MSc Digital Politics and Sustainable Development Programme Specification

Programme Title and Award	MSc Digital Politics and Sustainable Development		
Programme Level	Level 7	HECoS Code	100489 100490 100488
Relevant QAA Benchmark Statements	Politics and IR	Programme Code	LMSDPSD-F LMSDPSD-P
Awarding Body	Northeastern University - London	Language of Instruction	English
Teaching institution	Northeastern University London	Duration of Study	1 Year (FT) 2 Years (PT)
Mode of study	Full Time Part Time		
HESA Cost Code	LPINT7263 Political Theory in the Anthropocene – 128 (8.33%) LPINT7264 Global Politics in the Digital Age – 128 (8.33%) LPINT7265 Sustainable Development in Theory and Practice – 128 (8.33%) LPINT7266 Human Security: Cyber, Environmental and Beyond – 128 (8.33%) LPINT7267 Research Methods for Political Science – 128 (8.33%) LPINT7268 Extended Dissertation in Political Science – 128 (33.33%) LPHIL7255 Technology and Human Values - 141 (8.33%) LPHIL7252 AI and Data Ethics - 141 (8.33%) LPHIL7254 Minds and Machines - 141 (8.33%) LPHIL7260 Responsible AI - 141 (8.33%)		

	LPHIL7259 Advanced Topics in Ethics and Political Theory - 141 (8.33%)
	LPHIL7253 Values and Society - 141 (8.33%)

Programme Summary

The political present is defined by a set of linked transitions that now seem both necessary and unavoidable – toward a future that will be, we must hope, simultaneously digital and sustainable. These two terms increasingly define the character of our politics and the challenges that our societies face, from the global to the local, the abstract to the concrete. The current 'anthropocene' era – the term that has been adopted to capture the step change that has occurred in the scale of human impacts on the planet, in ecological, climatological and geological terms – is today becoming ever more digital, as reflected both in the rapidly changing, technological character of human impacts on the planet and in the changing forms that political interventions in society, economy, international relations and, broadly, the politics of sustainability, can and do take.

This MSc degree in Digital Politics and Sustainable Development is situated at the forefront of these ongoing, interconnected transformations. The degree is built around a carefully crafted core set of courses – Political Theory in the Anthropocene; Global Politics in the Digital Age; Human Security: Cyber, Environmental and Beyond; Sustainable Development in Theory and Practice; and Research Methods for Political Science – that provide the critical framings and research tools for the course of study and the active engagement with the changing world around us that it calls for. The list of optional courses offered allows students to design a tailored programme of study to fit their particular interests. The degree culminates in the structured development and execution of an Extended Dissertation in Political Science on a relevant research question of the individual student's choosing.

The connection that the programme establishes between digital politics and sustainable development allows for a critical interrogation of some of today's most pressing questions, which cut across multiple academic disciplines: Are there technological, digital or technocratic 'solutions' to today's sustainability challenges, and how will rapidly developing new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, help or hinder efforts to meet these challenges? In what ways do these technologies threaten the sustainability of life on earth and the challenges of global sustainable development, and in what ways can such threats best be addressed? How will digital technology's ongoing transformations of how politics works and is conducted affect our efforts to address all of these challenges, and others?

Programme Integration

There are six courses (Political Theory in the Anthropocene; Global Politics in the Digital Age; Human Security: Cyber, Environmental and Beyond; Sustainable Development in Theory and Practice; Research Methods for Political Science; and the Extended Dissertation in Political Science) that frame the course of study for all students on the programme and provide the core knowledge, skills, and resources that each student needs to master, including with an eye toward specialised employment in the areas covered by the degree, further research, and/or further postgraduate study. The remainder of each student's courses – three in total – will be selected from a list of options that allow for individual students to focus on their own specific interests in the pursuit of these ends. The Extended Dissertation is a sustained piece of independent research, supervised by members of the faculty, on an agreed topic of the student's choice in the area of Politics and International Relations.

Full-Time Programme Structure

Students will take four 15-credit courses during semester one and two, plus the 60-credit Extended Dissertation course during semester three, for a total of 180 credits.

