



MA European Politics

Programme Specification

Primary Purpose

Course management and quality assurance.

Secondary Purpose

Detailed information for students, staff and employers. Current students should refer to the related Course Handbook for further detail.

Disclaimer

The University of Portsmouth has checked the information given in this Programme Specification. We will endeavour to deliver the course in keeping with this Programme Specification; however, changes may sometimes be required arising from annual monitoring, student feedback, review and update of units and courses. Where this activity leads to significant changes to units and courses, there will be prior consultation of students and others, wherever possible, and the University will take all reasonable steps to minimize disruption to students. It is also possible that the University may not be able to offer a unit or course for reasons outside of its control, for example; the absence of a member of staff or low student registration numbers. Where this is the case, the University will endeavour to inform applicants and students as soon as possible. Where appropriate, the University will facilitate the transfer of affected students to another suitable course.

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Course Details

1. Named Awards

MA European Studies

Postgraduate Diploma in European Studies

Postgraduate Certificate in European Studies

2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable)

C2673F/P

3. Awarding Body

University of Portsmouth

4. Teaching Institution

University of Portsmouth

5. Accrediting Body

University of Portsmouth

6. QAA Benchmark Groups

N/A

7. Document Control Information

Version: September 2017

8. Effective Session

2017/18

9. Author

Dr Angela Crack

10. Faculty

Humanities and Social Sciences

11. Department

Social, Historical and Literary Studies

Curriculum

12. Educational Aims

- To broaden the critical knowledge and understanding of students through using a multidisciplinary approach to focus on relevant themes and issues
- To ensure that the research and specialist expertise of staff informs the curriculum
- To provide a challenging and stimulating study environment

- To provide a general framework for students to follow a flexible and coherent programme of study in European Studies which corresponds to their differing backgrounds, needs and external obligations
- To expose students to a broad range of key issues in contemporary European affairs
- To provide students with the skills and knowledge base with which to research a specific issue in contemporary European affairs

13. Reference Points

- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document
- The scholarship and research expertise of academic members of staff.
- QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education.
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

14. General Learning Outcomes

Level 7

Master's degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
 - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
- the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development

15. Learning Outcomes

On completion of the programme students will be able to:

- debate the interaction of economic, political and social factors accounting for change in contemporary Europe
- critically engage with political issues, events and processes in contemporary Europe
- assess the place of Europe in the wider geopolitical context

- evaluate debates on the nature of policy-making and multi-level governance in contemporary Europe
- display an informed awareness of the variety of research resources in the European area and critique relevant material
- plan, execute and present a sustained piece of critical analysis, mobilising a wide range of relevant and up-to-date sources within their chosen field of European affairs

A. Knowledge and Understanding of:

- A.1 the place of nationalism and national identity and related issues of citizenship and ethnicity in contemporary Europe
- A.2 the process and problems of democratisation and integration in Europe
- A.3 the changing nature of security in contemporary Europe
- A.4 the nature and problems of governance and policy-making within the EU and contemporary Europe
- A.5 the changing nature of Europe's relations with the wider world and the impact of global forces on Europe
- A.6 the range of research methods and research resources available for the study of European affairs
- A.7 the research process attached to undertaking a piece of extended research

B. Cognitive (Intellectual or Thinking) Skills, able to:

- B.1 critically engage with key debates in the analysis of European affairs
- B.2 assess the interaction between different economic, political and social factors
- B.3 apply a multidisciplinary approach to analysing key issues
- B.4 synthesise, analyse and interpret information from a variety of sources
- B.5 undertake international, national, regional and subregional analysis of change
- B.6 demonstrate research and information retrieval skills

C. Practical (Professional or Subject) Skills, able to:

- C.1 use critical skills in analysis of texts and comparing and contrasting differing interpretations
- C.2 apply a multidisciplinary approach to the analysis of complex problems
- C.3 select appropriate research methodologies
- C.4 use bibliographic skills appropriate to the topic and be able to access relevant sources and databases
- C.5 produce well-structured, clearly written and cogently argued essays, projects, reports and dissertation
- C.6 apply scholarly conventions of presentation accurately and consistently

D. Transferable (Graduate and Employability) Skills, able to:

- D.1 demonstrate advanced literacy and oral and written communication skills, including the ability to present a rhetorically effective, coherent, well-supported and sustained argument
- D.2 demonstrate word-processing skills
- D.3 demonstrate the ability to access relevant sources, databases etc. and use electronic search tools for completion of a project
- D.4 work within a group and engage critically but respectfully in debates with others
- D.5 be able to mobilise and synthesise a broad range of sources effectively and produce a clear coherent analysis
- D.6 demonstrate an ability to work independently and manage time effectively to meet set goals

16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

Knowledge of the subject area is conveyed through a combination of lectures and seminars and in some cases simulation exercises. The relationship between the elements is fluid with the aim of maximising student participation in their own learning (A1-6). Awareness of research methods and resources, the use of data-bases and access to the internet is provided via workshops and library/computer sessions where appropriate in individual units and via the support stream of study

skills/research methods classes throughout the year (A6-7) Students also have access to the full range of lectures and research seminars organised by the Centre for European and International Studies Research

