# Programme Specification

**I.** Programme Details

| Programme title | Politics of the Middle East | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Final award** *(exit awards will be made as outlined in the [Taught Degree Regulations](#))* | BA | ☐ | MA | ☐ |
| | BSc | ☐ | MSc | ☒ |
| | Other | ☐ | MRes | ☐ |
| **Mode of delivery** | Distance-learning | ☐ | | |
| | On-campus | ☒ | | |
| **Professional body accreditation** *(if applicable)* | n/a | | | |
| **Academic year this specification was created** | 2016/17 | | | |
| **Dates of any subsequent amendments** | | | | |

**II.** Programme Aims: What will the programme allow you to achieve?

1. to provide a critical understanding of political processes in the Middle East by using the concepts, theories, and methods of comparative politics (political sociology and political institutions), political economy, and international relations.
2. to enable students to test, through empirical evidence from the Middle East, the utility, and limitations of the analytical approaches of comparative politics and international relations beyond the confines from which they are largely derived.
3. to provide the opportunity to conduct independent research based on the analytical foundations learned from their taught courses, by writing a dissertation.
4. to equip students with sound research, communication, and writing skills, as well as analytical and case knowledge, that will facilitate entry into professional employment and/or further research.

**III.** Programme Learning Outcomes: What will you learn on the programme?

There are four key areas in which you will develop: subject-based knowledge, intellectual skills, subject-based practical skills, and transferrable skills.

| i.      Knowledge |
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By the end of the programme, students will be able to:

1. recall and describe significant issues and actors animating politics in the Middle East
2. recall and describe different approaches to the study of politics in the Middle East
3. recall and describe the relationship between the analysis of Middle East politics and the theoretical analysis of politics in general, with reference both to normative and empirical issues

| Typical Teaching Methods | Typical Assessment Methods |
|---|---|
| • seminar classes, discussion with teachers, and the writing of coursework assignments.<br>• requirement of attendance of all classes | • long essays, course work, unseen examinations and a dissertation |

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| <ul><li>encouragement of extensive independent study</li><li>assigning non-assessed work for discussion in seminars on a regular basis</li><li>delivering lectures and seminar classes to which students are expected to contribute actively</li><li>requirement of regular seminar presentations and specified pieces of written coursework</li><li>provision of additional and targeted assistance by the relevant course teacher in the preparation of these</li></ul> | |

## ii. Intellectual (thinking) skills

By the end of the programme, students will be able to:

1. analyse and critically assess data and evidence from manuscripts and digital sources
2. solve problems of conflicting sources and conflicting interpretations
3. locate materials independently through the use of research sources (particularly research library catalogues) and other relevant traditional sources
4. demonstrate independence of judgment, especially in relation to differing interpretations of political phenomena

| Typical Teaching Methods | Typical Assessment Methods |
|---|---|
| <ul><li>introduction of varying, often conflicting interpretations of political developments that need to be assessed critically</li><li>discussion of these theories and the weighing up of evidence both in oral and written presentations, which requires the exercise of analytical skills</li></ul> | <ul><li>long essays, coursework, unseen examinations, and a dissertation</li></ul> |

## Learning Outcomes: Subject-based practical skills

By the end of the programme, students will be able to:

1. retrieve, sift, and select information from a variety of sources, including group discussions
2. read regularly and rapidly a variety of types of report/paper, incorporating different types of evidence, methodology and disciplinary perspectives
3. employ appropriate research techniques in a variety of specialised research libraries and institutes
4. demonstrate effective written and oral communication skills
5. present coherent political arguments orally and in writing
6. research and write critical, argument-driven essays, dissertations, and presentations

| Typical Teaching Methods | Typical Assessment Methods |
|---|---|
| • preparation for essays and oral contributions in classroom settings<br>• appropriate research training and advice, especially in the preparation of the dissertation | • long essays, coursework, unseen examinations, and a dissertation |

## Learning Outcomes: Transferrable skills

At the end of the programme, students will be able to:

1. structure and communicate ideas effectively both orally and in writing
2. work independently, managing time and meeting deadlines
3. participate constructively in groups and assess the relevance and importance of the ideas of others

| Typical Teaching Methods | Typical Assessment Methods |
|---|---|
| • provision of regular oral feedback in seminar discussions, oral and written feedback on the planning of essays and of the dissertation, and on the submitted coursework.<br>• setting seminar presentations and coursework deadlines on specific days, to encourage time management<br>• seminar classes and tutorials which rely on discussion and interaction. | • long essays, coursework, unseen examinations, and a dissertation. |

## General statement on contact hours – postgraduate programmes

Masters programmes (with the exception of two-year full-time MAs) consist of 180 credits, made up of taught modules of 30 or 15 credits, taught over 10 or 20 weeks, and a dissertation of 45 credits. The programme structure shows which modules are compulsory and which optional.

As a rough guide, 1 credit equals approximately 10 hours of work. Most of this will be independent study (see https://www.soas.ac.uk/admissions/ug/teaching/) such as reading and research, preparing coursework, revising for examinations and so on. Also included is class time, for example lectures, seminars, and other classes. Some subjects may have more class time than others – a typical example of this are language acquisition modules.

At SOAS, most postgraduate modules have a one-hour lecture and a one-hour seminar every week, but this does vary.

More information can be found on individual module pages.