Required Courses

Semester One

LPINT7264 Global Politics in the Digital Age (15 credits)

LPINT7265 Sustainable Development in Theory and Practice (15 credits)

Optional Course One

Optional Course Two

Semester Two

LPINT7263 Political Theory in the Anthropocene (15 credits)

LPINT7266 Human Security: Cyber, Environmental and Beyond (15 credits)

LPINT7267 Research Methods for Political Science (15 credits)

Optional Course Three

Semester Three

LPINT7268 Extended Dissertation in Political Science (60 credits)

Optional Courses

The list of optional courses offered each year may vary depending on student registration numbers, faculty availability and other factors.

Semester One Options

LPHIL7255 Technology and Human Values (15 credits)

LPHIL7252 AI and Data Ethics (15 credits)

LPHIL7258 Political and Ethical Ideas Across History (15 credits)

Semester Two Options

LPHIL7254 Minds and Machines (15 credits)

LPHIL7260 Responsible AI (15 credits)

LPHIL7259 Advanced Topics in Ethics and Political Theory (15 credits)

LPHIL7253 Values and Society (15 credits)

Part-Time Programme Structure

Students will take two 15-credit courses during semester one and two in Year One and Two, plus the 60-credit Extended Dissertation course during semester three in both years, for a total of 180 credits.

Required Courses

Year One

Semester One

LPINT7264 Global Politics in the Digital Age (15 credits)

LPINT7265 Sustainable Development in Theory and Practice (15 credits)

Semester Two

LPINT7263 Political Theory in the Anthropocene (15 credits)

or

LPINT7266 Human Security: Cyber, Environmental and Beyond (15 credits)

and

LPINT7267 Research Methods for Political Science (15 credits)

Semester Three

Begin LPINT7268 Extended Dissertation in Political Science (60 credits)

Year Two

In Year Two, students will take three optional courses plus the remaining required course that they have not yet taken (either Political Theory in the Anthropocene or Human Security), in the semester in which it is offered.

Semester One

Optional Course One

and

LPINT7263 Political Theory in the Anthropocene (15 credits)

or

LPINT7266 Human Security: Cyber, Environmental and Beyond (15 credits)

or

Optional Course Two

Semester Two

LPINT7263 Political Theory in the Anthropocene (15 credits)

or

LPINT7266 Human Security: Cyber, Environmental and Beyond (15 credits)

or

Optional Course Two

and

Optional Course Three

Semester Three

Complete LPINT7268 Extended Dissertation in Political Science (60 credits)

Optional Courses

The list of optional courses offered each year may vary depending on student registration numbers, faculty availability and other factors.

Semester One Options

LPHIL7255 Technology and Human Values (15 credits)

LPHIL7252 AI and Data Ethics (15 credits)

LPHIL7258 Political and Ethical Ideas Across History (15 credits)

Semester Two Options

LPHIL7254 Minds and Machines (15 credits)

LPHIL7260 Responsible AI (15 credits)

LPHIL7259 Advanced Topics in Ethics and Political Theory (15 credits)

LPHIL7253 Values and Society (15 credits)

Entrance Requirements

This programme follows the standard entrance requirements for an undergraduate degree (or equivalent) achieved in an academic subject such as Economics, English, History, Languages, Philosophy, Politics, Sociology, Psychology; but each applicant will be assessed on an individual basis, including relevant professional experience where applicable. If English is not an applicant's native language, they will need to demonstrate proficiency in English in order to study at the University. For a list of equivalencies, please check here.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Where a student wishes to apply for the recognition of prior learning on the basis of certificated or experiential learning, they should follow the University's Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Policy.

Aims of the Programme

The overall aims of the programme are to:

- Give a thorough grounding in the discipline and practice of Political Science and International Relations, and to encourage critical evaluations of how the past is represented, constructed, debated, and contested in relation to the present and the future, in different settings, and at different unit levels of analysis.

- Develop an awareness and understanding of the different approaches to, and theories of, sustainability and development, security, digital transition, and global citizenship in contemporary global politics.

