



HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

🕒 Master of Science International Relations MS (IR)

Master of Science International Relations MS (IR)

Department of Humanities & Social Sciences

Campuses

Islamabad

Regular Program Duration

2 Years

4 Semesters

Available Specialization

International Relatio

Program Timing

Evening

Entry Requirements

50% or 2.5/4.0 CGPA from the related fields.

Additionall , applicants must provide HEC verification of all academic certificates / degrees.

Objectives of the Degree Program

The main aim of this program is to provide students with a specialized degree in International relations which will help them to acquaint with the specific domains of the degree.

Learning outcome of the Degree Program

Specialization in the field, research based knowledge and analytical and critical diffusion

Why choose BU for the Stated Degree Program?

BU offers MS (IR) program with the objective of inculcating research based knowledge in the students. The degree is analytical in nature which will help the students to critically examine the national, regional and international issues.

Furthermore, the department has a stream of highly qualified faculty who have been teaching for a long time equipped with expertise and knowledge.

Research Groups Relevant to this Degree Program, within BU and their area of interest

Political and social Reforms

Focused on: socio-cultural transformation in the context of Pakistan.

Future Career Prospects

Master students graduating in IR will have career options in research and development, government level jobs, teaching, consultancy and management as well.



Structure of MS-IR (Road Map)

Semester 1

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Hours	Pre-Requisite
IRS 501	International Relations: Advanced Theory and Practice	3	
IRS 502	Advanced Research Methodology	3	
IRS 503	Seminar on Contemporary Regional and Global Issues	3	
IRS 524	Foreign Policy Analyses	3	

Semester 2

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Hours	Pre-Requisite
IRS 511	Ethnic Conflict in Global Perspective	3	
IRS 513	Gulf War and its Consequences	3	
IRS 516	Role of Non-State Actors in IR	3	
IRS 518	Politics of South Asia	3	

Semester 3 & 4

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Hours	Pre-Requisite
THS 701	Thesis	3	
THS 701	Thesis	3	

Course Description (MS-IR)

Compulsory Courses

IRS 501 International Relations: Advanced Theory and Practice

This course aims to teach the theoretical approaches within the IR discipline. The emphasis is on Realism, Neo-Realism, Liberalism, Neo-Liberalism, Structuralism/Marxism and the critical theories that help in understanding the international politics, economy and overall affairs.

IRS 502 Advanced Research Methodology

This course aims at teaching philosophical foundations of social science inquiry; qualitative and quantitative data, introduction to epistemological and ontological theories, stages in research, research methods and designs, hypothesis and an introduction to writing research proposal, literature review, and paper with citations

IRS 503 Seminar on Contemporary Regional and Global Issues

This course focuses on teaching variety of issues related to socio-economic, political, security, environmental, human rights, ideological, bilateral and multilateral relations, trading, globalization, non-state actors, interdependency, IO's etc. This course takes a holistic approach towards international affairs that transcend both at regional and global level and may have an impact accordingly.

Elective Courses

IRS 511 Ethnic Conflict in Global Perspective

Despite human advancement and globalization the occurrence of ethnic conflicts is on the rise. This course exposes the students to the origins, dynamics, and management of ethnic conflicts. The purpose of the course is to understand the genesis of ethnic conflicts by studying selected conflicts in different parts of the world and highlighting their differences and similarities. The course also aims at establishing the relationship between ethnic conflict

and other security challenges such as terrorism and organized crime.

IRS 512 Power Politics and Beyond

This course aims at teaching the most important aspect of International Relations which is power politics firstly within the realpolitik structure and secondly as an object of analysis within the global political system. The aim of this course is to acquaint the students with the reasons, causes, impacts and outcomes of power politics game which is not only hierarchical in nature but also very variant.

IRS 513 Gulf War and its Consequences

This course focuses on the regional politics at the time of Gulf War, its occurrence, reason and the consequences that the region, world and the actors involved experienced. The course takes an analytical view of what led to the Gulf War, whether or not WMD's were used and is it a mean of combat in a globalized and liberal world.

IRS 514 Forecasting in International Relation

The subjective study of International Relations is subjected to speculations and predictions. The different paradigms have been marked by events that have been important phases in the history. Based on those experiences, the states, policy makers, scholars, writers etc. predicted the current political and economic situation. The course focuses on teaching the aspects of International Relations which have been derived from events, occurrences and experiences of the recent past and speculate and forecast the changing nature of future political-economic conditions globally.

