



UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON  
INSTITUTE  
IN PARIS

# Course Outline

## BA in International Politics (single honours or with minors)

### 2025–2026



[london.ac.uk/institute-paris](https://london.ac.uk/institute-paris)



The BA in International Politics programme is available in two versions:

- **International Politics (UCAS Code L241)**
- **International Politics with French (UCAS Code L242)**

The International Politics modules are listed below. The module information for the French Studies minors is listed on page 9 onwards.

## **BA in International Politics**

All modules on the programme are taught and assessed in English. Teaching is by a mixture of lectures, small group seminars and Learning Labs. The seminars are designed to generate informed discussion around set topics, and may involve student presentations, group exercises and textual analysis as well as open discussion. Learning Labs involve a range of interactive, student-centred activities, including peer-review work, brainstorming activities, presentations, debates, site visits and more.

### **Year 1 - Compulsory Courses**

#### **POLP101 – Doing International Politics (1): Theories & Actors**

This module challenges the notion that politics in general, and theory in particular, are passive pursuits. The module explores the practical underpinnings of both theory and politics.

You will study some of the principal explanatory theories of politics and international relations and you will learn how many of the core sources of division in modern politics - such as race, nation, class, gender and more - can be better understood with reference to important theoretical innovations in the social sciences.

POLP101 lays the conceptual groundwork for the degree in 'international politics' by encouraging students to be engaged and think critically about both the 'international' and the 'political' from the get-go.

#### **POLP102 – Learning Lab: Non-State Actors**

The contemporary study of international politics recognises actors in addition to nations and states for doing international politics such as artists, activists, non-governmental organisations, collectives, and movements.

This module teaches students how to identify, understand and analyse a specific actor (e.g. individual, corporate, collective, institutional, governmental, non-governmental) and study the ways which this actor performs international politics.

Through a collaborative and workshop environment, this module will help students understand the practical sense of actors performing international politics, interpret these actors with theoretical tools and study their actions with methodological tools.



## **POLP103 – Order and Security**

This module explores how states and international actors attempted to build and maintain order and security in the modern era, encompassing practices of violence and war-making as well as diplomacy and cooperation. It will examine the colonial underpinnings of international order, the mutations of the Liberal International Order and its recent crises, as well as attempts to build alternative forms of order and security by anticolonial actors.

## **ULC160 – Issues in Contemporary French Politics**

This course will introduce students to the ways in which institutions and political practices have developed since the inception of France's Fifth Republic in 1958 and how they, in turn, have been shaped and have responded to the changes affecting post-war French society. The first part of the course covers some of the major characteristics of contemporary French politics (institutions, the state, party politics).

The second part of the course offers a thematic approach by focusing on a selection of social and political issues (immigration, race and ethnicity, gender, religion, environment), and analysing the ways in which they have contributed to shape common understandings about what being French means in the late 20th and early 21st century.

## **Year 2**

### **Compulsory Courses**

#### **POLP201 – Doing International Politics (2): Methods**

This module is an introduction to understanding the uses and functions of methods in doing international politics research. Many social and political scientists critiqued idealism, laying the foundations for modern distrust of actors' own explanations for their behaviour. More recent theorists remained suspicious of 'biographical illusions'. This module will introduce these debates by asking what we can and cannot learn from people giving an account of themselves. It will begin with the study of how various actors give accounts of themselves (activists, diplomats, lawyers, migrants), with further case studies in semester B, culminating in a series of sessions on racial capitalism and the reinvention of (auto/)biographical methods by actors and theorists within the Black Radical Tradition (Cedric Robinson).

In the course students will be invited to make connections between international political actors and themselves as actors. We will also consider how artistic forms of 'representation' can help us understand different approaches to representing political actors and events. The course returns to a central question for political studies – the (in)significance of actors' own explanations for their actions – with a focus on how this issue affects methods of doing international politics research.