- Give students an appreciation of the complexity of research within Political Science and International Relations.

- Foster the technical skills involved in research and writing substantive pieces of work to the highest standard.

- Give students the knowledge and understanding of, and skills to, analyse and evaluate information from various levels of engagement in global politics.

- Through individual supervision, guide students to deliver a substantial piece of original research, presented in clear, coherent, well referenced, and persuasively argued prose.

- Improve students' applied skills in the areas of critical questioning/reasoning, information gathering, synthesis, and analysis, and oral and written communication.

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A student will be able to:

K1d   Examine and analyse information from various levels of engagement in international politics, sustainability, and security.

K2d   Distinguish between, and assess, different perspectives in recent debates in international relations, international sustainability, and security.

K3d   Critically evaluate the usefulness of inter- and cross-disciplinary approaches to international sustainability and security.

K4d   Critically appraise the means by which the academic study can contribute to a wider public engagement with, and appraisal of, the media, and/or public policy and the challenges and complexities of reconstructing the past for a public audience.

Subject Specific Skills

A student will be able to:

S1d   Formulate and structure coherent arguments in a critical, lucid, and conceptually sophisticated manner.

S2d   Identify, examine, and evaluate primary and secondary sources, and critically analyse evidence derived from such sources.

S3d   Synthesise a large amount of information from different disciplinary and methodological perspectives, consistent with approaches to political science and international relations.

S4d   Locate their work within the existing corpus of interdisciplinary scholarship, and identify key issues and worthwhile questions within this corpus.

Transferable and Professional Skills

A student will be able to:

T1d   Gather, organise, and deploy a range of evidence and data in support of a clearly defined line of argument.

T2d   Synthesise and analyse large amounts of information to produce pertinent and critical conclusions.

T3d   Closely read and engage critically and analytically with texts.

T4d   Consistently display an excellent level of technical proficiency in written English and command of scholarly terminology, so as to be able to deal with complex issues in a sophisticated and systematic way.

For the exit awards see Appendix A.

Teaching and Learning Strategies

- The University's campus has state-of-the-art teaching rooms and independent and group study spaces.

- A Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) for each course with a syllabus and range of additional resources (e.g. readings, question prompts, tasks, assessment briefs, slides or handouts, discussion boards, and sample examination papers and examiners' reports) to orientate and engage students in their studies.

- Northeastern University's online library digital resources, and other online academic resources, such as JSTOR and the OED. Students are inducted on their use at the start of the programme, and wider digital literacy is reinforced and developed across their studies.

- Students can also apply for a reader's card to use the British Library and apply for membership of any of the City of London libraries. Students at the University can apply for Senate House Library membership.

- As part of the wider teaching and learning environment, the University hosts a range of academic and social events in which students, faculty, alumni and interlocutors from outside the academy are brought together.

Teaching Methods

- Lectures
- Seminars or small-group classes
- Feedback on formative work
- Student presentations
- Online discussion forums

- Individual dissertation supervisions (which support both written and oral communication skills)
- (Structured) independent study and research

At the University, we are committed to providing individual attention and guidance. Seminars include student interaction and dialogue. Faculty also hold regular 'Office Hours', which are opportunities for students to explore ideas, raise questions, or seek targeted guidance or verbal feedback on a one-to-one basis.

Assessment, as indicated below, is in a variety of modes: formative and summative coursework, examinations, written assignments (such as essays, reports, article reviews and policy briefs), oral presentations, a dissertation research proposal, and a final dissertation.

Students will be formatively assessed during each core course in seminar activities and by means of assignments that offer opportunities to develop, practise and refine the same skills in research, writing, presentation and communication that will be assessed in the summative assessment elements for the course. Assessments have been designed to foster engagement with society and the world, the ability to intervene in political activities and the making of policy, and cooperation with relevant actors, institutions, organisations and industries. Formative assessments do not count towards the end of year results, but will provide students with regular developmental feedback.

Learning Opportunities

The optional regular research seminars offer a lively and varied menu of talks and discussions involving both internal and invited speakers. Digital Politics and Sustainable Development students are invited and encouraged to attend these in all three semesters.

