

DEPARTMENT OF  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS  
HANDBOOK

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS



**ASHOKA**  
UNIVERSITY

MONSOON SEMESTER 2022

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The Department offers academic programmes in International Relations that are designed to equip students with knowledge of the theory, history and substantive domains of international politics. The department has a range of course offerings: from introductory courses in IR theory and international history and security, advanced courses in conflict analysis, globalization and Asian geopolitics, to courses in gender and populism in international politics.

### Faculty Members:

- Nayan Chanda
- Bann Seng Tan
- Quintijn Kat
- Pallavi Raghavan
- Srinath Raghavan
- Ananya Sharma
- Amit Julka
- Dipin Kaur
- Rudra Chaudhri (Visiting)
- Amb. Shivshankar Menon (Visiting)

### I. Academic Programmes in International Relations:

The Department of International Relations allows students to explore the discipline in the following three ways:

#### A. Interdisciplinary Major in History and International Relations:

- To pursue this interdisciplinary major, students must complete 16 major courses = 10 courses in History + 6 courses in IR.
- The 6 courses in IR include:
  - A. One mandatory 1000-level course (such as Conflict and Cooperation in International Politics, Introduction to International Relations Theory, Introduction to International History, and Global Cold War)
  - B. 5 electives in IR (including cross-listed courses)
- For more on the History requirements, please contact the History Department.

#### B. Minor in International Relations:

- To pursue a minor in IR, students need to complete 6 courses in IR.
- The 6 courses in IR include:
  - A. One mandatory 1000-level course (such as Conflict and Cooperation in International Politics, Introduction to International Relations Theory, Introduction to International History, Decolonisation: An International History and Global Cold War)
  - B. 5 electives in IR (including cross-listed courses)

### C. Concentration in International Relations:

- To pursue a concentration in IR, students need to complete 4 courses in IR.
- The 4 courses in IR include:
  1. One mandatory 1000-level (such as Conflict and Cooperation in International Politics, Introduction to International Relations Theory, Introduction to International History, Decolonisation: An International History and The Global Cold War)
  2. 3 electives in IR (including cross-listed courses).

### II. Mandatory Courses and Prerequisites:

The following are the prerequisites for the History & IR interdisciplinary major, IR Minor, and IR Concentration:

- The Department offers 1000-level courses in IR to help students establish a foundational grip over the discipline. Thus, it is a prerequisite for students to complete at least one 1000-level IR course.
- You cannot take higher-level courses unless you have fulfilled the 1000-level requirement **in a prior semester**.
- You also cannot do your 1000-level requirement and higher-level courses simultaneously. So, the department recommends that you take a 1000 level IR elective in the second semester itself or at the earliest.
- The mandatory 1000 level course rule applies to any cross-listed courses, summer courses, etc. That is, if you want to opt for any 2000/3000 level cross-listed/summer course and count it towards IR, you must have done a 1000 level IR course **in a prior semester**.
- In the earlier semesters, only ‘Conflict and Cooperation in International Politics’ and ‘Introduction to International History’ were offered as 1000-level courses. Now, the department also offers ‘Theories and Issues of International Relations’ and ‘Decolonization: An International History’ as 1000-level courses. Please note that if you have done **any one** of these four courses, it counts as you have fulfilled your 1000-level requirement.
- Although there may be two 1000-level courses on offer in some semesters, you do not have to take both to fulfil your requirement. Any one of them meets the requirement. However, there is also no restriction on taking both 1000-level courses if you want. In that case, one will count as your mandatory course, and the other as an elective.
- After the first 1000 level course, you are free to take any electives in any level-wise sequence (though particular electives may have additional prerequisites). There is no minimum number of level-wise courses that you must take, other than the mandatory 1000 level course.

### III. Structure for ASPs (4th year):

After the completion of their three years of under graduation in Ashoka, many students opt for the Ashoka Scholars' Programme- i.e. a fourth year. During the fourth year, the ASP students can engage with the field of IR in the following ways:

1. History and IR Advanced Major:

- All students who graduate with an interdisciplinary major in History and IR are eligible to apply for the Advanced Major in History and IR.
- The following are the required credit components for the Advanced Major:
  - A. Capstone Thesis in either History or IR (2 semesters, 4 credits each)
  - B. Sources and Histories (2 semesters, 4 credits each)
  - C. Any one History or IR elective (4 credits)
- One can pursue a thesis either with the History Department or with the IR Department.
- The History-IR Advanced majors should reach out to the History department for more information.