#### **POLP202 – Learning Lab: Field Experience (Sites)**

The contemporary study of international politics recognises heterogeneous places where international politics happens. These places range from city streets and squares to internet platforms and are often intensification points for international politics.

This module enables students to gain practical experience of how these various sites become intense points of international politics. This module teaches students how to identify



a site and study the ways in which a particular site becomes an intense locus by using various methods of analysis taught in the module through fieldwork.

The module also enables students to share their findings with other students in a collaborative and workshop environment, disseminate their findings with social and other media, present their work to other students, and write a research essay.

### **POLP204 – International Institutions (new module subject to validation)**

In this module, students will study major international institutions, including the European Union, the United Nations and many more. Students will analyse the practices that shape and reproduce these institutions across time. The module will offer practical experience, including a portfolio project on a key institution and, potentially, the opportunity to participate in Model EU/UN conferences.

### **Electives – Students choose two of the following options.**

#### **ULC230 – Climate Politics**

The module will provide students with a historical account of the international climate regime, and its evolutions since the 1990s. In particular, it will explore France's particular status and role in the international climate debate, as well as how the climate issue plays out in the French context.

Students will also adopt a 'non-state actor' lens when analysing international climate politics. This will involve identifying a range of non-state actors (NGOs, foundations, think-tanks), and analysing their involvement in the international climate policy space.

#### **ULC231 – Politics and Fiction**

This module will provide a broad, introductory overview of classic and contemporary works of literature written in English or in English translation, in which political themes are foregrounded.

Undertaking close, historically contextualised readings of textual extracts, students will analyse and evaluate the relationship between politics and literary text in class discussions, group presentations and written assignments. The module requires no previous background in literary studies.

#### **ULC232 – Queer Politics in Contemporary France**

This module offers an introduction to queer theory and politics in modern Francophone literature, culture and film. It reads seminal theoretical writing that emerged from 1990s America (Butler, Sedgwick), alongside French narratives of the AIDS crisis in the 1980s (Guibert), fluid performances of identity (Genet), non-binary experimentation (Garréta), and trans-culture (Ben Jelloun). Because queerness resists dominant forms of belonging, it also intersects with questions of race, class, and power.

Through Foucault's analysis of heteronormative oppression, we consider the politics of queer Maghrebi French writing and film (Taïa), while probing new critical ways to think about intersectionality, trans theory, queer affect, and homonationalism.



## **ULC234 – France, Britain and Empire: Comparative and Connected Histories**

This module examines the French and British colonial Empires in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Taking a comparative and connected approach, the module encourages students to think beyond the nation as a frame of historical analysis, in order to develop a deeper understanding of the transnational and global dimensions of colonial power.

The module examines the contribution of interimperial networks of journalists, scientists and diplomats to articulated discourses of race, gender and civilisation, and compares the

dynamics of settler colonialism across empires. The geographical areas examined include Africa, Asia and the South Pacific.

## **ULC235 – An Introduction to Global Cinema**

This module examines international films to explore how the formal elements of the cinema language work to create meaning within the context of a variety of cultures. By watching and analysing films from modern and contemporary cinema, we will discuss style and mise en scène in relation to their historical, economic and political context.

Emphasizing postcolonialism, transnationalism and the effects of globalisation on film cultures, the class provides the skills to study film aesthetics, enhance critical thinking and discover the realities of the film market. It shows the crucial cultural and ideological role cinema plays around the world. We will pay particular attention to economic aspects such as film production systems and distribution to deepen our understanding of the globalised film industry.

## **ULC236 – Social movements and the politics of protests**

From Occupy and the Arab uprisings to Indigenous movements and Black Lives Matter, social movements are central actors of politics at the local and international levels. This seminar focuses on the history, trajectory, actors and impact of contemporary social movements to explore the relationship between power and resistance.

The first part of the module provides an introduction to different concepts and theories of social movement studies and will critically relate these approaches to cases of social movements.