Students will also be encouraged to attend the broader programme of academic events and talks at the University.

Inclusive Teaching and Learning

The Politics and International Relations faculty are deeply committed to widening participation in the field, both through outreach activities and through a teaching environment that is inclusive towards a variety of backgrounds and learning styles. Members of the faculty are engaged in the public dissemination of their discipline, working with schools and professional environments, engaging with the media, and publishing in accessible formats.

Faculty create inclusive learning environments in different ways, both within the classroom and through study materials. In Digital Politics and Sustainable Development, particularly the inclusion of different geographic locations and cultural practices is important, and faculty use a wide range of case studies from different

locations and types of organisations. The assessments on this programme are varied, giving students with different learning styles and preferences the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in different ways.

The student body at the University is especially important to the faculty's ability to give individualised attention to students, and thus to be inclusive towards a variety of backgrounds and learning styles.

The University is able to make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities. Student Support and Development (SSD) are able to put into place individual Learning Support Plans, which set out what additional support and reasonable adjustments can be provided based on an assessment a disabled student's needs. Applicants with a disability are encouraged to contact SSD as early as possible to discuss their support needs and the adjustments and support available at the University.

The University provides mandatory training in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for all staff and students. This is an important part of our support for a diverse and inclusive experience for all members of our organisation across teaching, research and all of our University processes, procedures and life.

Research-Led Practice-Driven Teaching

All members of the Politics and International Relations faculty have been chosen on the basis of their scholarly activity, as well as their talents in teaching, and are encouraged to remain active in their field and given an individual annual scholarship budget. The teaching has been developed and allocated on the basis of professional and research interests and expertise. The faculty is committed to supporting a lively, open, and interactive teaching environment, in which scholarship and teaching are mutually complementary.

Experiential Learning

The University is a global, experiential, research university built on a tradition of engagement with the wider world. Experiential learning is integral to our teaching and learning. The University offers a wide range of experiential learning opportunities. Some are integrated into the classroom (curricular), some are designed to complement classroom learning (co-curricular), and some are independent of any course (extra-curricular). Because it is grounded in real-world experience, experiential learning can also take place outside of the university.

Building on the Start-up Hub at the University, students would be encouraged to get involved by joining relevant societies. The University utilises the thriving start-up ecosystem across London bringing together corporates, high profile guest speakers and insights from successful founders.

Furthermore, many of the University's courses integrate impact challenges into teaching and learning. They allow students to develop a creative, evidence-informed, solution to a complex real-world challenge, typically over multiple weeks. The challenges allow students to engage with a problem that matters to them, that speaks to their interests and values, and that also develops their knowledge and skills in a real-world context. Regular reflective assignments and faculty, practitioner, or peer feedback will help support students throughout the challenge.

Assessment

Assessment Methods

- Formative and summative written assignments
- Oral presentations
- Group work
- Reports/policy briefs
- Experiment
- Examination
- Research proposal
- Dissertation

Appendix C is the programme structure and assessment summary.

Assessment Regulations

The University's Assessment Regulations for Taught Awards can be found here.

Student Support

Disabilities and/or Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs)

Students are strongly encouraged to inform the University of any medical conditions, disabilities, specific learning difficulties (SpLD) or neurological differences as soon as is practical. Students will be asked to submit supporting documentation from a doctor, clinical or educational psychologist detailing the nature of their disability and the impact it is likely to have on their studies in order to help us put in place appropriate support and accommodations. More information can be found in the Student Disability Policy here. This data is managed and securely stored by Student Support and Development (SSD). Throughout the academic year, a number of talks

and events are held which are designed to support and inform students with regard to mental health, disabilities, safety and learning support.

SSD meet with students as soon as possible, and preferably before the start of the academic year, to discuss their needs and draft a Learning Support Plan (LSP) which outlines the support to be provided both within the University (if appropriate) and externally. If requested by the student, the SDD will then arrange to inform relevant faculty of the student's needs and any reasonable adjustments required.