2. Thesis in IR (after the completion of an IR minor): Students who have completed their IR minor (i.e. six IR courses) by the end of their third year are also eligible to write a thesis with the IR department in their fourth year. However, their thesis will not lead to an advanced degree in IR, since IR is not a major.

#### IV. Capstone Thesis in International Relations:

The following are the guidelines for a Capstone Thesis with the IR Department, applicable both to the History & IR Advanced Major-thesis and IR fourth-year thesis:

1. The IR Department calls for thesis proposals in April (sixth semester). Students should use their proposal statements to highlight key details about their thesis project: the research area and questions, methods and sources. The department will take on students for pursuing a thesis based on the quality and feasibility of their proposals. Students are advised to discuss their topics for theses with faculty members, who might be best suited to supervise their theses. If the latter agrees to supervise the thesis, the same should be mentioned in the proposal statement. The allocation of supervisors will finally be decided by the department during the process of selection.
2. The IR Department has structured the Capstone Thesis requirements to equip the students with the necessary skills required to write a thesis. The coursework for the thesis is divided into a two-semester plan, as under:
  - A. Monsoon Semester: There will be 4 mandatory research workshops, followed by a proposal presentation in the Monsoon semester. The proposal presentation will be the first graded component of the overall thesis.
  - B. Spring Semester: There will be two graded seminars in the Spring semester. The first one will be a preliminary presentation and the second one will be a final presentation of your work.

- C. Additional seminars/workshops may be scheduled depending upon the progress and requirements.
3. The Department can provide financial support for sourcing materials, field trips, interviews, etc if required. Students will have to make a clear case for this with the endorsement of their supervisors.
  4. The Department also welcomes students who want to write a joint thesis with other departments. However, one should be clear about the primary department they want to apply to. One will get IR credits only when IR is the primary department they enrol in. In any case, the students will have to apply formally by responding to the call for proposals and should discuss their plans with the prospective supervisor from the IR department.
  5. The IR Department does not permit third-year students to write a thesis in IR. Only the ASP students are permitted to do so.

## V. Departmental Policies:

### A. Policy on cross-listed courses:

1. When a course is cross-listed, the first department that is mentioned alongside the course code is that of the department it arises from. In that case, it does not count as a cross-listed course for that particular department. The cross-listing applies to the other departments mentioned in the course code.
2. For an IR Minor, students are permitted to do no more than **2** cross-listed courses.
3. For an IR Concentration, students are permitted to do no more than **1** cross-listed course.
4. Even when taking up higher-level cross-listed courses, students must fulfil the mandatory 1000-level pre-requisite course in IR. That is, if you want to opt for any 2000/3000 level cross-listed course and count it towards IR, you must have done a 1000 level IR course **in a prior semester**.
5. For more information on cross-listed courses, please contact the OAA.

### B. Policy on Independent Study Modules (ISMs):

1. Initiative for ISMs must come from students, who should contact the concerned faculty and work it out.
2. The department must be informed about the ISMs, if any, before the end of the semester, so that OAA can be informed. For example: for Spring 2021, the department must be informed by the end of the Monsoon 2020 semester.
3. Each student is permitted not more than one ISM per semester.

### C. Policy on Teaching Assistants (TAs):

1. Students in their third year and the Ashoka Scholars' Programme (ASP)

- are eligible to become TAs for the IR department.
2. The department calls for applications for TAs before every semester.
  3. The credits of the TAship will be announced at the beginning of the semester.
  4. Please note that the credits earned through TAship will not replace course credits. You will have to complete six courses (in case of Minor) and four courses (in case of Concentration). Nevertheless, you can count your Teaching Practicum (from your TAship) towards your overall credit requirements for your degree programme.

## VI. Upcoming Course Catalogue

### MONSOON 2022 COURSE CATALOGUE

S.No	Name of the Course	Course Level	Faculty
1.	Theories and Issues of International Relations	1000	Quintijn Benjamin Kat
2.	Decolonization: An International History	1000	Pallavi Raghavan
3.	What Makes the World Hang Together?: Culture, Norms and Identity in International Politics	2000	Ananya Sharma
4.	Ethics and International Relations: Unpacking the Normative Dilemmas of our Times	2000	Ananya Sharma
5.	Globalization Facing the Challenge of Nationalism and Pandemic	2000	Nayan Chanda
6.	The Rise of China and the Shifting Balance of Power in Asia	2000	Nayan Chanda
7.	International Relations of South Asia	2000	Amit Julka
8.	A History of India Pakistan Relations	2000	Pallavi Raghavan
9.	India in Asian Geopolitics	3000	Shivshankar Menon
10.	Regime type and War	3000	Bann Seng Tan
11.	Hegemony, the United States, and the World	3000	Quintijn Benjamin Kat
12.	Social Theory and International Politics	3000	Amit Julka
13.	Security, Conflict, and Political Violence in the Contemporary World	3000	Dipin Kaur
14.	Towards Understanding Chinese Politics	3000	Shivshankar Menon