The second part of the module delves into case studies of contemporary social movements from different regions and political regimes to explore the conditions of protest and the potential for social change.

## **ULC237 – French political thought**

The module offers an overview of key intellectual figures and texts in French and Francophone political thought from the 18th to the 19th centuries, focussing on the period around the French revolution and its fall-out. Taking a historical approach, the module encourages students to situate ideas within their broader social and discursive context and grasp how these debates shaped the development of a number of contemporary political institutions and concepts. Students will gain an understanding of how and why ideological currents such as liberalism and socialism emerged across this period of crisis as intellectual actors sought to articulate new forms of social organisation. The module will explore the origins of notions like popular sovereignty and representative government, as well as feminist, racial, and social critiques of (and alternatives to) the liberal state and empire.



## Year 3

### Compulsory Courses

#### **POLP301 – Doing International Politics (3) – Practices**

Many narratives of nationalist movements claim each nation-state as a unique formation, and yet the methods they use to encourage the loyalty of their populations are everywhere so similar. This module works through this paradox from an international political perspective.

It will enable you to understand and explain the emergence of the nation-state form and its dramatic extension to the world. Topics include comparative nationalist music; mimetic diasporic nationalisms; similarities and differences between African, Asian and Latin American decolonisations; and differing global responses to the French Revolution.

#### **POLP302 – Learning Lab: Frontiers of International Politics**

The contemporary study of international politics recognises other actors than nations and states for practicing international politics such as artists, activists, non-governmental organisations, collectives, and movements.

This module enables you to understand how these various actors perform international politics in areas known as frontiers where borders, zones, and camps constitute grey zones of legibility and illegibility, legality and illegality and where intense social and political struggles take place. Some examples we will study include the Spanish colonial enclaves in Morocco where the cities of Ceuta and Melilla create a European frontier, US American bases in South Korea and Australian detention centres.

#### **POLP388 – Research Project**

The research project is designed to give students the opportunity of studying an agreed topic under supervision on an individual basis and to a greater depth than is possible within existing modules.

The research project is an independent study programme. Student will select their own research topic and will be expected to develop a strong research commitment. Each student is appointed a research project supervisor, with whom they will meet regularly, to offer advice and guidance.

The research project module encourages final year students to take responsibility for their own learning, with the guidance of the supervisor, by the end of the module students will be able:

- To explore areas of interest within the discipline of their degree programme with an in-depth research
- To develop a number of useful research skills
- To apply critical analysis to areas of interest
- To challenge, through an original research, dominant theories and perspectives within the discipline.



## **Electives – Students choose two of the following options.**

### **ULC313 – French Colonialism in North Africa**

Much of the rich diversity of contemporary French society, and many of the political and cultural debates about how to manage this diversity, have emerged from French colonial presence in the Maghreb.

This course will reflect upon the nature of French colonial power in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, in order to understand the operation of empire and its legacy in France and the Maghreb today. Covering topics such as imperial science, settlement and urbanisation, gender and sexuality, journalism and colonial resistance, the course offers a thematic approach to the study of the colonial period, and interrogates its links with 'pre' and 'post' colonial eras.

Students will consider the ways in which historical relationships influenced the nature of decolonisation and post-independence political and cultural exchange.

### **ULC326 - Trauma and Transmission: Holocaust Afterlives**

This course is divided into two halves. The first half focuses on the artistic and literary production that followed immediately in the wake of the Second World War bearing witness to the realities of the concentration camps, either as they were directly lived or mediated through contact with victims. This material is profoundly marked by the traumatic nature of these years and in many respects it fell on "deaf ears" when it was first produced, too disturbing, too distressing to reach wide audiences. The second part of the course will deal with the time lag thus generated in the reception of Holocaust testimony and the questions about transmission that this raises. Focusing on film as a "popular" medium for transmission of history and culture, the class will consider both the chronology of these works and their different narrative and filmic strategies for conveying what is now "part of human history," with particular attention to the modes of distancing or of re-contextualising deployed by the film-makers.

