



Master of Arts in Politics

Handbook

April 2026

Introduction

Master of Arts in Politics

The Master of Arts in Politics qualifies students for positions in social advocacy, urban planning, government administration, public policy, news media, research, economics, consulting, and public relations. The programme provides general qualifications in domains that use transferable skills and competences spanning multiple sectors and industries. It combines asynchronous components (lecture videos, readings, and assignments) with synchronous meetings attended by students and a teacher during video calls, supporting a diverse cohort of adult learners across different work-life situations and time zones.

The course is designed to be mentally demanding and personally engaging. Students learn to organise and present their perspective on assignments while developing analytical and creative capacity to think critically about their work, articulate their viewpoint, and adjust positions in light of evidence and instructor feedback.

Entry requirements

Education Requirements

Candidates must hold an EQF 6 level degree.

Language Requirements

English language competency at IELTS 6.5 (or equivalent) is required of all applicants.

Instructional design

Teaching: The programme combines asynchronous and synchronous components. Asynchronous work includes lecture videos, assigned readings, and online discussion forums completed at the student's own pace. Synchronous sessions are live video meetings for interactive discussions, collaborative projects, peer review, and real-time feedback. A flipped classroom methodology is employed, with students engaging with theoretical materials and completing assignments before each live session.

Assessment: Each module uses two forms of assessment. Regular Assessment (60% of module mark) involves continuous evaluation of submitted assignments and the student's ability to respond to instructor feedback. Cumulative Assessment (40% of module mark) is a final project, long essay, portfolio, written examination, or oral examination. The overall module mark is weighted according to ECTS.

Degree structure

The degree comprises 10 taught modules (30 ECTS) and the Politics Dissertation capstone (60 ECTS), totalling 90 ECTS at EQF 7.

Module	ECTS	Level
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Political Theory	3	EQF 7
Political Practice and Institutions	3	EQF 7
Global Politics and International Law	3	EQF 7
Histories of Political Ideas and Forms	3	EQF 7
Political Economy	3	EQF 7
Politics, Ethics, and Aesthetics	3	EQF 7
Race, Religion, and the Feminine	3	EQF 7
Studio Methods and Arts of Politics	3	EQF 7
Further Studies in Politics I	3	EQF 7
Further Studies in Politics II	3	EQF 7
Politics Dissertation (Capstone)	60	EQF 7

Module Descriptions

1. Political Theory

The Political Theory module offers an introduction to contemporary and classic theories of politics, examining foundational concepts and debates. Students engage with theories that seek to explain political phenomena, understand political institutions, and address normative questions about how politics should operate. The module covers a range of philosophical and theoretical frameworks, helping students develop a critical understanding of politics as both a field of study and a field of practice.

Learning Outcomes

1. Carry out tasks related to analysis of, and engagement with, assigned readings, focusing on approaches, definitions, and arguments, thereby developing critical reading and evaluative skills.
2. Monitor one's own learning and identify deficiencies.

3. Produce work that addresses the distinction between philosophies and theories of politics, and theory that is political, and articulate these differences with clarity.

2. Political Practice and Institutions

This module incorporates insights from political science, public policy, political and social theory, history, and cultural studies to inquire into the whats, wheres, whys, and hows of political actions and the institutions in which they emerge and/or are contained. Students analyse political practices such as community organising, social movements, electoral campaigns, political parties, and other varieties of individual and collective transformative practices. Additionally, students assess what it means to act politically and the implications of such actions for both individuals and institutions. The relationship between the individual and political institutions is evaluated, including topics such as becoming part of an institution, engaging in institutional critique, seeking institutional reforms, calling attention to institutionalised inequalities, and inspiring institutional change.

Learning Outcomes

1. Carry out tasks that critically assess political institutions, demonstrate understanding of their structures, functions, and dynamics, and engage in informed debates about their role in society.
2. Produce work that analyses different political practices with the purpose of understanding their origins, mechanisms, and effects.
3. Advise on the process of becoming part of a political institution while discussing the potential benefits, challenges, and responsibilities associated with this process.

