- 5 to produce graduates who, if suitably qualified, will be capable of embarking upon research degrees in critical geopolitics studies
- 6 to produce graduates capable of successfully pursuing careers in government agencies, business, the media and other areas where an advanced knowledge and understanding of contemporary critical geopolitics is needed or desirable
- 7 to meet the needs of stakeholders
- 8 to provide a programme which meets the FHEQ at Masters level 7

11 Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas. Critical Geopolitics; international relations theory; social science methods and methodologies; international and regional studies politics topics; human geography; independent learning; cooperative group work; individual presentations skills

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should:

- A1 have an advanced knowledge and understanding of contemporary critical geopolitics
- A2 have knowledge of the more important approaches and methods in social science research and of the techniques required to carry out advanced research
- A3 have a foundation of specialist knowledge and research skills from which they can embark upon careers with significant international dimensions or pursue a postgraduate research degree in critical geopolitics studies
- A4 have the theoretical and practical skills that will enable them to successfully complete an MA dissertation

Teaching and Learning Methods

The primary means of imparting knowledge and understanding is seminars (A1-A4). Throughout the MA programme students are strongly encouraged to engage in independent reading for which they are given extensive support and guidance on reading materials and their appropriate use. Students are strongly supported by staff in their completion of self-designed research projects.

Assessment Strategy

Knowledge and understanding are primarily assessed by unseen 3 hour examinations and research projects both of which are designed to assess theoretical and conceptual understanding and the capacity of students to relate knowledge through case studies and other empirically focused projects (A1-A4).

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- B1 Synthesise information from a variety of primary and secondary sources
- B2 Analyse, evaluate and interpret the principal source materials for critical geopolitics
- B3 Plan, conduct and communicate original research through examinations and research papers
- B4 Understand the theoretical basis of international studies and human geography research.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Cognitive skills are developed through seminars (B1-B2), research projects (B2-B3, B4) and supervision of research projects and dissertations (B3). Students are encouraged to develop cognitive skills through analysis of case studies (B1), independent reading and designing research projects (B2-B4).

Assessment Strategy

Intellectual skills are examined through unseen written exams, research papers and the MA dissertation (B1-B4).

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- C1 Critically evaluate key arguments in critical geopolitics
- C2 Critically evaluate the most important texts and themes in critical geopolitics
- C3 Present a reasoned and informed position both in writing and in spoken presentations
- C4 Identify, locate, and retrieve appropriate paper and electronic materials relevant to critical geopolitics

Teaching and Learning Methods

Critical skills are developed through independent reading and encouraging active participation individually and in groups in seminar settings (C1-C3). Formal spoken presentations (C3) and written research projects (C1-C4) are informed by appropriate materials in critical geopolitics some of which references are provided to students and others of which students have to locate.

Assessment Strategy

Practical skills are assessed through research projects and unseen written examinations (C1-C4).

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- D1 Take responsibility for his/her own learning and personal professional development
- D2 Manage time and prioritise tasks by working to deadlines
- D3 Communicate effectively to others when working in seminar group settings.
- D4 Make effective use of appropriate electronic resources including journals and the internet and undertake effective word processing

Teaching and Learning Methods

Student self learning and time and task management is encouraged in weekly seminars and one on one research supervision sessions (D1-D2). Communication is practiced in weekly seminars (D3). Students are directed to appropriate journals and provided information concerning appropriate internet usage (D4).

Assessment Strategy

Self learning is assessed in the context of the timely submission of research projects and completion of unseen examinations (D1-D2). Effective use of electronic resources is assessed in the context of their analysis and correct presentation in research projects and unseen examinations (D4).

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features**Basic structure of the programme**

One year full time or two years part time.
 180 credits (120 coursework, 60 dissertation)
 100 credits compulsory (2 x 20 credit modules and 1 x 60 credit dissertation), 80 optional credits

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)

Rigorous compulsory training in Critical Geopolitics. Rigorous compulsory research training in Theories and Approaches in the Study of Politics: Power and Democracy

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/>

13 Criteria for admission*Entry qualifications*

Normally at least a lower second class honours degree (2:2) or its equivalent.

Admissions policy/selection tools

Academic references
 Candidate's personal statement

Non-standard Entry Requirements

Relevant professional experience and/or qualifications may be taken into account in the absence of a satisfactory first degree.

Additional Requirements

Level of English Language capability

As set by HASS faculty but usually no less than IELTS 6.5 overall (or TOEFL equivalent)

14 Support for Student Learning

The Student Services portal provides links to key services and other information and is available at: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/>

Induction

During the first week of the first semester students attend an induction programme. New students will be given a general introduction to University life and the University's principle support services and general information about the School and their programme, as described in the Degree Programme Handbook. New and continuing students will be given detailed programme information and the timetable of lectures/practicals/labs/ tutorials/etc. The International Office offers an additional induction programme for overseas students.

