

The Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation

The course *Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation* offers a comprehensive exploration of Russia's international behaviour, strategic objectives, and evolving identity in world politics. Designed for Master's students specializing in International Relations, Security, and Diplomacy, this course provides the analytical and conceptual tools necessary to understand Russia's role as both a global and regional power. By combining historical depth, theoretical grounding, and contemporary case studies, the course equips students with the knowledge to interpret the logic and implications of Russian foreign and security policy within an increasingly multipolar international system.

Structured around interactive lectures and applied seminars, the course begins by addressing the foundations of Russian national identity and the idea of "Russian exceptionalism" as a lens for foreign policy. It then moves chronologically through the major phases of Russian external relations—from the Cold War period and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, to the assertive posture of the Putin era. Students will critically examine how instruments such as diplomacy, military strategy, energy resources, and soft power have been employed to advance national interests. Central to the course is an understanding of how internal political culture, economic transformation, and strategic thinking have shaped Russia's external engagements.

The curriculum emphasizes an interdisciplinary approach, blending politics, history, economics, and international security studies. Each module investigates Russia's relationship with major global actors and regions: the European Union, NATO, the United States, China, Central Asia, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe. Through comparative and case-based learning, students will assess Russia's foreign policy strategies toward these actors, considering both cooperative frameworks and conflictual dynamics. Special attention is devoted to Russia's conduct in the post-Soviet space, the management of "frozen conflicts," and its pursuit of influence through energy diplomacy and military modernization.

A distinctive feature of the course is its focus on the intersection between Russia's domestic developments and its global ambitions. Students will explore how political leadership, strategic culture, and national doctrines—such as the Foreign Policy Concept and the Military Doctrine—inform decisions in Moscow. By engaging with key theoretical perspectives and influential scholars, participants will gain insight into both Russian and Western interpretations of Moscow's geopolitical behaviour.

The teaching methodology is constructivist and participatory, encouraging learners to build knowledge through active debate, simulations, and policy-oriented analysis. Seminars include simulations, debates and scenario-based case studies, enabling students to apply conceptual understanding to real-world diplomatic challenges. Evaluation combines attendance, participation, oral presentations, and a final exam assessing both theoretical comprehension and analytical rigor.

By the end of the course, students will demonstrate an advanced understanding of the principles guiding Russian foreign policy, the internal and external factors shaping its evolution, and the implications for global security. They will develop competencies in critical analysis, synthesis of complex political information, and the ability to formulate informed, evidence-based perspectives on Russia's strategic behaviour and its impact on international order. Ultimately, the course offers future security and diplomacy professionals the intellectual foundation to

engage deeply with one of the most consequential actors in contemporary international relations.