3. Global Politics and International Law

This module addresses various topics related to international law and politics. Students assess the history and practice of geopolitics, nationalism, internationalism, diplomacy, and related concepts within the realms of political science and the wider social sciences. Students analyse the circumstances which contribute to the allocation of power within world politics and how these are influenced by paradigm shifts in the production of expertise and knowledge. Topics include the concept of the 'Global South' as a locus for conversations and studies that have historically been centred on the 'West' and the 'Global North'; the historicisation of various perspectives on geopolitics; and the experience of marginalised and colonised peoples within national and international contexts. The module combines theoretical frameworks with practical application to case studies on central contemporary political issues.

Learning Outcomes

1. Carry out tasks that reflect upon and analyse historical perspectives on geopolitics, and how they have shaped and continue to influence international relations and power dynamics.
2. Be responsible for independent research in the field of international law and politics, while applying knowledge and skills to explore contemporary issues and debates.
3. Manage readings and monitor one's own understanding of a variety of viewpoints.

4. Histories of Political Ideas and Forms

Which political ideas corresponded to which forms of social, political, and economic life? What is the relation between ideas, ideals, and ideologies? How do the results of political imagination correspond to the unfolding of human histories? What are the conditions that make certain kinds of political judgments

and philosophies possible? This module examines these questions through critical engagement with primary and secondary sources across different historical periods and political traditions.

Learning Outcomes

1. Produce work evaluating the relationship between ideas, ideals, and ideologies, highlighting their distinct characteristics and interconnections.
2. Carry out tasks that analyse how political imagination corresponds to the unfolding of human histories, and provide examples of this process.

5. Political Economy

This module adopts a range of humanistic and social scientific perspectives to analyse the relationships that exist between market, state, economy, polis, consumer, worker, producer, citizen, and subject. Students engage with key topics including production, distribution, development, growth, globalisation, and economic and social policies.

Learning Outcomes

1. Carry out tasks that demonstrate the capacity for independent research in the field of political economy, using learned knowledge and skills to explore and contribute to ongoing debates in the field.
2. Participate effectively in discussions and debates on political economy, demonstrating understanding, critical thinking skills, and ability to articulate complex ideas.
3. Create scholarly work related to key topics in political economy, such as production, distribution, development, growth, globalisation, and economic and social policies.

6. Politics, Ethics, and Aesthetics

The etymological intersections between *politikos* (the practice and theory of influencing other people on a civic or individual level), *aisthesis* (perception through the senses and the intellect), and *poiesis* (the act of making, producing, bringing-forth) are complex, plentiful, and serve as the premise of this module. Students explore how aesthetic practice and political theory have historically informed and transformed one another.

Learning Outcomes

1. Carry out tasks that analyse the historical and evolving relationship between aesthetics (as the domain of perception through the senses and the intellect) and politics (as the dynamics of life within a polis), providing examples from a range of historical periods and cultural contexts.

7. Race, Religion, and the Feminine

Understanding history is essential to critically examining religious identity, war, and conflict, especially since many contemporary arguments concerning the future of these subjects rely on concepts deeply indebted to the past. This module explores the intersections of race, religion, gender, and the body as

political categories, examining how they shape and are shaped by political structures and historical processes.

Learning Outcomes

1. Carry out tasks related to the historical relationships between religion and politics, and their interplay in shaping conflicts and identity.
2. Produce work addressing the complexity and diversity of human experiences and perspectives in relation to the historical relationships between politics, religion, race, gender, and the body.