IRS 515 Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) – (Role of IMF, World Bank, and WTO)

The three institutions of Bretton Woods system play an important role in monitoring the international economic, financial and trading system. The aim of this course is to teach

the intricacies and technicalities of these three institutions along with their roles and impact on the global political economy. Furthermore, the most important feature of this course is to acquaint the students with the aspect of SAPs; the conditionality that these institutions force the borrowers to adopt in order to receive the loan/grant.

IRS 516 Role of Non-State Actors in International Relation

International relations is now not guided by the role and power of state anymore. The non-state actors have gained an important position in world affairs. These non-state actors may include MNC's, TNC's, IO's, NGO's, INGO's and terrorists as well. The aim of this course is to teach the students the changing dynamics of international relations which is equally shared by the non-state actors as well.

IRS 517 Evolution and Development of International Political Philosophy

The course aims at teaching the relationship between the society and an individual while dealing with variety of forms of government and social existence. It focuses on the set of values that individuals may follow to establish a good society which may include the voting rights, balance of power, justice system etc. The course also deals with both the philosophy and the methodology of the political thought while delving into the mainstream and critical theories within IR.

IRS 518 Politics of South Asia

This course aims at teaching regional and international relations of the South-Asian countries with an emphasis on the internal and external influences in the region. The role of major powers in the South Asian region is also an area of great interest. Furthermore, the course looks at the Indian hegemonic aspirations and its relations with the rest of the countries of region with Pakistan acting as a balancer.

IRS 520 Politics of Middle East

The aim of this course is to introduce the students to the domestic politics of Middle East. The course looks at the regional issues that exist while also looking at the individual governments of the major Middle Eastern countries. The Israel-Palestine issue is of immense importance along with Saudi Arabian and Iranian political development in and outside the region.

IRS 521 International Law and Use of Force

Since the establishment of UNO in 1945, its member states have pledged to refrain from any sort of aggression and attack on the territorial and political sovereignty of other states. By virtue of this the use of force, by the states against other states, stands prohibited. Witnessing the numerous episodes of international armed conflicts, over the past decades, it remains a matter of utmost significance as to what extent the Charter of the United Nations is playing its role to pursue its mandate. This course, thus, engages the students in the discourse about jus in bello and jus ad bellum. Covering a range of relevant international customary and treaty laws and practices, this course aims to give the students optimal exposure about international legal regime regulating the use of force.

IRS 522 Contemporary Trends in International Law

The course focuses on current issues, debates and developments in international law. The course will focus on the international law, treaties, engagements and agreements. It also looks at the international organizations and laws. Issues such as human rights, penalties, use of force etc and case studies relevant to international law.

IRS 523 Comparative Analyses of Foreign Policy of Major Powers

This course aims at teaching comparatively the foreign policies of any two of the great powers of the world. It furthermore analyses their respective role and involvement in

the world and its impact on the international political and economic system. It also focuses on their level of interaction with the smaller countries.

IRS 524 Foreign Policy Analyses

This course aims at the study of processes, factors and levels of analysis while formulating foreign policy of any country. It also looks at the situations and conditions which impact foreign policy formulation of different countries along with economic, political and security needs of the country.

IRS 525 Role of International Financial Institution in International Relation

This course aims at teaching the role of IFI's such as World Bank and IMF along with the regional banks or MDB's in international political economy. It also teaches the discrepancies at the international level exerted by these institution in favor of the First World but in disfavor of the Third World. Furthermore, it scrutinizes the success and failure of development strategies implemented by these IFI's.

IRS 526 Analysis of Pakistan's Foreign Policy

This course aims at teaching the evolution of Pakistan's foreign policy in different political and historical eras. It also discusses the determinants and instruments of foreign policy making while focusing on the security needs of Pakistan that shapes its foreign policy and eventually affects her relations in the regional and international arena.

IRS 527 Politics and Security of Asia-Pacific Region

This course focuses on teaching the dynamics of Asia-Pacific region which holds a strategic position in international affairs both economically and political. The advancement of NIC's, ASEAN, APEC and SCO economically, the US involvement in the region, NATO's role in South China Sea and importance of Strait of Malacca form the major contributing factors of this course.

