Diplomacy in Action

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| **Credit level:**4 |
| **Length:** semester 2 |
| **ECTS credit value:** 8 |
| **College and School:** Lazarski University in Warsaw, Faculty of Economics and Management |
| **Module Leader:** prof. Jakub Wódka |
| **Host Course:** BA International Relations |
| **Pre-requisites:**N/A |
| **Co-requisites:**N/A |
| **Special features:**N/A |
| **Access restrictions:**N/A |
| **Summary of module content:** Through scenarios and case studies, the module will provide students with practical knowledge of the diplomatic craft. Students will gain insights into how institutions responsible for foreign policy are organized. They will also learn and practice various forms of diplomatic reporting and correspondence, recognize the importance of effective negotiations and the role of diplomacy in conflict resolution and international cooperation. Additionally, the module will cover topics such as cross-cultural communication. Particular emphasis will be put on the rise of non-traditional forms such as digital and public diplomacy, alongside other innovative diplomatic activities undertaken by countries. |

**Assessment Methods**

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| **Rank** | **Assessment type** | **Assessment name** | **Weighting** | **Qualifying set** (where the minimum mark required applies across multiple assessments) |
| 1 | Coursework | Policy brief | 60 |  |
| 2 | Group Presentation | Group Oral presentation | 40 |

**Study Abroad or Equivalent Assessment Methods**

Please contact the module leader for assessment details for study abroad students.

**Synoptic assessment**

N/A

**Learning outcomes**

By the end of the module the successful student will be able to:

1. Explain the role and functions of diplomacy as a fundamental tool of a state’s foreign policy, demonstrating an understanding of its theoretical foundations within International Relations.
2. Identify the major historical milestones in evolution of diplomacy as well as the specificity of diplomacy at its bilateral, multilateral and special missions level, in relation to broader international political structures and processes.
3. Assess critically the structure and decision-making process in foreign policy of a state and external activities of international organizations, including the role of various stakeholders, state and non-state, through the lens of competing scholarly perspectives.
4. Identify and explain basic mechanisms and instruments in diplomatic activity, including specificity of diplomatic correspondence and reporting, and how they shape international interactions.
5. Describe modern technologies used in diplomatic practice, recognizing their implications for contemporary diplomatic engagement and professional development in a digitalized global environment

**Course outcomes the module contributes to:**

* L4.1 An ability to identify the primary characteristics of International Relations as a scholarly discipline, informed by key theories and political concepts, in the context of cognate disciplines.
* L4.4 Appreciation of the value of critical thinking in assessing the diverse range of scholarly traditions within International Relations.
* L4.5 The ability to evaluate the role of historical, structural, cultural and ideational dimensions of domestic and international political processes, in theory and in practice
* L4.7 An ability to take responsibility for their studies and professional development, especially as it relates to personal development planning (PDP) within a digitally networked world.
* L4.9 The ability to develop and sustain well-justified arguments through a range of media including writing, public speaking, and visual presentations.

**Indicative syllabus content**

* Diplomatic engagements in international organizations, treaties, and alliances.
* Diplomatic responses to crises, conflicts, and methods for conflict resolution through diplomatic channels.
* Practical aspects of the interface between economics and diplomacy.
* Public and cultural diplomacy as soft power tools shaping a country's image.
* Digital and cyber-diplomacy.
* Technology in diplomatic practices.
* Techniques for effective diplomatic communication, negotiation strategies, and the role of language in diplomatic interactions.
* Simulations, case studies and role-play related to real-world diplomatic scenarios.
* The students will be expected to attend at least one seminar with an active diplomat accredited in Warsaw, such seminars are organized several times during the academic year by the Foreign Affairs Club at Lazarski University.
* Usually the module will also include one field trip to a chosen think-tank or analytical center dealing with foreign policies.

**Teaching and learning methods**

The module is conducted in the form of interactive seminar, which will cover the indicative content. Varied and innovative teaching methods, such as guided discover techniques, role-playing scenarios as well as the more usual short comprehension questions, will be employed to consolidate students' understanding of the material discussed during the reading seminar. Furthermore, students will receive supplementary reading materials for self-study. Students will work in pairs or groups of three to prepare and deliver an oral presentation on an allocated research topic, with each presentation also being recorded. These presentations will serve as an introduction to the seminar, sparking discussion and critical engagement with key diplomatic concepts and case studies. Delivered weekly throughout the semester, they encourage students to develop their public speaking skills, refine their argumentation, and respond to peer feedback in a dynamic setting. Working in small groups fosters teamwork, collaboration, and the ability to coordinate effectively—key skills in diplomacy. By integrating student-led presentations into the seminar structure, the module promotes active learning, enhances analytical skills, and strengthens collaborative problem-solving.