8. Studio Methods and Arts of Politics

How are we to create totalities and frames that connect without colonising? Is it possible to read and harness our recent history in a way that impacts how we name, understand, and solve political problems? This module addresses the differences and specificities that are often sacrificed to achieve grand theory, toward a method of addressing the theoretical, temporal, and spatial intersections of political life. A dynamic treatment of bodies, affect, memory, identities, cultures, institutions, power, and lifeworlds in contemporary geopolitics marked by old and new regimes of capital and colony is explored in depth.

Learning Outcomes

1. Create meaningful political discussions and debates with respect and understanding for differing viewpoints.
2. Manage reflexivity and honest introspection regarding one's own sociopolitical and cultural lifeworld, and how it is affected by dominant epistemologies and methods.

9. Further Studies in Politics I

A distinctive part of the curriculum is Further Studies in Politics, a module that runs in parallel with the other modules of the programme. Further Studies allow students to integrate course material from new perspectives. Students take Further Studies twice, and have the ability to select a customised assessment package to make their programme more relevant to their educational and career goals.

Learning Outcomes

1. Collaborate with expert practitioners, gaining tailored insights and practical guidance on contemporary political issues.
2. Carry out tasks that deepen knowledge in specific areas of interest that complement the core curriculum in political studies.
3. Monitor one's foundation in both the theory and practice of political studies, preparing for advanced study or career opportunities in the field.

10. Further Studies in Politics II

Further Studies in Politics II continues the parallel strand of Further Studies, allowing students to integrate course material from new perspectives. This module is not a more advanced version of Part I — it is a fresh set of topics aligned with other aspects of the programme's curriculum. Students again select a customised assessment package suited to their educational and career goals.

Learning Outcomes

1. Collaborate with expert practitioners, gaining tailored insights and practical guidance on contemporary political issues.
2. Carry out tasks that deepen knowledge in specific areas of interest that complement the core curriculum in political studies.
3. Monitor one's foundation in both the theory and practice of political studies, preparing for advanced study or career opportunities in the field.

11. Politics Dissertation (Capstone)

The Politics Dissertation contains both a research planning phase ('The Research Plan') and a research execution phase ('The Dissertation'). Students undertake an extended, independent research project that demonstrates originality, critical analysis, and sustained engagement with primary and secondary sources.

Learning Outcomes

1. Manage and responsibly undertake an extended, independent research project.
2. Carry out tasks that demonstrate originality, critical analysis, and synthesis of research materials, with advanced competence in determining relevance of information.
3. Produce scholarly work that demonstrates integration of rigorous research methods and sustained engagement with primary and secondary sources.

Internships policy

Internships must be a genuine extension of the student's academic programme, providing opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge to substantive projects directly related to their field of study. Internships consisting primarily of administrative or routine tasks will not be approved.

Every internship must have a defined start date, end date, and formal learning plan with objectives agreed in advance by the student, the host organisation, and the relevant college. Responsibilities and task complexity should increase over time. Each student must be assigned a named supervisor within the host organisation who holds relevant expertise and is responsible for providing regular guidance and feedback.

Woolf prioritises paid internships to ensure equitable access regardless of socioeconomic background. Unpaid internships may only be approved where they constitute a genuine learning opportunity and do not displace the work of a paid employee.

Programmatic standards

Day-to-day management sits with the relevant college. Each college must have a designated Woolf contact responsible for vetting and approving all host organisations and placements before any internship may proceed. Colleges are responsible for matching students to approved positions.

Students must complete pre-internship preparation before commencing a placement, which may include CV writing, interview support, and other instruction as necessary. Virtual internships are encouraged to widen access beyond geographical constraints; support systems must address the challenges of remote work, including cross-timezone communication and fostering professional belonging.

Programme effectiveness must be evaluated on an ongoing basis. Formal evaluations will be collected from students, host supervisors, and academic advisors, and will inform curriculum design and programme improvement.

Grading Scheme

General Marking Criteria and Classification

Marking of student work keeps in view the scale of work that the student can reasonably be expected to have undertaken in order to complete the task.