IRS 528 National Security Issues in Contemporary Pakistan

This course focuses on teaching both, the hard and soft, power issues in contemporary Pakistan. Pakistan is surrounded by myriad of problems which may have a direct or indirect effect on its security. National security issues involve Indian hegemonic designs, proliferation of terrorism, insurgencies, ethnic and sectarian violence, secessionist movements in Balochistan and Punjab, nuclear program, cyber warfare, political upheavals leading to economic crisis and social disintegration

IRS 529 Contemporary Environmental Issues

This course aims at teaching the various contemporary environmental issues such as environmental degradation, climatic change, water politics, Kyoto Protocol etc. it also focuses on the political economy of environment itself. The policies of different countries on global commons, politics of managing global environment, the effect on the non-industrialized countries, environmental regimes and security are also important aspects of this course.

IRS 530 Major Issues of Muslim World

This course aims at teaching the variant political, socio-economic, religious and security issues of the Muslim World. It also focuses on the role of the Muslim countries in world politics; unity and disunity among the Muslim world and the international external influence on the entire Muslim region. It also attempts to look at the issues such as Arab Spring, role of Israel in the region, influence of OIC and Arab League etc.

IRS 531 Conflict and Cooperation in South Asia

This course helps the students to study and analyze the dynamics of peace and conflict in South Asia. Despite the presence of a number of common features, the countries of South Asia have not been able to evolve cooperative relations and their relations are characterized by numerous conflicts. A student of Internal Relations in Pakistan needs to

Structure of MS-IR (Road Map)

understand the underlying factors that affect relationships between South Asian neighbors and explore the ways and means to address these issues.

IRS 532 Peace Building in Post-conflict Societies

The persistence of violence creates a vacuum in the rule of law and a criminalized political economy, both of which can only be rectified with time, resources, and perseverance. This course is designed to help the students understand the impact of a conflict on a society and the processes required in building peace and rehabilitation. The students must be aware of various conflict resolution models and preconditions of positive peace.

IRS 533 International Organization

This course aims at teaching the rise, evolution and need of international organizations in the world. It also focuses on the theoretical discourses which explain the role of international organizations. As permanent entities international organizations have achieved much prominence which calls for studying the functions, roles, competency, structure and impact of international organizations at domestic, regional and international level.

IRS 534 Power Sharing in Multi ethnic States

International Relations is not only marked by state to state relations and their interactions. In the traditional societies of Africa, Afghanistan, some of the Arab countries, and some parts of the former colonial Sub-continent, the power is further divided among the tribes and groups that hold power through inheritance. This course focuses on power sharing between those multi-ethnic tribes and groups which hold conventional power over their domains which is not a very familiar phenomenon in the Western societies

IRS 535 Arms Control and International Security

This course aims at teaching security policies in terms of arms control and international security. It also focuses on the steps that have been taken to control the nuclear and conventional

weapons to achieve peace and security around the globe. This course addresses the political, strategic and humanitarian factors associated with arms control and disarmament. It also takes into account the associated political concepts such as, deterrence, full spectrum, CBM's and overall security.

IRS 536 Politics of Human Rights

This course aims at teaching the basic concept of human rights; the historical and ideological aspect of it, the debate on the uniformity and universality of human rights and international politics. This course also focuses on politicization of human rights for vested interests and the organizations that are working for the protection of human rights around the world.

IRS 537 Contemporary Political Theories

This course aims at teaching the major political theories and ideologies such as liberalism, realism, conservatism, socialism, anarchism, nationalism, fascism, feminism etc. In rethinking these ideologies, particular attention will be paid to the different aspects of each particular ideology. It also focuses on the aspects of good society, social justice, equality, liberty, equal rights and state and democracy.

IRS 538 Central Asia in International Politics

This course covers a predominantly Muslim region, which has recently come to prominence in world politics since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Its focus is on the national politics and regional and international relations of Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, with references to other players' role in the region. The course concentrates on selected themes concerning political and social change, economic modernisation and regional security against the backdrop of sectarian, ethnolinguistic and ideological diversity, as well as outside interference and geopolitical rivalry.

THS-701 Thesis

Each student is required to work on the thesis under the guidance of his/her supervisor and to defend it before the thesis committee. Students need to meet in periodic meetings with their supervisors and intimate them about the different phases of their research and seek their respective supervisor's guidance for future course of action

IRS 729 Contemporary Muslim World

This course aims at teaching the variant political, socio-economic, religious and security issues of the Muslim World. It also focuses on the role of the Muslim countries in world politics; unity and disunity among the Muslim world and the international/external influence on the entire Muslim region. It also attempts to look at the issues such as Arab Spring, role of Israel in the region, influence of OIC and Arab League etc.