Study skills support

Students will learn a range of Personal Transferable Skills, including Study Skills, as outlined in the Programme Specification. Some of this material, e.g. time management is covered in the appropriate Induction Programme. Students are explicitly tutored on their approach to both group and individual projects.

Numeracy support is available through Maths Aid and help with academic writing is available from the Writing Development Centre (further information is available from the Robinson Library).

Academic and Pastoral support

Each undergraduate and taught postgraduate student will be assigned a personal tutor.* A personal tutor is one part of a wider network of advice and guidance available to students to support their personal and general academic development. The module leader acts as the first point of contact for subject-specific academic advice. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Student-Staff Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies. Within the academic unit, students may also receive additional academic and pastoral advice from a range of other student-facing staff including degree programme directors, dissertation/project supervisors, and administrative support staff.

*Arrangements may vary for students taking special types of provision.

The University also offers a wide range of institutional services and support upon which students can call, such as the Writing Development Centre, Careers Service and Student Wellbeing Service. This includes one-to-one counselling and guidance or group sessions / workshops on a range of topics, such as emotional issues e.g. stress and anxiety, student finance and budgeting, disability matters etc. There is specialist support available for students with dyslexia and mental health issues. Furthermore, the Student Union operates a Student Advice Centre, which can provide advocacy and support to students on a range of topics including housing, debt, legal issues etc.

Support for students with disabilities

The University's Disability Support team provides help and advice for disabled students at the University - and those thinking of coming to Newcastle. It provides individuals with: advice about the University's facilities, services and the accessibility of campus; details about the technical support available; guidance in study skills and advice on financial support arrangements; a resources room with equipment and software to assist students in their studies.

Learning resources

The University's main learning resources are provided by the Robinson and Walton Libraries (for books, journals, online resources), and Information Systems and Services, which supports campus-wide computing facilities.

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language Proficiency Test. This is administered by INTO Newcastle University Centre on behalf of Newcastle University. Where appropriate, in-session language training can be provided. The INTO Newcastle University Centre houses a range of resources which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange.

15 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Module reviews

All modules are subject to review by questionnaires which are considered by the Board of Studies. Changes to, or the introduction of new, modules are considered at the Board of Studies and/or the School Teaching and Learning Committee. Student opinion is sought at the Student-Staff Committee and/or the Board of Studies. New modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee.

Programme reviews

The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee. The FLTSEC takes an overview of all programmes within the Faculty and reports any Faculty or institutional issues to the Faculty Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee.

External Examiner reports

External Examiner reports are considered by the Board of Studies. The Board responds to these reports through Faculty Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee. External Examiner reports are shared with institutional student representatives, through the Student-Staff Committee.

Student evaluations

All modules, and the degree programme, are subject to review by student questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Student-Staff Committee, and the Board of Studies. The results from student surveys are considered as part of the Annual Monitoring and Review of the programme and any arising actions are captured at programme and School / institutional level and reported to the appropriate body.

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback

Feedback is channelled via the Student-Staff Committee and the Board of Studies.

Faculty and University Review Mechanisms

Every six years degree programmes in each subject area undergo periodic review. This involves both the detailed consideration of a range of documentation, and a review visit by a review team (normally one day in duration) which includes an external subject specialist and a student representative. Following the review a report is produced, which forms the basis for a decision by University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee on whether the programmes reviewed should be re-approved for a further six year period.

Accreditation reports

Additional mechanisms

16 Regulation of assessment

Pass mark

The pass mark is 50 (Postgraduate programmes)

Course requirements

Progression is subject to the University's Masters Degree Progress Regulations, Taught and Research and Examination Conventions for Taught Masters Degrees. There are reassessment opportunities, with certain restrictions. Limited compensation up to 40 credits of the taught element and down to a mark of 40% is possible for candidates who commenced their programme in 2013/14 or earlier. For students starting their programme in 2014/15 or later, no compensation is possible.

The University employs a common marking scheme, which is specified in the Taught Postgraduate Examination Conventions, namely:

Summary description applicable to postgraduate Masters programmes

<50	Fail
50-59	Pass
60-69	Pass with Merit
70 or above	Pass with Distinction

Summary description applicable to postgraduate Certificate and Diploma programmes

<50	Fail
50 or above	Pass

Role of the External Examiner

An External Examiner, a distinguished member of the subject community, is appointed by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee, after recommendation from the Board of Studies. The External Examiner is expected to:

- See and approve examination papers
- Moderate examination and coursework marking
- Attend the Board of Examiners
- Report to the University on the standards of the programme

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/>

The School Brochure <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/marketing/services/print/publications/ordering/>

Degree Programme and University Regulations: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>