The assessment of work for the course is defined according to the following rubric of general criteria:

1. **Engagement:**
 - Directness of engagement with the question or task
 - Range of issues addressed or problems solved
 - Depth, complexity, and sophistication of comprehension of issues and implications of the questions or task
 - Effective and appropriate use of imagination and intellectual curiosity
2. **Argument or solution:**
 - Coherence, mastery, control, and independence of work
 - Conceptual and analytical precision
 - Flexibility, i.e., discussion of a variety of views, ability to navigate through challenges in creative ways
 - Completion leading to a conclusion or outcome
 - Performance and success of the solution, where relevant
3. **Evidence (as relevant):**
 - Depth, precision, detail, range and relevance of evidence cited
 - Accuracy of facts
 - Knowledge of first principles and demonstrated ability to reason from them
 - Understanding of theoretical principles and/or historical debate
 - Critical engagement with primary and/or secondary sources
4. **Organisation & Presentation:**
 - Clarity and coherence of structure
 - Clarity and fluency of writing, code, prose, or presentation (as relevant)
 - Correctness of conformity to conventions (code, grammar, spelling, punctuation, or similar relevant conventions)

Definition of marks

97-100

Work will be so outstanding that it could not be better within the scope of the assignment. These grades will be used for work that shows exceptional excellence in the relevant domain; including (as relevant): remarkable sophistication and mastery, originality or creativity, persuasive and well-grounded new methods or ideas, or making unexpected connections or solutions to problems.

94-96

Work will excel against each of the General Criteria. In at least one area, the work will be merely highly competent.

90-93

Work will excel in more than one area, and be at least highly competent in other respects. It must be excellent and contain: a combination of sophisticated engagement with the issues; analytical precision and independence of solution; go beyond paraphrasing or boilerplate code techniques; demonstrating quality of awareness and analysis of both first principles or primary evidence and scholarly debate or practical tradeoffs; and clarity and coherence of presentation. Truly outstanding work measured against some of these criteria may compensate for mere high competence against others.

87-89

Work will be at least very highly competent across the board, and excel in at least one group of the General Criteria. Relative weaknesses in some areas may be compensated by conspicuous strengths in others.

84-86

Work will demonstrate considerable competence across the General Criteria. They must exhibit some essential features of addressing the issue directly and relevantly across a good range of aspects; offer a coherent solution or argument involving (where relevant) consideration of alternative approaches; be substantiated with accurate use of resources (including if relevant, primary evidence) and contextualisation in debate (if relevant); and be clearly presented. Nevertheless, additional strengths (for instance, the range of problems addressed, the sophistication of the arguments or solutions, or the use of first principles) may compensate for other weaknesses.

80-83

Work will be competent and should manifest the essential features described above, in that they must offer direct, coherent, substantiated and clear arguments; but they will do so with less range, depth, precision and perhaps clarity. Again, qualities of a higher order may compensate for some weaknesses.

77-79

Work will show solid competence in solving problems or providing analysis. But it will be marred by weakness under one or more criteria: failure to fully solve the problem or discuss the question directly; some irrelevant use of technologies or citing of information; factual error, or error in selection of technologies; narrowness in the scope of solution or range of issues addressed or evidence adduced; shortage of detailed evidence or engagement with the problem; technical performance issues (but not so much as to prevent operation); poor organisation or presentation, including incorrect conformity to convention or written formatting.

74-76

Work will show evidence of some competence in solving problems or providing analysis. It will also be clearly marred by weakness in multiple General Criteria, including: failure to solve the problem or discuss the question directly; irrelevant use of technologies or citing of information; factual errors or multiple errors in selection of technologies; narrowness in the scope of solution or range of issues addressed or evidence adduced; shortage of detailed evidence or engagement with the problem; significant technical

performance issues (but not so much as to prevent operation); poor organisation or presentation, including incorrect conformity to convention or written formatting. They may be characterised by unsubstantiated assertion rather than argument, or by unresolved contradictions in the argument or solution.