If a student is undiagnosed but believes they may have a SpLDS (e.g. Dyslexia) the SDD will help them to access diagnostic services. If the assessment confirms a SpLDS, the SDD will work the student in preparing a LSP and will provide advice about accessing additional funding and support through the Disabled Students Allowance, where a student may be eligible.

For more information, please click here.

Employability Skills

- Work independently, creatively, and to deadlines
- Conduct specialised independent research and explore relevant existing knowledge
- Analyse, contextualise, and interpret complex policy issues and multiple sources of evidence
- Synthesise and evaluate information against a backdrop of uncertainty
- Develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Develop teamwork and leadership skills
- Present findings and opinions in a clear, structured manner, whether orally or in writing
- Engage in collaborative and constructive discussion
- Reconcile theoretical frameworks with real-life practice
- Evaluate project outcomes
- Develop public policy making and political consulting skills

The programme also is able to take advantage of Northeastern University London's ever-expanding partnerships with industry and other organisations, including as part of the wider global Northeastern University network, as part of its commitment to fostering employability.

Careers Education, Information and Guidance

Masters students will have access to the University's Careers Advisory Service. This includes employer receptions with representatives from a wide range of sectors and our electronic Careers Centre, containing features and functionality for careers guidance, interview advice and job searching.

In addition, Careers Advisers, supplemented with support from tutors, offer advice, often one-to-one, on securing a professional future tailored to students' skills and ambitions.

Quality Evaluation and Enhancement

Award Standards

Every programme of study is developed by the Faculties, utilising their subject specialists and approved by Academic Board.

Review and Evaluation Mechanisms

The University has robust procedures, as described in AQF4 Programme and Course Approval and Modification and AQF5 Annual Monitoring and Reporting, in place to assure the quality of the programme development, delivery, management, systematic monitoring and ongoing review and enhancement of all University programmes. Enhancements are made as necessary to ensure that systems remain effective and rigorous.

The University utilises constructive feedback from a variety of sources, internal and external, to inform its decision-making process to enhance the programme and student experiences. These feedback sources are listed below:

- Annual Course Reviews, written by the Course Leader, are prepared to enable the Course Leader to reflect on the course, using a variety of data and student/faculty feedback to enhance the course and support the writing of the Annual Programme Review.

- Annual Programme Reviews, written at the end of each academic year, are prepared in order to enhance individual programmes and to plan ahead.

- Annual External Examiner reports are prepared by the External Examiners, as appointed by the University, to confirm that a programme has been assessed in accordance with the approved documentation and that the student performance meets the appropriate academic standards.

- Formal student feedback mechanisms consist of course questionnaires and Student-Engagement Committee meetings at least once each semester, as well as annual student satisfaction surveys.

- Informal student feedback is also valued by the University and this can take the form of students talking or corresponding with their faculty or professional staff.

Version History

Title: MSc Digital Politics and Sustainable Development Programme Specification					
Approved by: Academic Board					
Location: Academic Handbook/programme specifications and handbooks/postgraduate programme specifications					
Version number	Date approved	Date published	Owner	Proposed next review date	Modification (As per AQF4) & category number
2.0	August 2024	August 2024	Dr Pablo Calderon Martinez	January 2029	Category 1: Corrections/clarifications to documents which do not change approved content or learning outcomes
1.0	July 2024	July 2024	Dr. Marianna Koli	January 2029	
Referenced documents	AQF7: Assessment Regulations for Taught Awards Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Policy AQF4:Programme and Course Approval and Modifications AQF5: Annual Monitoring and Reporting				
External Reference Point(s)	Subject Benchmark Politics and International Relations.				

Disclaimer

The University has checked the information provided in this Programme Specification and will aim to deliver this programme in keeping with this Programme Specification. However, changes to the programme may sometimes be required arising from annual monitoring, student feedback, and the review and update of courses and programmes. Where this activity leads to significant changes to courses and programmes there will be prior consultation with students and others, wherever possible, and the University will take all reasonable steps to minimise disruption to students. It is also possible that the University may not be able to offer a course or programme for reasons outside of its control, for example, due to the absence of a

member of staff or low student registration numbers. Where this is the case, the University will aim to inform applicants and students as soon as possible, and where appropriate, will facilitate the transfer of affected students to another suitable programme.