Cognitive skills are developed via a range of activities including lectures, seminars, simulations. Students also develop these skills in a focused way via preparation for seminar discussion, seminar presentations, extended essays/projects and ultimately the dissertation (B1-6). The research proposal which forms part of the dissertation unit and the plans which constitute a formative exercise in some units involve consideration of the key debates in a specific area (B1) as well as showing explicit ability to retrieve information (B6). Skills in the latter are also explicitly developed through induction sessions in the library and through the library and workshops in which form part of the study skills/research methods support classes running throughout the year (B6)

Induction sessions provide an introduction to use of the library, IT facilities and includes introduction to what is expected of masters-level work. Practical skills are further reinforced through study skills/research methods sessions which extend throughout the year. In addition the course handbook and unit handbooks provide guidance on such aspects as conventions. Tutorial support for the dissertation and personal tutorial consultations for essays, projects etc. and discussion in seminars are also vehicles for the development of practical skills. In some options students develop negotiating and lobbying skills and in the work-based unit they have the opportunity to reflect on the work place and develop a project of practice relevant to their work situation.

The process of preparing assessments such as essays, projects, reports, portfolios and dissertation in terms of reading, organising material, developing an analysis and writing and presentation develops the above transferable skills (D1- 6). Such development is encouraged by the framework of lectures, seminars, simulations in the areas studies units and personal tutorials for the dissertation. In addition a combination of the induction sessions, study skills and research methods classes further explicitly supports the development of transferable skills (D1-5). Group work skills are developed within seminars (D4).

17. Assessment Strategy

Knowledge and understanding of the subject area are assessed via a variety of forms - extended essays, projects, portfolios, plans (A1-6). All of these help students to develop research skills, which are also ultimately developed and assessed extensively via the dissertation (A7). Knowledge of the range of research methods and resources available is also assessed by the dissertation proposal which forms part of the dissertation unit (A6-7).

Essays, projects, reports and portfolios assess the development of the above cognitive skills geared to addressing key questions in European affairs (B1-6). The research proposal assesses the degree to which students have considered explicitly the range of and problems associated with accessing data and sources relevant to their dissertation (B6). The dissertation is the culmination of the MA in that it assesses the students' ability to apply all the cognitive skills over an extended piece of work (B1-6).

The effectiveness of students' application of practical skills is assessed via essays, projects, reports, the research proposal and the dissertation. In each case assessors are asked in mark-sheets to remark on criteria, which include skills developed such as presentation, structure, clarity and coherence.

Skills (D1-3,5,6) are assessed through the assessment for all units and extensively so by the dissertation (especially D6). The research proposal for the dissertation also explicitly assesses awareness of skills (D3). Groups work skills (D4) are not explicitly assessed. However, non-assessed group work in seminars and discussion develops this skill.

18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements

See [Unit Web Search](#)¹ for full details on the course structure and units

The degree is based on the University credit rating for taught masters' degrees of 180 credits. In the programme all taught units are rated at the 30 credits now standard for masters' degrees. The dissertation is rated at 60 credits.

Awards follow the university regulations i.e.:

- MA European Studies - 180 credits
- Postgraduate Diploma in European Studies - 120 credits (i.e. all taught units except the dissertation)
- Postgraduate Certificate in European Studies - 60 credits (i.e. 2 taught units)

The programme is offered in two modes—full time over one year and part-time over two years.

A major feature of the delivery of the programme is flexibility. All students take one core unit, Challenges to EU Politics and Governance. They then choose 3 options. They will be given guidance in their option choices. However, they can determine whether they wish to specialise in governance and policy aspects of the subject or more security, international relation relations and external relations. Further specialisation is secured on the dissertation.

19. Employability Statement

Throughout the teaching year there will be a study skills/research management support course consisting of at least 2 hours contact time per week. This will run in parallel to the assessed units. This course will cover masters- level academic skills which will be useful in further employment such as report writing, data collection and analysis. It will also cover research skills such as accessing data-bases and bibliographic searching. Part of the study/skills research management course will also include explicit advice on careers for postgraduates in conjunction with the university's career service. The core unit EU Institution, Law and Theories also includes a two hour session discussing working in EU institutions. Assessment and activities in individual units are also designed with work-related learning in mind such as simulations of meetings of committees in the EU, preparation of briefing papers for the Commission on external policy, the development of lobbying strategies for network groups, presentations.

In addition, especially for those part-time students who are in employment a work-based unit is available in which students currently in work can reflect on their work for the benefit of their masters degree. Finally, within the structure of the assessment for the dissertation there is an opportunity for students to develop a more work-related extended document in place of the normal academic dissertation e.g. a commissioned assessment and analysis of a specific problem/issue in a work environment. These would have to be approved and relate to the overall subject area of European Studies. Postgraduate students will also have access to the advice on internships and within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences opportunities for internships will be open to MA students, particularly with a EU/political content. Opportunities also exist via Purple Door for development of career opportunities and work placements. Personal development and career planning is provided within the teaching team of the programme.