70-73

Work will show evidence of competence in solving problems or providing analysis, but this evidence will be limited. It will be clearly marred by weakness in multiple General Criteria. It will still make substantive progress in addressing the primary task or question, but the work will lack a full solution or directly address the task; the work will contain irrelevant material; the work will show multiple errors of fact or judgment; and the work may fail to conform to conventions.

67-69

Work will fall down on a number of criteria, but will exhibit some of the qualities required, such as the ability to grasp the purpose of the assignment, to deploy substantive information or solutions in an effort to complete the assignment; or to offer some coherent analysis or work towards the assignment. Such qualities will not be displayed at a high level, and may be marred by irrelevance, incoherence, major technical performance issues, error and poor organisation and presentation.

64-66

Work will fall down on a multiple General Criteria, but will exhibit some vestiges of the qualities required, such as the ability to see the point of the question, to deploy information, or to offer some coherent work. Such qualities will be substantially marred by irrelevance, incoherence, error and poor organisation and presentation.

60-63

Work will display a modicum of knowledge or understanding of some points, but will display almost none of the higher qualities described in the criteria. They will be marred by high levels of factual or technology error and irrelevance, generalisation or boilerplate code and lack of information, and poor organisation and presentation.

0-60

Work will fail to exhibit any of the required qualities. Candidates who fail to observe rubrics and rules beyond what the grading schemes allow for may also be failed.

Indicative equivalence table

US GPA	US Grade	US Percent	UK Mark	UK UG Classification	UK PG Classification	Malta Grade	Malta Mark	Malta Classification	Swiss Grade
4	A+	97 - 100	70+	First	Distinction	A	80-100%	First class honours	6.0
3.9	A	94-96				B	70-79%	Upper-second class honours	
3.7	A-	90-93							5.5
3.3	B+	87-89	65-69	Upper Second	Merit	C	55-69%	Lower-second class honours	
3	B	84-86	60-64						
2.7	B-	80-83	55-59	Lower Second	Pass				5
2.3	C+	77-79	50-54			D	50-54%	Third-class honours	
2	C	74-76	45-49	Third	Pass				
1.7	C-	70-73	40-44						
1.3	D+	67-69	39-	Fail	Fail				
1	D	64-66							
0.7	D-	60-63							
0	F	Below 60				F			

Synchronous Adjustments Template

Synch discussions may affect the mark on submitted assignments: written work is submitted in advance, and a discussion follows. This provides students an opportunity to clarify and explain their written claims, and it also tests whether the work is a product of the student's own research or has been plagiarised.

The synchronous discussion acts to shift the recorded mark on the submitted assignment according to the following rubric:

+3

Up to three points are added for excellent performance; the student displays a high degree of competence across a range of questions, and excels in at least one group of criteria. Relative weaknesses in some areas may be compensated by conspicuous strengths in others.

+/- 0

The marked assignment is unchanged for fair performance. Answers to questions must show evidence of some solid competence in expounding evidence and analysis. But they will be marred by weakness under one or more criteria: failure to discuss the question directly; appeal to irrelevant information; factual error; narrowness in the range of issues addressed or evidence adduced; shortage of detailed evidence; or poor organisation and presentation, including consistently incorrect grammar. Answers may be characterised by unsubstantiated assertion rather than argument, or by unresolved contradictions in the argument.

- 3 (up to three points)

Up to three are subtracted points for an inability to answer multiple basic questions about themes in the written work. Answers to questions will fall down on a number of criteria, but will exhibit some vestiges of the qualities required, such as the ability to see the point of the question, to deploy information, or to

offer some coherent analysis towards an argument. Such qualities will not be displayed at a high level or consistently, and will be marred by irrelevance, incoherence, error and poor organisation and presentation.