### **ULC333 - Postcolonial Fictions in the City of Paris**

How has fictional writing served as a vehicle for the representation and processing of France's complex colonial legacy? To what extent has fiction enabled the surfacing of unacknowledged or contested events within the city of Paris, and how has the city served as an active component in the telling of this history, emerging in these texts and films as more than a mere backdrop to 'politics' and/or 'immigrants'? This course addresses these questions through fictional readings and site-based study. Three main forms of fiction have been chosen, which will be associated primarily with three sites, though the resonance of these books will work across all of the sites explored: crime fiction and *The Palais dorée*; postcolonial novels of neighbourhood life and *the Goutte d'Or*; women's cinema of the 'banlieue' and the town of Bobigny (Seine-Saint Denis).

### **ULC334 - Contemporary Theory 1: Critique**

Critical theory can be thought of as a philosophical mode of reflecting on the forms of power that structure our daily lives. From our embodied subjectivity and the institutional ways in which we are policed, to understanding what makes us human and the ethics of engaging



with the other, this course offers an introduction to seminal thinkers across twentieth century thought who have helped shape the politics of identity, agency, power, and belonging.

The course will explore five key concepts in contemporary theory – identity and gender politics (Butler, Spivak), power and policing (Foucault, Rancière), biopolitics (Foucault, Mbembe), self/other (Derrida, Khatibi, Badiou), the human and posthuman (Braidotti, Haraway) – in order to navigate the tension between how we live now and how we might live differently.

Central to these wide-ranging ideas are questions around how the individual operates in the collective space they inhabit. How does the lived experience of Paris as a host city contribute to theoretical questions of belonging or alienation? What forms of (dis)empowerment are made possible by the multicultural city? How can we conceptualise the ethics and emotions of each encounter, and what lasting legacy might they leave on the body?

### **ULC335 - Contemporary Theory 2: Crisis**

Marxists have long argued that capitalism tends towards 'crisis' but since the 2008 Financial Crash this vocabulary has become more widespread in relation to a range of issues such as climate change, migration and the rise of neofascist politics.

Taking a step back and considering the term's analytical qualities, this module asks how crisis helps illuminate the unprecedented challenges of 21st century politics and examines different critical-theoretical approaches to manifestations of contemporary crisis.

Crises occur when social formations can no longer be reproduced on the basis of pre-existing governing strategies and systems of social relations. Any given crisis means there is a systemic instability that can only be addressed through radical measures from various actors. This means that as well as studying authoritarian turns within liberal states, including emerging and ongoing forms of policing and racialisation, we will also look at the less familiar, sometimes improvisatory, forms of resistance pursued by subaltern peoples and social movements in turbulent times.

### **ULC336 - Contemporary Theory 3: Thinking the Anthropocene**

The ecological crisis is an epoch-making phenomenon, whose history is rooted in Western modernity and whose negative consequences affect all regions of the world and all strata of society, albeit in different ways. The aims of this module are to enable students to deepen their understanding of key issues and debates in contemporary political ecology, to enable them to identify and account for new forms of environmental movements, and to produce written and/or oral analyses that can offer convincing explanations and insights into contemporary ecological crisis.

### **ULC337 – Performing Environmental Justice**

What are the potentially generative roles of performativity, theatricality and rehearsal in decolonial demands for environmental justice? Situated against the backdrop of national and international environmental laws and summits, this module exposes students to a variety of experimental, grassroots initiatives that explore possibilities of environmental justice "from below". The module is centred around a series of case studies that include people's tribunals



and rights of nature tribunals, theatre and performance works including staged hearings, films, exhibitions and protests. We engage in a close reading of a range of forums and assemblies, each blurring lines between "fiction" and "reality", that contest existing political and legal frameworks and offer speculative propositions for alternative manners of understanding and enacting environmental justice.