Course Management

20. Support for Student Learning

- The Course is managed by a Course Leader.
- Collaborative programmes are managed on a day-to-day basis by the University Contact who may or may not be the Course Leader.

¹ www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch

- The Combined Honours Degree is managed by a Course Leader from one subject area and a Deputy Course Leader from the other.
- Extensive induction programme introduces the student to the University and their course.
- Each student has a personal tutor, responsible for pastoral support and guidance.
- University support services include careers, financial advice, housing, counselling etc.
- The Academic Skills Unit (ASK).
- The Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre (ASDAC).
- Excellent library facilities.
- The University of Portsmouth has consistently been awarded an excellent rating for student support and guidance in a number of Quality Assurance Agency inspections.
- Student course and unit handbooks provide information about the course structure and University regulations etc.
- Feedback is provided for all assessments.
- Personal Development Planning (PDP) for all awards.

21. Admissions Criteria

A. Academic Admissions Criteria

- an honours degree at a good standard in a social science, humanities or related discipline
- exceptionally other applicants may be admitted to the programme providing they can demonstrate an ability to study successfully at masters level
- students for whom English is a second language must demonstrate that they have a high level of competence in English equivalent to an ITLS score of 6.5 or above

B. Disability

The University makes no distinction in its admissions policy with regard to disability and will endeavour to make all reasonable adjustments in order to make it possible for students to study at Portsmouth on a course of their choice.

22. Evaluation and Enhancement of Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching

A. Mechanisms for Review and Evaluation

- Course Leader's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review.
- Head of Department's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review.
- Unit and Course Level student feedback considered at Board of Studies.
- Unit Assessment Board consideration of student performance for each programme.
- Annual Standards and Quality Reports to Board of Studies, including consideration of Subject and Award External Examiner Reports.
- Periodic Programme Review.
- Student Representatives and Student/Staff Consultative Committees.
- National Student Survey.
- Staff Performance and Development Review.
- Peer Review and Development Framework.
- Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee.

B. Responsibilities for Monitoring and Evaluation

- Unit Co-ordinators for unit content and delivery.
- Course Leader for day-to-day running of course.
- University Contact for day-to-day running of course.

- Board of Studies with overall responsibilities for operation and content of course.
- Combined Honours Management Board.
- Head of Department.
- Associate Dean (Academic).
- Associate Dean (Students).
- Quality Assurance Committee.
- Unit, Award and Progression Board of Examiners.

C. Mechanisms for Gaining Student Feedback

- Student Representation on Board of Studies.
- Student Staff Consultative Committees.
- Unit and Course level student feedback questionnaires.
- University participates in external student surveys, eg National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and International Student Barometer (ISB).

D. Staff Development Priorities

- Academic staff undertake activities related to research, scholarship, teaching and learning and student support and guidance.
- Annual staff performance and development reviews match development to needs.
- Managers undertake a variety of management development programmes.
- All academic staff encouraged to seek Higher Education Academy membership.
- Academic staff undertake initial and continuing professional development within the Academic Professional Excellence Framework (APEX) programme which is aligned with the Higher Education Academy (HEA)'s UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF)
- Support Staff are encouraged to attend short courses in areas such as minute taking, and specific IT packages.

23. Assessment Regulations

The current University of Portsmouth academic regulations will apply to this programme (see [Assessment and Regulations²](#)).

24. Role of Externals

Subject External Examiners who will:

- Oversee unit assessment and usually attend Unit Assessment Boards
- Review unit assessment strategy
- Sample assessment artefacts
- Present report to Unit Assessment Boards

Award External Examiners (usually also a Subject External Examiner) who will:

- Oversee and attend Award/Progression Boards
- Scrutinise and endorse the outcomes of assessment
- Ensure that the standard of the award is maintained at a level comparable with that of similar awards elsewhere in the United Kingdom

² www.port.ac.uk/departments/services/academicregistry/qualitymanagementdivision/assessmentandregulations/

25. Indicators of Standards and Quality

A. Professional Accreditation/Recognition

None.

B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent)

PDSQR May 2013 – The programme is reviewed within the university's programme of regular review including in ASQR and PDSQR. The Masters provision underwent an External Periodic Review in May 2013. The review confirmed the 'fitness of purpose' of the History curriculum and the effectiveness of its annual monitoring and review processes.

C. Quality Assurance Agency

QAA Higher Education Review, March 2015, judgements about standards and quality meet UK expectations (*for full report see [Higher Education Review of the University of Portsmouth, March 2015](#)*³).

D. Others

None.

26. Further Information

Further information may be found in:

- Student Handbook
- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document
- University of Portsmouth Prospectus
- [University of Portsmouth](#)⁴ and [School of Social, Historical and Literary Studies](#)⁵ websites

³ www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Documents/University%20of%20Portsmouth/University-of-Portsmouth-HER-15.pdf

⁴ www.port.ac.uk/

⁵ <http://www.port.ac.uk/school-of-social-historical-and-literary-studies/>