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| **Activity type** | **Category** | **Student learning and teaching hours\*** |
| **Lecture** | Scheduled |  |
| **Seminar** | Scheduled | 60 |
| **Tutorial** | Scheduled |  |
| **Project supervisor** | Scheduled |  |
| **Demonstration** | Scheduled |  |
| **Practical classes and workshops** | Scheduled |  |
| **Supervised time in studio/workshop** | Scheduled |  |
| **Fieldwork** | Scheduled |  |
| **External visits** | Scheduled |  |
| **Work based learning** | Scheduled |  |
| **Scheduled online learning** | Scheduled |  |
| **Other learning** | Scheduled |  |
| **Total scheduled** |  | 60 |
| **Placement** | Placement |  |
| **Independent study** | Independent | 140 |
| **Total student learning and teaching hours** |  | 200 |

\*hours per activity type are indicative and subject to change.

**Assessment rationale: why has this assessment been used for this module?**

**One policy brief** (2000 words) assesses students’ understanding of real-world diplomacy, prompting them to exploring current global issues. This home assignment not only assesses students' analytical and diplomatic skills but also trainsthem to express ideas clearly and concisely—an essential ability in diplomatic reporting. Mastering this skill enhances their employability not only in the diplomatic service but also in careers that require drafting concise reports under time constraints, such as journalism, policy analysis, intelligence, corporate communications, legal advisory, and international organizations (addresses module LOs 2, 3 and 4).

**The group presentation,** worth 40%, consists of an oral PP presentation to the class on policy-relevant topics (current international developments). Students will work in pairs or small groups up to three members to prepare for it. The presentation will last 20 minutes for pairs and 30 minutes for groups of three, ensuring equal speaking time for each participant. The group work component is designed to foster collaboration and improve communication skills within teams, an essential ability in professional environments. After the presentation, a brief Q&A session will help students develop skills for public engagement, valuable in careers such as diplomacy, international organizations, public affairs, lobbying, and related fields (addresses module LOs 1, 4 and 5).

Students will be informed about the ethical considerations of AI use in preparing the policy brief and the presentation. They may use AI for tasks such as preliminary research, literature inquiry, idea brainstorming, language and writing enhancement, fact-checking, cross-referencing sources, and preparing for potential Q&A sessions.

**Assessment criteria: what criteria will be used to assess my work on this module?**

**Policy brief:** Policy brief will be assessed based on the following criteria: (1) clarity and structure, (2) analytical depth and evidence, (3) relevance and practicality of recommendations, (4) consideration of stakeholders and context, (5) writing quality.

**Group Presentation:** Each student will be assessed individually**,** based on the following criteria, each worth 20%: (1) clarity of explanation, (2) use of sources, (3) quality of argument and analysis, (4) contextual understanding and factual accuracy, and (5) ability to answer questions.

The assessment(s) will examine to what extent the student has demonstrated ability to:

* describe diplomatic principles and strategies, explaining their role in shaping a state’s foreign policy within the broader field of International Relations
* analyze key historical developments in diplomacy, illustrating how bilateral, multilateral, and special mission diplomacy have evolved in response to international political structures and crises
* evaluate foreign policy decision-making and the influence of economic, structural, and ideational factors on the role of state and non-state actors in international diplomacy
* illustrate the effective use of public and cultural diplomacy as tools of soft power in shaping a country's image
* evaluate the role of modern technology in diplomacy, analyzing its impact on diplomatic communication, negotiation strategies, and professional development in a digitalized world.

**Sources**

Baldwin, D. *Economic Statecraft.* Princeton University Press, 2020.

Barder, B. *What Diplomats Do: The Life and Work of Diplomats*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2014.

Berridge, G. R, *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2022.

Hamilton, K and R. Langhorne, *The Practice of Diplomacy: Its Evolution, Theory and Administration*, Routledge, 2011.

Pigman, G.A. *Contemporary Diplomacy.* Polity Press, 2010.

Roberts, I. *Satow’s Diplomatic Practice*, Oxford University Press, 2023.

Public library of US diplomacy, <https://wikileaks.org//plusd/>

*Will AI take over diplomatic reporting?*, DIPLO, <https://youtu.be/QuRX-2NQ0zQ> (other resources on DIPLO)

An annually updated reading list including a list of other resources such as contemporary journal articles, reports, magazines and blogs will be provided.

In addition, students will be expected to carry out independent research to explore topics within contemporary publications in order to broaden their knowledge and understanding beyond the core content delivered in lectures.