IRS 730 Comparative Study of Foreign Policies of Major Powers

This course aims at teaching comparatively the foreign policies of any two of the great powers of the world. It furthermore analyses their respective role and involvement in the world and its impact on the international political and economic system. It also focuses on their level of interaction with the smaller countries.

IRS 731 Politics and Foreign Policy of USA

This course offers a general introduction to the history, traditions, and theories of US foreign policy. The course is divided in three parts. First, we draw on the foundational ideas in American political thought to introduce major foreign policy traditions throughout US history. Second, we examine key theoretical debates in international relations to ask if and how they affect American foreign policy making. Third, we focus on the domestic and geopolitical implications that set limitations to, and opportunities for, the US abroad. The course also lays emphasis on the main international issues faced by the United States since the end of the Cold War, such as terrorism, nuclear proliferation, international cooperation, and global governance.

IRS 732 Politics and Foreign Policy of China

The course describes the major elements of Chinese foreign policy today, in the context of their development since 1949. We seek to understand the security-based rationale of policy as well as other factors - organizational, cultural, perceptual, and so on - that influence Chinese foreign policy. China's relations with various countries and regions, Chinese policy toward key functional issues in international affairs, how the rise of China is affecting global power relations, and how other actors are responding. The course pays attention to the application of international relations theories to the problems we study, and also takes an interest in policy issues facing decision-makers in China as well as those facing decision-makers in other countries who deal with China.

IRS 733 Politics and Foreign Policy of Russia

This course introduces students to the key developments in Russia's foreign and defence policy. It closely examines the drivers, policy tools and constraints Russia faces when seeking to achieve its foreign policy objectives. Students also learn to apply major theories of international relations to the analysis of specific countries' foreign policy decisions and to the development of policy recommendations for emerging security challenges

IRS 734 International Law and Organization

This course aims at teaching the rise, evolution and need of international organizations in the world. It also focuses on the theoretical discourses which explain the role of international organizations. As permanent entities, international organizations have achieved much prominence which calls for studying the functions, roles, competency, structure and impact of international organizations at domestic, regional and international level. The course focuses on current issues, debates and developments in international law. The course will focus on the international law, treaties, engagements and agreements. It also looks at the international organizations and laws. Issues such as human rights, penalties, use of force etc and case studies relevant to international law.

IRS 735 Regionalism: Theory and Practice

Regionalism has become a defining feature of international relations, but why do states around the world feel the 'urge to merge'? How have states and non-state actors led the process of creating regional institutions and what has inhibited the development of regionalism around the world? Why do some actors adopt a more formal, legalistic approach to regional institutional building, whilst others prefer more elastic and informal arrangements? Should we and if so how can we distinguish between old and new regionalism in a globalized political economy? How are regional groupings socially constructed to include certain actors at the expense of others? How are external factors involved in regional issues and how does regional cooperation contribute to global governance? How can such complex developments be theorized so that they may be compared? This course explores these questions in order to compare and contrast the dynamic processes of regionalism around the world today.

IRS 736 International Political Economy

The aim of this course is to acquaint the students with the concept of "International Political Economy" which is rather new but has gained momentum potentially. Economic trends have changed from traditionalism to internationalism where major economic activities are carried out at an international level while the state only acts as a medium. It also focusses on aspects of sustainability where it is important to register that economics is as sustainable as the men would let it be. This course will explain economic processes in the light of theories, trends and transformations and will then shed light on the economic outcomes within the theoretical perspectives.

IRS 737 Advanced Strategic Studies

The course aims at explaining the key areas that are strategic in pursuit of state's interests. It focusses on how states make strategic moves nationally, regionally and globally. It also aims at focusing on the relationship between politics and many forms of power and how to counter utilize them in times of need.

IRS 738 Nuclear Studies

The course gives thorough theoretical and experimental knowledge on atomic nucleus, production of radioactive nuclei and decay and gives a good base for further studies in nuclear and radiation physics and within the field of nuclear energy. The course contents in more detail includes: Nuclear models, experimental methods for determination of the nuclear radius, nuclear charge and matter distribution. The range of nuclear force, nuclear binding energy and neutron and proton separation energies. The theories related to nuclearization are also imperative.

IRS 739 Contemporary Conflict Resolution

Conflict and violence produce disruptive impacts over the security, economic, and social wellbeing of our increasingly interconnected societies. In a time when conflicts are becoming more complex, a better understanding of their dynamics and of the means to address and solve them are a paramount necessity for future leaders and policy makers. This course offers the opportunity to develop analytical skills to understand today's armed conflict and to learn key tools of conflict resolution. Not only it aims to equip students with a better understanding of how to address and solve contemporary armed conflicts and disputes, but also to develop assessment techniques.