### **ULC338 - The Worldmaking of Objects : A Political Economy of International Trade**

This course is about thinking the global from the point of view of objects and tracing the worldmaking they do through the human and non-human assemblages their trajectories create. This tight focus on objects will be our point of entry into thinking international trade, its histories and differential effects across various places, the inequalities, foreclosures and unexpected openings and entanglements it has produced. We will start by exploring what makes an object a commodity before tackling its various modes of circulation and ways of thinking about and representing the territories it traverses, the transfers, translations and transformations it operates. We will simultaneously practice different ways of narrating these worldmaking operations of objects, through ethnographic and mapping techniques (taught and assessed in English).



# BA in International Politics with French

Students taking a minor in French take 90 credits per academic year in their major subject and 30 credits in French Studies.

## Year 1

Students take POLP101, POLP102 and POLP103.  
They also take the following French language course:

### **ULL100 – Written and oral expression – taught and assessed in French**

Students have a total of 4 hours per week on language (3h written work and 1-hour oral work). Oral work focuses on developing students' readiness for employment, with the preparation of French CVs, mock interviews and business pitching exercises. Class sizes are approximately 15 students.

## Year 2

Students take POLP201, POLP202A and POLP204.  
They also take the following French language course:

### **ULL 200 – Advanced Grammar of Written and Spoken French – taught and assessed in French**

Advanced study of grammatical, lexicolinguistic and stylistic aspects of French to improve students' written French and oral competence. Assessment takes place through a series of coursework assignments, oral presentations and a written exam.

## **Elective module**

Students also choose one of the following elective modules (further details included in the single honours BA in International Politics section and in French Studies course outline)

**ULC201 – Introduction to French Linguistics**

**ULC204 – History of Sensibilities and Emotions**

**ULC212 – Identités I: Gender and Sexuality**

**ULC213 – Twentieth-Century Art**

**ULC223 – Text and Image in Mass Culture**

**ULC230 – Climate Politics**

**ULC231 – Politics and Fiction**

**ULC232 – Queer Politics in Contemporary France**

**ULC234 – France, Britain and Empire: Comparative and Connected Histories**

**ULC235 - An Introduction to global cinema**

**ULC236 - Social movements & politics of protests**

**ULC237 – French political thought**



## Year 3

Students take POLP301, POLP302 and POLP388. They also take the following French language course:

### **ULL300 – Advanced techniques in formal discourse – taught and examined in French**

The course aims to develop the students' linguistic and methodological skills necessary for the production of French formal writing and oral presentations.

Written classes will involve the study and practice of syntactic constructions at work in French formal discourse, as well as linguistic analysis of writing samples, and composition of business letters, reports, summaries, etc.

Oral classes will focus on the development of students' capacity to produce formal oral discourses suitable for academic or professional contexts, based on a range of current affairs topics.

### **Elective module**

Students also choose one of the following elective modules (further details included in the single honours BA in International Politics section and in French Studies course outline)

#### **ULL311/2 Advanced translation**

**ULC304 *Fin de siècle I: Politics and Ideology***

**ULC307 *La Prose de la ville***

**ULC310 *Le Républicanisme en France: 1789-1914***

**ULC313 French Colonialism in North Africa**

**ULC315 -Y2K BD: The fin de millénaire bande dessinée**

**ULC317 Variation, Contacts and Ideologies in Contemporary French**

**ULC318 French Society Through Musical films**

**ULC326 Trauma and Transmission: Holocaust Afterlives**

**ULC333 Postcolonial Fictions in the City of Paris**

**ULC334 Contemporary Theory I: Critique**

**ULC335 Contemporary Theory 2: Crisis**

**ULC336 Contemporary Theory 3: Thinking the Anthropocene**

**ULC337 Performing Environmental Justice**

**ULC338 The Worldmaking of Objects : A Political Economy of International Trade**

*Course information is correct at time of printing (April 2025).  
Options may vary from year to year and are subject to availability.*