

## Politics and International Relations (OASP)

This fascinating module gives students an introduction to the theoretical background to international relations and examines a range of contemporary and historical topics through which it is possible to explore the behaviour of states and international organisations. Topics may include the work of Hugo Grotius, the ideas of the Treaty of Westphalia and the Congress of Vienna.

Major themes, including national interest, realism, the nation state, sovereignty, ideologies (such as those dominant in the Cold War), the growth of superpower rivalry and war and co-operation will be addressed, all of which help to constitute some of the practical aspects of the subject. The course will also contrast the international behaviour of small and large states. Students will be encouraged to relate what they learn to contemporary issues, using up-to-date materials from various kinds of sources.

There is a very wide range of important issues which may be explored, such as strategy and its bearing on international security issues; the 'clash of civilisations'; the contrast between super-powers and great powers; developing countries and causes of poverty – and how these affect states' attitudes and behaviour. In this context it is important to understand the role and image of the three great international financial institutions, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation.

The framework for understanding that controversial institution, the UN, now needs to include: the enlarged capacity to encroach on states' internal affairs and sovereignty, international law and the concomitant International Criminal Court, as well as environmental issues including global warming and the debate attached to it; and human rights and genocide.

Things have moved a long way since the Nuremberg trials; how far remains a crucial issue, alongside older concepts such as balance of power, deterrence and pre-emption. Regime change, humanitarian intervention, water shortage and terrorism, have affected us all. These are some of the genuinely very exciting topics, which may be looked at in greater depth.

### **Suggested pre-summer reading**

*World Politics: Trend and Transformation*, Charles W. Kegley. (This is thorough, very well informed and engaging).

*Strategy in the Contemporary World: An Introduction to Strategic Studies*, ed. John Baylis, James J. Wirtz, Eliot A. Cohen, Colin S. Gray. (A well-structured and insightful survey by professionals).

*International Relations: A Very Short Introduction*, Paul Wilkinson. (A small and manageable compass. Large works on this subject can be indigestible!)

*Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*, Robert Kagan. (Small, brilliant and wide-ranging analysis).

*International Relations: The Basics*, Peter Sutch & Juanita Elias.

If you are unable to obtain books locally, they may be ordered from

<http://bookshop.blackwell.co.uk>

or

[www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)