IRS 740 Media and International Relations

Media plays one of the most important role in creating a narrative that is needed to understand any phenomenon. As the world is now interconnected there are various platforms that provides information regarding any issue that may take place globally. The course aims at merging media and international relations on a theoretical level to understand how media can play a more constructive role in producing and disseminating information.

IRS 741 Contemporary Critical Debates in International Relations

This course will delve into emergent trends and debates in and of relevance to International Relations. A range of new theoretical interventions will be examined in depth, as will questions of epistemology, methodology, ethics, representation, disciplinarily, and more. A strong working knowledge of the main issues, debates, and theoretical traditions of IR will be studied in detail.

IRS 742 Issues in Pakistan's Foreign Policy: Seminar Course

This course aims at teaching the evolution of Pakistan's foreign policy in different political and historical eras. It also discusses the determinants and instruments of foreign policy making while focusing on the security needs of Pakistan that shapes its foreign policy and eventually affects her relations in the regional and international arena.

IRS 743 International Environmental Politics

This course aims at teaching the various contemporary environmental issues such as environmental degradation, climatic change, water politics, Kyoto Protocol etc. it also focuses on the political economy of environment itself. The policies of different countries on global commons, politics of managing global environment, the effect on the non-industrialized countries, environmental regimes and security are also important aspects of this course.

IRS 744 Globalization, Modern State and Society

The concept of globalization has emerged and evolved as the most important phenomenon which not only directs the societal norms but also the politics and economics at international level transcending at regional and national levels. The aim of this course is to acquaint the students with the basic concept, theories and the process of globalization. Furthermore, it is important to understand the impact of globalization at all the three levels of analysis: the systemic, state and the individual. Globalization further has had a very deep impact on the state, society and economy at national and international level whereby the active movement of capital and populace are part and parcel of global world. The course aims to enrich the students with these processes and make them aware of the changing dynamics.

IRS 745 Dynamics of Security in International Relations

This course aims at teaching security policies in terms of arms control and international security. It also focuses on the steps that have been taken to control the nuclear and conventional weapons to achieve peace and security around the globe. This course addresses the political, strategic and humanitarian factors associated with arms control and disarmament. It also takes into account the associated political concepts such as, deterrence, full spectrum, CBM's and overall security.

IRS 746 Dynamics of Modern Diplomacy

This course introduces students to the main issues in contemporary international relations. The aim is to provide students with basic knowledge about the two dominant patterns of behavior in international relations: conflict and cooperation. The course also provides an introductory overview of the major approaches and theories of international politics, such as realism, liberalism and social constructivism. Specific historical and contemporary issues are studied from these perspectives.

IRS 747 Climate Change, Sustainable Development and International Security

The course looks at the twin challenges of transition to a low-carbon economy and adaptation to climate change, and how they influence global and regional development. This course explores the multiple and interconnected dimensions of science and technology, and the economics, politics and policy of climate change. There is an emphasis on understanding the implications of climate change and climate policies for equity between, and within, countries. The course aims at providing knowledge of the earth system and climate impacts, for example related to water, food and ecosystem services.

IRS 748 Refugees and Forced Migrants in International Relations

The course offers students an understanding of the complex and varied nature of forced migration and refugee populations, of their centrality to global, regional and national processes of political, social and economic change, and of the needs and aspirations of forcibly displaced people themselves. It also helps students develop a broad understanding of academic research related to forced migration and refugees, as well as critical thinking and sound evaluative tools.

IRS 749 Politics of the Indian Ocean

The objective of the course is to analyze India's strategic engagement in the Indian Ocean region considering the growing influence of India in the international arena. The course provides historical introduction to the dominant role played by India in the long distance trade in the early modern period, with particular attention to the commerce between India, the Gulf areas and the coastal regions of East Africa. The course also concentrates on India's efforts to control the Indian Ocean, on the importance of securing sea lanes and of acquiring facilities along the critical choke points, via its naval and maritime strategy.

IRS 750 Advanced Course on Foreign Policy Analysis

This course aims at the study of processes, factors and levels of analysis while formulating foreign policy of any country. It also looks at the situations and conditions which impact foreign policy formulation of different countries along with economic, political and security needs of the country.

THS 900 PhD Thesis

Each student has to undertake thesis under the guidance of the designated supervisor to complete the degree requirement.