0 (fail)

Written work and the oral examination will both be failed if the oral examination clearly demonstrates that the work was plagiarised. The student is unfamiliar with the arguments of the assignment or the sources used for those arguments.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's work without correct referencing. The consequence of plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work as your own work. Plagiarism violates Woolf policy and will result in disciplinary action, but the context and seriousness of plagiarism varies widely. Intentional or reckless plagiarism will result in a penalty grade of zero, and may also entail disciplinary penalties.

Plagiarism can be avoided by citing the works that inform or that are quoted in a written submission. Many students find that it is essential to keep their notes organised in relation to the sources which they summarise or quote. Course instructors will help you to cultivate professional scholarly habits in your academic writing.

Depending on the course, short assignment essays may not require students to submit a bibliography or to use extensive footnotes, and students are encouraged to write their assignments entirely in their own words. However, all essays must acknowledge the sources on which they rely and must provide quotation marks and citation information for verbatim quotes.

There are several forms of plagiarism. They all result in the presentation of someone's prior work as your new creation. Examples include:

- Cutting and pasting (verbatim copying)
- Paraphrasing or rewording
- Unauthorised Collaboration
- Collaboration with other students can result in pervasive similarities – it is important to determine in advance whether group collaboration is allowed, and to acknowledge the contributions or influence of the group members.
- False Authorship (Essay Mills, Friends, and Language Help)
- Paying an essay writing service, or allowing a generous friend to compose your essay, is cheating. Assistance that contributes substantially to the ideas or content of your work must be acknowledged.

Complaints and appeals

Students and faculty should always seek an amicable resolution to matters arising by addressing the issue with the person immediately related to the issue. Students should handle minor misunderstandings or disagreements within a regular teaching session or by direct message, or with their College. If a simple resolution is not possible, or the matter remains unresolved for one party, the steps outlined in this section apply to all groups, colleges, and units of Woolf.

The Red Flag system

An issue with a red flag should be submitted in the case that a member of Woolf seeks to make an allegation of serious misconduct about another member, including matters of cheating, plagiarism, and unfair discrimination or intolerance.

Any member of Woolf, seeking to raise a matter of serious concern, should submit a red flag by emailing redflag@woolf.education. Provide a short, clear description of the issue.

If a student submits an issue with a red flag, or if a faculty member submits an issue about a student, it will trigger a meeting with the student's College Advisor. If the issue is not resolved, the matter will be escalated to the College Dean, or to a committee designated by the College Dean, which will have the power to clear the flag.

If an issue is submitted with a red flag by a faculty member about another faculty member, then the issue is reported directly to the College Dean.

For both students and faculty members, after the Dean's decision, the one who submits the complaint is provided the opportunity to accept or appeal the decision; if the one submitting the issue appeals the decision, it will be assigned to the Quality Assurance, Enhancement, and Technology Alignment Committee, which is a subcommittee of the Faculty Council.

Mitigating circumstances

When serious circumstances ('Mitigating Circumstances'), beyond the control of a student or faculty member, adversely affect academic performance or teaching support, a Mitigating Circumstances report must be submitted using Woolf's red flagging system. Mitigating Circumstances may include but are not limited to serious medical problems, domestic and personal circumstances, major accidents or interruptions of public services, disturbances during examination, or serious administrative or procedural errors with a material effect on outcomes.

Mitigating circumstances do not normally include a member's personal technology problems, including software, hardware, or personal internet connection failures; employment obligations or changes in employment obligations; permanent or sustained medical conditions (unless there is a sudden change of condition); or circumstances where no official evidence has been submitted.

Mitigating circumstances are normally only considered when a red flag has been submitted for the issue before the deadline of an affected written project or assignment, or within one week of a cumulative examination. Proof of mitigating circumstances may result in an extended deadline or examination period, or the possibility to retake an examination; it will not result in any regrading of existing submissions or exams.

Grade appeals

Students who dissent from the grades they have received should follow the normal procedure for submitting a red flag.