The Degree Programme Handbook

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules

Intended Learning Outcome	Module codes (Comp/Core in Bold)
A1	POL8044 POL8041 POL8099 GEO8016 GEO8017 NCL8007 POL8003 POL8005 POL8006 POL8018 POL8020 POL8023 POL8029 POL8035 POL8036 POL8037 POL8038 POL8039 POL8040 POL8043 POL8046 POL8048 POL8049 POL8050 POL8051 POL8052 POL8053
A2	POL8041
A3	POL8044 POL8041 POL8099 GEO8016 GEO8017 NCL8007 POL8003 POL8005 POL8006 POL8018 POL8020 POL8023 POL8029 POL8035 POL8036 POL8037 POL8038 POL8039 POL8040 POL8043 POL8046 POL8048 POL8049 POL8050 POL8051 POL8052 POL8053
A4	POL8044 POL8041
B1	POL8044 POL8041 POL8099 GEO8016 GEO8017 NCL8007 POL8003 POL8005 POL8006 POL8018 POL8020 POL8023 POL8029 POL8035 POL8036 POL8037 POL8038 POL8039 POL8040 POL8043 POL8046 POL8048 POL8049 POL8050 POL8051 POL8052 POL8053
B2	POL8044 POL8041 POL8099 GEO8016 GEO8017 NCL8007 POL8003 POL8005 POL8006 POL8018 POL8020 POL8023 POL8029 POL8035 POL8036 POL8037 POL8038 POL8039 POL8040 POL8043 POL8046 POL8048 POL8049 POL8050 POL8051 POL8052 POL8053
B3	POL8044 POL8041 POL8099 GEO8016 GEO8017 NCL8007 POL8003 POL8005 POL8006 POL8018 POL8020 POL8023 POL8029 POL8035 POL8036 POL8037 POL8038 POL8039 POL8040 POL8043 POL8046 POL8048 POL8049 POL8050 POL8051 POL8052 POL8053
B4	POL8044 POL8005 POL8006 POL8018 POL8041 POL8046 POL8049 GEO8016 GEO8017
C1	POL8044 POL8041 POL8099 GEO8016 GEO8017 NCL8007 POL8003 POL8005 POL8006 POL8018 POL8020 POL8023 POL8029 POL8035 POL8036 POL8037 POL8038 POL8039 POL8040 POL8043 POL8046 POL8048 POL8049 POL8050 POL8051 POL8052 POL8053
C2	POL8044 POL8041 POL8099 GEO8016 GEO8017 NCL8007 POL8003 POL8005 POL8006 POL8018 POL8020 POL8023 POL8029 POL8035 POL8036 POL8037 POL8038 POL8039 POL8040 POL8043 POL8046 POL8048 POL8049 POL8050 POL8051 POL8052 POL8053
C3	POL8044 POL8041 POL8099 GEO8016 GEO8017 NCL8007 POL8003 POL8005 POL8006 POL8018 POL8020 POL8023 POL8029 POL8035 POL8036 POL8037 POL8038 POL8039 POL8040 POL8043 POL8046 POL8048 POL8049 POL8050 POL8051 POL8052 POL8053
C4	POL8044 POL8041 POL8099 GEO8016 GEO8017 NCL8007 POL8003 POL8005 POL8006 POL8018

	POL8020 POL8023 POL8029 POL8035 POL8036 POL8037 POL8038 POL8039 POL8040 POL8043 POL8046 POL8048 POL8049 POL8050 POL8051 POL8052 POL8053
D1	POL8044 POL8041 POL8099 GEO8016 GEO8017 NCL8007 POL8003 POL8005 POL8006 POL8018 POL8020 POL8023 POL8029 POL8035 POL8036 POL8037 POL8038 POL8039 POL8040 POL8043 POL8046 POL8048 POL8049 POL8050 POL8051 POL8052 POL8053
D2	POL8044 POL8041 POL8099 GEO8016 GEO8017 NCL8007 POL8003 POL8005 POL8006 POL8018 POL8020 POL8023 POL8029 POL8035 POL8036 POL8037 POL8038 POL8039 POL8040 POL8043 POL8046 POL8048 POL8049 POL8050 POL8051 POL8052 POL8053
D3	POL8044 POL8041 POL8099 GEO8016 GEO8017 NCL8007 POL8003 POL8005 POL8006 POL8018 POL8020 POL8023 POL8029 POL8035 POL8036 POL8037 POL8038 POL8039 POL8040 POL8043 POL8046 POL8048 POL8049 POL8050 POL8051 POL8052 POL8053
D4	POL8044 POL8041 POL8099 GEO8016 GEO8017 NCL8007 POL8003 POL8005 POL8006 POL8018 POL8020 POL8023 POL8029 POL8035 POL8036 POL8037 POL8038 POL8039 POL8040 POL8043 POL8046 POL8048 POL8049 POL8050 POL8051 POL8052 POL8053