Copyright

Appendix A – Exit Awards

Postgraduate Certificate

4 x 15 credit Level 7 courses = 60 credits

Postgraduate Diploma

8 x 15 credit level 7 courses = 120 credits

Appendix B – Map of Courses to Learning Outcomes

Course Title	Knowledge And Understanding				Subject-Specific Skills				Transferable And Professional Skills			
	K1d	K2d	K3d	K4d	S1d	S2d	S3d	S4d	T1d	T2d	T3d	T4d
LPINT7263 Political Theory in the Anthropocene	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
LPINT7264 Global Politics in the Digital Age	X	X			X	X	X		X	X		X
LPINT7265 Sustainable Development in Theory and Practice	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	
LPINT7266 Human Security: Cyber, Environmental and Beyond	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	
LPINT7267 Research Methods for Political Science	X	X			X	X			X			X
LPINT7268 Extended Dissertation in Political Science	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		X	X
LPHIL7255 Technology and Human Values								X		X	X	X
LPHIL7252 AI and Data Ethics								X	X		X	X
LPHIL7258 Political and Ethical Ideas Across History								X	X	X		X
LPHIL7254 Minds and Machines					X			X		X	X	X
LPHIL7260 Responsible Artificial Intelligence											X	X

Course Title	Knowledge And Understanding				Subject-Specific Skills				Transferable And Professional Skills			
	K1d	K2d	K3d	K4d	S1d	S2d	S3d	S4d	T1d	T2d	T3d	T4d
LPHIL7259 Advanced Topics in Ethics and Political Theory						X		X			X	X
LPHIL7253 Values and Society											X	X

Appendix C - Programme Structure And Assessment Summary

Code	Course Title	Credit	Type	Mode	Assessment Weighting % & Activity Type (code overleaf)					
					AE1	Activity Type	AE2	Activity Type	AE3	Activity Type
FHEQ Level 7										
LPINT7263	Political Theory in the Anthropocene	15	R	CD	35	A	65	A		
LPINT7264	Global Politics in the Digital Age	15	R	CD	40	Oral	60	R		
LPINT7265	Sustainable Development in Theory and Practice	15	R	CD	15	Oral	15	Pract	70	A
LPINT7266	Human Security: Cyber, Environmental and Beyond	15	R	CD	30	A	70	Exam		
LPINT7267	Research Methods for Political Science	15	R	CD	100	A				
LPINT7268	Extended Dissertation for Political Science	60	R	CD	100	A				
LPHIL7255	Technology and Human Values	15	O	CD	100	A				
LPHIL7252	AI and Data Ethics	15	O	CD	30	A	70	A		
LPHIL7258	Political and Ethical Ideas Across History	15	O	CD	100	A				
LPHIL7254	Minds and Machines	15	O	CD	100	A				
LPHIL7260	Responsible AI	15	O	CD	100	A				
LPHIL7259	Advanced Topics in Ethics and Political Theory	15	O	CD	15	F	85	A		

Code	Course Title	Credit	Type	Mode	Assessment Weighting % & Activity Type (code overleaf)					
					AE1	Activity Type	AE2	Activity Type	AE3	Activity Type
FHEQ Level 7										
LPHIL7253	Values and Society	15	O	CD	70	Oral	30	A		

Course Type: C = Compulsory; O = Option.

Course Mode: CD = Campus Delivery; BK = Block Delivery; BL = Blended Learning; DL = Distance Learning and Self-Directed Learning; EL = E-Learning; EX = Experiential; PL = Placement; WB = Work Based Learning,

Assessment Weighting: AE1 = Assessment Element 1; AE2 = Assessment Element 2; AE3 = Assessment Element 3;

AE4 = Assessment Element 4

Assessment Activity Type	Code
Written exam	Exam
Take home exam	TEx
Written assignment	A
Report	R
Dissertation	Diss
Portfolio	F
Project output (other than dissertation)	P
Oral assessment and presentation	Oral
Practical skills assessment	Pract
Set exercise	Set