## VII. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

Q1: How many courses do I need to complete a minor/concentration in IR? A: You need six courses to finish a minor in IR. You need four courses to finish a concentration in IR.

Q2: How many IR courses do I need to finish my History and IR interdisciplinary major? A: You need to take 6 IR courses to satisfy the IR component of your History and IR interdisciplinary major. Please contact the History Department to learn about the History requirements.

Q3: Can I finish my IR minor within 3 years? A: Yes, it is possible to finish the minor within three years. However, it is important to plan your courses accordingly. Please keep in mind the 1000 level requirement before taking any other course in IR. The Department advises you to take the first 1000 levels in your second semester itself.

Q4: What are the prerequisites/ mandatory courses for my IR minor/concentration/IR component of the History and IR interdisciplinary major? A: As mentioned earlier, the only mandatory course is any one 1000-level IR course. You need to fulfil this mandatory requirement (in a prior semester) before you take other higher-level IR courses. Though particular higher-level electives may have further prerequisites. For more, refer to the 'Mandatory Courses and Prerequisites' section above.

Q5: Can any 1000-level course satisfy my 1000-level requirement?

A: Yes.

Q6: Can I take higher-level IR courses while simultaneously fulfilling my 1000-level mandatory requirement?

A: No. You must complete your 1000-level requirement in a prior semester before you take higher-level courses.

Q7: When is it recommended to take the mandatory 1000-level?

A: If you are interested in taking IR courses, it is recommended that you take your mandatory 1000-level course early in your undergraduate, either in your 2nd or 3rd semester at Ashoka. This will ensure that you have access to sufficient higher-level IR courses to complete an IR minor/ IR concentration/History and IR interdisciplinary major. This is also advisable for the ASP students who wish to take up an IR minor/ concentration in their fourth year.

Q8: Can I take a second 1000-level IR course and count it as an elective? A: Yes, if you have satisfied your mandatory 1000-level requirement, another 1000-level course may be counted as an elective.

Q9: Do I need to take 2000-level courses before taking 300-level courses? A: No, as long as



you have completed your mandatory 1000-level requirement, you are permitted to take courses of any level - so long as any particular course does not have further pre-requisites. However, while choosing your courses, do keep in mind that the levels indicate how advanced a course would be. So although you can take high-level courses, they may be difficult for you.

Q10: How do I decide which courses to take?

A: First, you must ensure that you are fulfilling your 1000-level mandatory requirement early enough. Second, you may consult the course descriptions provided on the LMS. Third, you may reach out to your peers or seniors who have already taken courses you may be interested in. A combination of these approaches will help you make an informed decision.

Q11: How many 1000/2000/3000 level courses do I need to take?

A: There is no such requirement to take a specific number of courses of each level. Only the first 1000 level course is mandatory.

Q12: I took a course in Monsoon 2018 which was cross-listed with International Relations. It is being offered again but is not showing as cross-listed. Is this a problem? A: No, it is normal for courses to not be cross-listed with other departments in every semester that they're offered. If you took a course that was cross-listed in the semester that you took it in, it will count towards your degree. Please cross-check the course code of such courses in the LMS.

Q13: I'm interested in becoming a Teaching Assistant (TA) for an IR course. How should I proceed?

A: Third-years and ASP students are eligible to become TAs. The department calls for applications at the beginning of each semester- interested students can apply through that.

Q14: Can I write a thesis in the third year?

A: No, only ASPs can write a thesis with the IR department. But you can do an ISM (Independent Study Module) with the department in the third year.

Q15: Who should I contact for further queries?

A: You can contact the IR Student Representative, Niharika Mehrotra, at [niharika.mehrotra\\_asp22@ashoka.edu.in](mailto:niharika.mehrotra_asp22@ashoka.edu.in), and CC the Department Manager, Pratima Kadian, at [pratima.kadian@ashoka.edu.in](mailto:pratima.kadian@ashoka.edu.in)