Department of History and Politics

Module Handbook

MA Britain in Global Politics

15 credits option

SAMPLE
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Objectives:

- Gain a greater understanding of Britain’s foreign policy history and Britain’s current position in the world
- Gain a greater understanding of the relationships, which Britain has forged with other nations and the benefits, and costs of those relationships.
- To have an understanding and appreciation of the wider literature related to the subject.
- Be able to consider Britain’s role within international organisations and supranational groups.

Introduction to the Module

This module examines the historical development of Britain's international relations from the 20th century to the present day. It concentrates on a number of key themes and issues, such as the UK's changing global role from imperialism to decolonisation, its relationship with Europe, and its 'special relationship' with the United States. The module explores how Britain fits in to a structure of global politics and how this has changed over time, and analyses the main driving factors behind the evolution of Britain's global relations.

This is a Masters level 15-credit (6-week) course, available both for students on the MA International Relations and the MA History degree(s).

The course will focus on the analysis and interpretation of a number of key issues in British policy in the contemporary period. The themes and topics to be covered may include the following:
Themes to be covered over the module include:

- Foreign Policy and British Politics.
- Relations with the European Union.
- Theoretical Interpretations.
- Issues of security and conflict.
- Britain and Global Conflict
- Britain and NATO.
- Britain and Interventionism.
- The Special Relationship with the United States.
- Britain and Globalisation.

Assessment

The assessment for this module is one 3,000-word essay due on TBC. You are required to answer one of the following questions at the end of the module. The questions are:

1: What are the main elements of and influences on British foreign policy?
2: Is the British approach to foreign policy and international relations ethical?
3: How successful has Britain been in finding a new role in the world since 1945?
4: Does the ‘special relationship’ with the United States strengthen Britain’s global role and influence?
5: How has economic globalisation affected Britain’s relationship with the world?

Electronic submission via Turnitin on the course Moodle page.
Lecture and Seminar Plan

It is vital that for each session you undertake the key reading as set out in the reading list below. This module will be delivered using interactive lectures and seminar format and as such requires you to come to classes prepared. The planned sessions are designed to give you a focused understanding of Britain in Global Politics.

The sessions are:

1: Introduction / British Foreign Policy and its Place in the World Since 1945
2: No Class – Reading Week [University Learning and Teaching Day]
3: Making British Foreign Policy
4: Britain’s Atlanticism: NATO and the ‘Special Relationship’
5: Britain and the European Union
6: Intervention, Security and Counterterrorism

Reading Lists

To maximise your grade potential it is strongly recommended that you engage in an extensive range of reading in order to compliment the content of the lecture and seminars.

As such, it would be worth researching a range of journal articles and books. The indicative reading below acts as a preliminary introduction to the more substantive reading required for each session.

Indicative Reading

It is important to remember that no one text will tell you everything you need to know about this subject, or indeed everything you need to know to pass this module. However, the following texts provide good general/introductory guides to the themes and topics under discussion. Please be sure to draw widely from the reading lists in order to gain the most from this module.

General Reading


*Memoirs*


Blair, Tony (2010) *A Journey* (Hutchinson)

Straw, Jack (2012) *Last Man Standing* (MacMillan)

**Useful Websites**

Below is a small selection of websites that could be useful for supporting your work on this course.

Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee

http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/foreign-affairs-committee/
Parliamentary Defence Committee -
http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/defence-committee/

Parliamentary International Development Committee
http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/international-development-committee/

Foreign and Commonwealth Office https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office

Chatham House, Royal Institute of International Affairs http://www.chathamhouse.org/
They also have guides to materials, e.g.


Foreign Policy Centre - http://fpc.org.uk/about/

Oxford Royale Academy
http://www.oxford-royale.co.uk/articles/anglo-american-relations-special-relationship-myth.html

HM Government Foreign Affairs Policy Area
https://www.gov.uk/government/topics/foreign-affairs
Substantive Reading

Session One: Introduction

Losing an Empire, Finding a Role: British Foreign Policy and its Place in the World Since 1945

Discussion: To what extent is Britain an influential actor in global affairs?

Essential Reading:


Additional Reading:


Session Two
Making British Foreign Policy

**Discussion Question:** What or who are the key influences on the making of British foreign policy?

**Essential**


**Additional Reading**


**Session Three**

**Britain’s Atlanticism: NATO and the ‘Special Relationship’**

**Discussion:** To what extent is Britain’s role in international affairs defined by Anglo-American relations?
Essential:


Recommended:


Pelling, H. (1956) *America and the British Left*.


**Session Four**

**Britain and the European Union**

**Discussion:** Why is Britain regarded as an ‘awkward partner’ in its relations with the EU? Is that fair?

**Essential:**


**Recommended:**


Conradt, D, et al (2002), Politics in Europe, Palgrave, pp. 1-17


**Session Five**

**Intervention, Security and Counterterrorism**

**Discussion:** How has the British approach to international relations and foreign affairs changed in the light of the threat of international terrorism? Is its response justified?

**Essential:**


http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+//www.number10.gov.uk/Page1297


Recommended:


Little, R. ‘Conclusions, the ethics and strategy of Labour’s third way’, ch. 15 in: Little, R. Wickham-Jones, M. (eds), New Labour’s Foreign Policy: A New Moral Crusade?, Manchester University Press, 2000


