

International Relations

SYLLABUS OVERVIEW 13-15 YEARS OLDS

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About Immerse

Immerse Education is an award-winning academic summer school provider offering programmes for 13-15 year olds in Cambridge University colleges.

The aim of these introductory programmes is to provide participants with academically challenging content in a classroom environment based on the university style of learning. Through 40 hours of academic sessions, the programmes also offer young students unique and valuable insights into what it would be like to study their chosen subject at an advanced level.



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This Syllabus Overview provides a summary of the topics and subject areas that participants can encounter during their studies with Immerse. It has been carefully created by our expert tutors who are current members of world-leading universities, and who have experience in teaching undergraduate students.

Academic Sessions

The academic sessions at Immerse are arranged into modules to enable participants to explore a broad range of topics over the course of two weeks. The modules included in this syllabus overview are indicative but not prescriptive.

Tutors are encouraged to include their own specialisms and also focus on any particular areas of interest expressed by participants within the class. They may choose to provide further detail on a specific topic, or they may include new material and information that builds on the knowledge already developed during the programme.

Personal Project

Each programme includes an element of individual work, generally termed the 'Personal Project'. This can take many forms but is commonly an essay or presentation delivered on the final day of the programme. Participants will receive feedback on this work which may also be mentioned in the participant evaluation which is provided in writing by the tutor once the programmes have ended.



Preparatory work

Some tutors may ask participants to complete some preparatory work, such as reading or a series of exercises in advance of the programme. Participants are strongly encouraged to complete this work since it will be included in the opening sessions of the programme. Any preparatory tasks will be provided in advance of the programme directly to the participant.

Academic Difficulty

As all of our programmes are designed to provide a unique introduction to advanced material, the syllabus will be academically challenging at times.

This is something to be excited about and all of our tutors will encourage and support participants throughout the programme. Immerse Education aims to develop every participant regardless of ability, and our tutors will adapt their teaching to individual needs.



Aim of the International Relations Programme

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International relations is an exciting, multidisciplinary subject that explores the local, regional and global interactions of the past, present, and future. This subject draws upon an understanding of geography, economics, politics, history, psychology and mathematics, to name but a few, and as such, it is a very highly-regarded subject of study. The aim of the Immerse Education International Relations programme is to introduce participants to the foundations of this subject and highlight the pathways that are available to those who would like to pursue international relations further in the future. Participants will get to grips with a variety of key IR theory and apply these to current and historic examples from around the world.

Introduction to International Relations

In this session we will consider what international relations means, what it relates to and how it can be categorised as an academic discipline and a practical field. Participants will be encouraged to explore the interdisciplinary nature of international relations and discuss the skills that they already possess which may be of benefit to its study. We will also consider the pathways to studying international relations and the topics typically encountered during an undergraduate degree in the UK. This will serve to highlight the range of opportunities open to a student of international relations and highlight any preconceptions that participants may hold about this broad field.

Key Theories in International Relations

In this session, participants will be introduced to realism and liberalism. We will consider a number of definitions through key historic case studies and discuss the main features of each theory. We will then collaborate to form the wording of our own definitions and participants will be invited to contribute their views of the relevance of each theory in the present day. We will discuss how these theories underpin broader themes which participants are likely to encounter in future international relations study and the problems that this may pose.





The Role of Ideas in International Relations

In this session participants will be introduced to constructivism through a series of case studies. We will compare and contrast the ideas behind constructivism with those of realism and liberalism, with participants contributing concrete examples in which the theories can be seen. We will explore the history of international relations theory by investigating the ideas of Hobbes and Locke and their influence on later political thinkers. This will culminate in participants researching and explaining Huntingtonian conflicts in international politics and peer-led debate concerning the theories we have so far encountered.

International Organisations

The significance of international relations can be visually traced through the changes recorded on maps over several centuries. Taking Europe as a pertinent example, we will discover how the borders of nation states have fluctuated over the past 400 years and consider the impact of international organisations and alliances upon these state lines. As old challenges give way to the modern challenges that society faces today, we will explore bodies such as the United Nations and consider what the aims of these organisations are and whether their current structures align with their objectives.

Regional Organisations

Participants will research the structure and role of several key regional organisations such as ASEAN and the African League. We will discuss the key constituents of power for each of these organisations and assess the extent to which they are able to affect change at a regional level. We will then discuss the structure and functions of the European Union in detail to understand its history and objectives. The class will also be encouraged to provide their own assessment of the effectiveness of the European Union, which will feed a conversation into the overall impact of regional organisations in international relations.

Foreign Policy Analysis

The ability to understand and interpret a country's foreign policy is a significant step in understanding the international relations between that country and the rest of the world. We will consider the process of creating a foreign policy and the factors that may influence this process. We will also consider the pitfalls of trying to assess contemporary foreign policy when both short- and long-term consequences may seem obscure. We will also explore whether historical precedent can help or hinder in our attempts to understand a current foreign policy. US policy will serve as a key case study in this session.





TOPICS LIST

Rising Powers in International Relations

This class considers the definition of a 'rising power' and participants are encouraged to identify and countries that could be considered under this definition. We will discuss what power is and how it can present itself while also exploring why the rise in power of a nation state has sometimes caused conflict historically. In particular we will consider the extent to which China can be considered a rising power and assess the impact of this on the international order. For example, we will consider how China's increasing influence may be reflected in US foreign policy.

A Post-9/11 World

This session will consider the events of 9/11 and the historical context that can be considered to have led up to this event. We will consider the impact of the attack, not only on the US, but also on other states around the world. We will discuss the differing impacts felt by diverse communities, for example, Muslim communities in the US. We will also explore whether international relations since the events of 9/11 have shifted more towards security than freedom, and the impact of terrorism more generally on global ideologies.

Human Security

In this session we will consider human security and seek to form our own definition of this term. We will also try to understand why many in international relations consider the term controversial. We will explore security in the content of nation, food, economy, environment and politics and the extent to which these relate to human rights. We will then consider how different IR theories approach human rights and human security and discuss which holds greater significance and relevance today: human security, or national security.

21st Century Warfare

Today, 90 percent of war casualties are civilians. A hundred years ago, 90 percent of war casualties were soldiers. In order to understand how and why the nature of warfare has changed in the past century, we will consider a number of factors which have been linked to conflict. First, we will consider the extent to which the process of democratisation can instigate conflict. We will also look at the legacy of colonialism in creating political insecurity and fragile states. Within this context we will consider the 'just war' theory and whether it is relevant in the 21st century.



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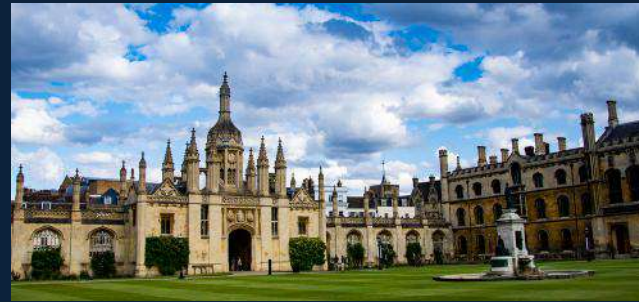


Personal Project

Throughout the fortnight, participants will be working on their own personal project. Having been provided with a brief, participants should research and prepare a presentation for their peers. This will build upon an aspect of the theory that they have learnt over the course of the programme and is also an opportunity to showcase their ability to apply this to practical examples. The presentation is followed by questions from the audience and wider class discussion of particular points of interest. The tutor may also include feedback about the presentation in the written evaluation which is sent to participants after the programme has ended.

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OUR AWARDS AND ACCREDITATIONS

