History of Public Diplomacy

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What is Public Diplomacy?

Diplomacy is the means by which the interests of a state are advanced in the international forum, either bi-laterally or multi-laterally, with other states through conversation, negotiation and cooperation. Private or Traditional Diplomacy is conducted in camera between well-informed negotiators, whereas Public Diplomacy is a broader strategy that promotes the interests of a state through direct contacts with the influential elites of the host state such as the media, academia, business and cultural intelligentsia. Professional diplomats who are representing and advancing the interests of their state must engage continuously with those who influence public opinion in the host society. In the world of satellite television and immediate communications, the role of Public Diplomacy has become absolutely essential in modern diplomatic practice. However, as students of this programme will realise, the value of Public Diplomacy is not something that was recognised only in recent times by practitioners of realpolitik. It has its origins in the Renaissance period and it was used to masterly effect in diplomatic ceremonial and cultural propaganda especially by the Republic of Venice and by France under Louis XIV, Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand and more recently by the post-war premier of Japan, Yoshida Shigeru.

Professional and highly skilled diplomats must be well-versed in the policies that they are required to promote. They must combine this knowledge with a good understanding of the political positions of their interlocutors. The more a diplomat knows about the culture, history, politics and socio-economic conditions of the host state, the more effective that diplomat will be. Such a comprehension of the host state will inform an accurate analysis of prevailing conditions within that state. This is an essential part of observation and intelligence that are essential to the conduct of effective diplomacy and foreign policy.

This pilot programme is designed to provide an applied professional entrée into the practice of Public Diplomacy with an historical perspective. Also, it is useful to those who are already professionally engaged in international affairs and who wish to enhance their career development. There are five places available on this programme. In addition to fluent English, a good knowledge of a foreign language would be advantageous.
Programme Requirements:

In order to qualify for admission to the M.A. degree, students must have accumulated 90 credits. Over the course of the academic year, student must research and write a minor dissertation on a topic related to the programme (50 credits).

In both semesters, students must take the programme’s core modules (10 credits each), in both semesters. In addition, students must take optional modules from the wide range of choices offered by the School of History. These include modules from the History of International Relations and Seminars in the UCD Centre for War Studies, (10 credits each). Also, students may take credits from the skills-based modules such as Research Skills and Reading German (5 credits each). It is intended that unpaid work placements will also be made available (5 credits).

Description of Core Modules:

In the first semester, students will take the core module Agency, Intelligence & Statecraft: The Origins of Modern Diplomacy & International Law, (10 credits). This module investigates, analyses and interprets the development of modern diplomatic practice, protocol and representation in association with the evolution of International Law. The chronological span is from 1500 when the embryonic diplomatic and intelligence services evolved in the Italian States and ideas about International Law and Power-balances first emerged, until 1900 when the impact of the world beyond Europe brought about an entirely new perspective and practice in the conduct of International Affairs.

In the second semester, students will take the core module Issues in Modern Diplomacy & International Law (10 credits). This module will consist of ten seminars covering various topics in contemporary diplomacy and international legal affairs, ranging from arbitration and negotiation to law of the sea. The seminars will be given by members of staff as well as by guest-speakers who have a range of international diplomatic and legal experience and expertise.

Learning Outcomes:

On completion of this programme students should be able to:

Demonstrate in-depth knowledge, critical understanding and authoritative interpretation and analysis of the History of Diplomacy and International Law and of the historical foundations and precedents for the conduct of International Relations and for the maintenance of the international balance of power.

Assess individual aspects and legacies of the History of Diplomacy, Intelligence and Statecraft within their broader contexts.

Present aspects of the historical debates concerning the evolution and sophisticated conduct of diplomatic practice that forms the basis of present-day international relations.

Acquire greater insights into the conduct of diplomacy and the historical contexts and precedents that have shaped the diplomatic practice and international law.