

PO399-15 Violence, Rights, Justice and Peace in the Middle East

26/27

Department

Politics & International Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Nicola Pratt

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module explores the reasons for violence and human rights violations and the possibilities for peace and justice in the Middle East. The module focuses on the 'conflict' between Israel and the Palestinians as an example of a seemingly intractable conflict in the Middle East. Despite the Israel-Hamas ceasefire agreed in October 2025, Israel continues to bomb and lay siege to the Gaza Strip in response to the Hamas attacks on southern Israel on 7 October 2023. This module does not focus on the current violence but rather on the background to this violence. It is not possible to fully understand the violence witnessed on and since 7 October 2023 without studying what came before then.

Students will be introduced to mainstream International Relations theories (realism, liberalism and constructivism) in addition to more critical approaches, such as postcolonialism/decolonialism, feminism and poststructuralism, in order to assess key debates in the study of the 'conflict', such as:

What are some of the challenges of studying this 'conflict'?

Is 'conflict' the most appropriate term to use in this case?

Why does Israel use military violence and other security measures against Palestinians?

Why do Palestinians use armed violence against Israel?

What is the role of international law in resolving the 'conflict'?

Why has peace been so illusive?

Is the two-state solution the best solution?

What is the role of international actors in helping or hindering peace and justice for Israelis and Palestinians?

The module will encourage students to critically reflect upon the limitations of mainstream International Relations theories in terms of reproducing dominant relations in the international system and the possibilities that decolonial and other critical approaches may challenge these hierarchies, paving the way for more peaceful and just solutions.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

To investigate the reasons for violence and violations of human rights and the possibilities for peace and justice in the Middle East through the case study of the 'conflict' between Israel and the Palestinians.

To provide an introduction to key scholarly debates about the 'conflict' and the possibilities for peace.

To understand the value of IR theories in studying the 'conflict' and the possibilities for peace, paying attention to the differences between mainstream and more critical approaches.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Each week of the module will cover the following topics respectively:

1. Introduction- the challenges of discussing Israel-Palestine
2. What use is International Law?
3. Conceptualising the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians: competing theoretical approaches
4. Israel's military and security policies towards the Palestinians
5. Palestinian resistance
6. Reading Week
7. A history of (failed) peace making
8. From conflict resolution to decolonisation
9. International dimensions: power and solidarity
10. Revision and Essay Writing Advice

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate significant knowledge of the historical and contemporary events related to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians and the relevant actors involved
- Use IR theories to assess key scholarly debates about the conflict between Israel and the

Palestinians, the reasons for violence and human rights violations and the possibilities for peace making and a just solution.

- Demonstrate an understanding of different notions of peace, justice and the legitimacy of violence in relation to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians
- Use IR theories to develop independent positions and arguments in relation to key scholarly debates about the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians

Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

[Specific reading list for the module](#)

Research element

Independent research for essay writing and completing other assessments

International

Introduces students to an important dimension of the Middle East

Subject specific skills

- significant knowledge of the historical and contemporary events related to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians and the relevant actors involved
 - an awareness of different IR theories and how they can be used to analyse the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians
- applying IR theories to analyse the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians and to develop critical assessments of key academic debates
- an understanding of different notions of peace, justice and the legitimacy of violence in relation to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians
- knowledge of decolonial approaches to studying the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians

Transferable skills

communication skills (written and verbal), time management, analytical skills, critical skills

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Private study	132 hours (88%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

You are expected to spend 8-10 hours per week reading the core readings for this module and taking notes in preparation for seminar discussions. You are expected to spend around 80 hours on independent research for the purpose of completing assessments.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A3

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
3000 word essay essay titles to be released in week 5	100%		Yes (extension)

Reassessment component is the same

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback on PAIS feedback form and verbal feedback in person.

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 4 of UECA-4 Undergraduate Economics 4 Year Variants
- Year 3 of UECA-LM1D Undergraduate Economics, Politics and International Studies
- UHIA-VM14 Undergraduate History and Politics (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
 - Year 3 of VM14 History and Politics (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
 - Year 4 of VM14 History and Politics (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
- Year 3 of UHIA-VM13 Undergraduate History and Politics (with a term in Venice)
- Year 4 of UPHA-V7MM Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics (with Intercalated year)
- Year 3 of UPOA-M100 Undergraduate Politics
- Year 4 of UPOA-M101 Undergraduate Politics (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 4 of UPOA-M168 Undergraduate Politics and International Studies with Chinese
- Year 3 of UPOA-M169 Undergraduate Politics and International Studies with Chinese (3 year)
- Year 3 of UPOA-M164 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and German
- Year 4 of UPOA-M165 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Italian
- Year 3 of UPOA-M162 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Quantitative Methods
- Year 4 of UPOA-M167 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Quantitative Methods (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 3 of UPHA-V7MW Undergraduate Politics, Philosophy and Law
- Year 4 of UPHA-V7MX Undergraduate Politics, Philosophy and Law (with Intercalated Year)

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 3 of UPOA-M16A Undergraduate Politics and International Studies
- Year 4 of UPOA-M16B Undergraduate Politics and International Studies (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 3 of UPOA-ML13 Undergraduate Politics and Sociology
- Year 4 of UPOA-ML14 Undergraduate Politics and Sociology (with Intercalated year)
- Year 4 of UPOA-M163 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and French
- Year 4 of UPOA-M164 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and German
- Year 3 of UPOA-M16D Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and German (3 year degree)
- Year 4 of UPOA-M166 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Hispanic Studies

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 4 of UHIA-VM15 Undergraduate History and Politics (with Intercalated Year)

This module is Option list C for:

- Year 3 of UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics
- Year 4 of UHIA-VM12 Undergraduate History and Politics (with Year Abroad)
- UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
 - Year 3 of V7MP Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite)
 - Year 3 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
- UPHA-V7MM Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics (with Intercalated year)

- Year 4 of V7MS Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite with Economics Major) (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 4 of V7MQ Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite) with Intercalated Year
- Year 4 of V7MM Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite) (with Intercalated year)

This module is Option list D for:

- Year 3 of UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics
- Year 4 of UHIA-VM12 Undergraduate History and Politics (with Year Abroad)
- Year 3 of UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics