

Programme Specification

Award and title: BA English Literature and History

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	English Literature History
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2024-25
<i>in the month(s) of</i>	September
<i>Awarding institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Teaching institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Delivery location:</i>	York St John University
<i>Programme/s accredited by:</i>	N/A
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Certificate of Higher Education English Literature and History Diploma of Higher Education English Literature and History BA (Ord) English Literature and History
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	QV31
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	English History
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	Undergraduate periods of study for full time and part time
<i>Language of study:</i>	English
<i>Paired with Foundation Year</i>	Yes
<i>Study abroad opportunities:</i>	Yes
<i>Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:</i>	Yes

Introduction and special features

Joint Honours programmes give students the opportunity to combine two subjects from a range of areas in a structured way. The selected pairings are designed to complement one another and allow you to have a significant amount of choice and flexibility in relation to your learning experience. In addition, Joint Honours will engage you in a range of learning and teaching experiences and assessment opportunities.

English Literature

English Literature is a rich and vibrant area of study. At York St John University (YSJU), we are a dynamic, engaged, and research active team who are committed to providing our students with a cutting-edge education. By studying English Literature, you will have the opportunity to learn about a range of different genres, historical periods, and literary forms. Our philosophy is simple: words matter. Words shape the world we live in (writing and narrative can and have changed the world) and the connections between the written page and the concerns of the 'real' world are a crucial part of the programme. Overall, the degree will enable you to develop your expertise as a reader and critic of a range of literary materials, whilst also supporting you in the development of a portfolio of transferable professional skills which will aid you in the wider job market. As you become adept at independent learning, you will become a more sophisticated reader of texts, and you will find that your confidence as a writer and as a critic will increase as your degree progresses. You will also be part of a wider culture of learning and be able to think about what your studies will enable you to accomplish personally, professionally and as an engaged citizen within society.

Through the course of a wide-ranging suite of modules, you will have the opportunity to develop an extensive knowledge of both classic and contemporary texts, and will have access to a range of employability opportunities and skills development throughout your time on the programme. The choice of modules on offer will help you to develop your own interests and allow you to shape your degree accordingly. For example, students can choose to follow an historical pathway that might include modules such as 'The Romantic Imagination: Affect, Excess and Revolution' which examines writing from the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, or 'Hunger, Rebellion, and Rage: The Victorians', which focuses on nineteenth-century fiction. In addition, students can focus on other specialised areas represented by modules including Mapping America, Sick Stories: Narratives of Illness, Disease, and Infection, Science Fiction for Survival, and Twenty-First Century Literature: What Now? What Next? We pride ourselves on a diverse and stimulating syllabus, and you might find yourself studying Native American writing, prison narratives, radical poetry, avant-garde writing, political polemics, Civil Rights literature, speculative fiction, satire, LGBTQ+ rights literature, experimental writing, and literature of the Caribbean, as well as canonical writers such as Shakespeare, Dickens, and Austen.

A team of research-active academics who are all recognised in their respective specialisms will facilitate and guide your learning. We use a variety of assessment methods to help you develop your learning through a broad range of skills and approaches. You will not sit any traditional exams as part of your degree in English Literature, and instead you will be encouraged to try new forms of writing. In addition to more traditional assessments such as the essay, you might be asked to write a blog post, to compile a research portfolio, or even to curate an online exhibition. Field trips are an integral part of the programme, and students in recent years have had the opportunity to visit London, Stratford-upon-Avon, and Whitby, as well as local sites including Car Convent, York Explore Archive, York Castle Museum and York Theatre Royal.

During your degree, you will develop a range of subject-specific and transferable skills. As well as having the opportunity to become an adept reader, critic, writer, and researcher, you will also become highly skilled in critical thinking, problem solving, constructing and developing an argument, time-management, public speaking, and project management. These skills are all valued highly by employers, and you have the chance to develop more professional skills on our bespoke employability module 'Literature at Work'. On this module, you will be able to experience an external work placement, or choose to work on a team project (such as designing a publication or curating a small exhibition). Students regularly contribute to our popular Literature blog, **Words Matter**, which is an excellent way to gain relevant professional experience and exposure for your critical and creative perspectives.

York is a fantastic place to be if you love books and reading. There is a rich literary history in the city, and you will have the chance to explore and learn more during your degree. W.H. Auden was born in York, as was contemporary novelist Kate Atkinson. Dickens and the Brontë sisters all knew York well, and Laurence Sterne's classic *Tristram Shady* was published in York in 1760. Each year, the city celebrates its literary heritage with the York Literature Festival, for which our department organises several events. In recent years, our students have had the chance to attend talks and readings by Jeffrey Boakye, Jason Williamson, Pat Barker and Kate Atkinson. As part of the YSJU Literature department, you will have the chance to get involved in a wide range of similar activities, as well as the opportunity to attend free workshops, writing sessions, and readings as part of your degree experience.

A degree including English Literature will open diverse and exciting opportunities when you enter the job market. This is because Literature graduates are able to think independently, write and present their ideas fluently and persuasively, and are skilled researchers and critical thinkers.

History

The History programme is structured to enable you to study different types and periods of history while providing opportunities for more specialist independent study and research as you move from Levels 4 to 6.

- It begins in the first year with a range of modules which explore the skills and techniques necessary for the study of history at degree level. These modules will also familiarise you with different approaches to the study of the past and provide an introduction to the main historical periods and approaches which will feature in later stages of the degree programme.
- In the second year, modules concentrate on key periods or themes in British, European, American and world history, allowing you to develop your own interests and specialise if you wish in the

history of particular periods or geographical regions. You will be given thorough guidance throughout your time here by your Academic Tutors in making your module choices.

- In the final year you will research a dissertation on a topic of your choice alongside a chosen selection of modules which offer in-depth study of a particular period or historical debate.

The modularised structure of the programme means that at all stages you have a choice of topics and periods of study, with freedom to construct a programme which combines a secure breadth of historical knowledge with your own interests and preferences.

The History programme at York St John University is distinguished for the following reasons:

- We offer a wide range of modules and specialisms which allows you to focus on the kinds of history which appeals to you.
- In the second year of the programme you will have the opportunity to undertake a project or placement which will give you practical experience of working in the wider community and exploring the relevance of your studies in a variety of personal, cultural and career contexts, as well as the opportunity to engage in exciting projects. This will be in the module, *History, Community and Culture* (although if you do the study abroad programme in semester 1, you will have an equivalent experience as part of the *Making History* module).
- We have a team of dedicated staff, who have an exceptional record of providing support to students (reflected in consecutive high scores in the support categories of the NSS).
- There is an optional exchange, which involves students studying for one semester (usually in the first half of the second year) at a university elsewhere in Europe or North America.
- At all levels of the programme key skills are fully integrated into academic study and students are encouraged to reflect self-critically on their performance and to prepare themselves for their future careers or postgraduate study.
- You will be taught by academic staff who are active researchers. Our research informs our teaching. In your final year, you will work with members of staff on their specific research specialisms at the same time that they are developing exciting new directions in their particular field.
- Field trips are an enhanced feature of the programme with students invited to attend trips, for example to museums, monasteries or castles as well as explore the history on their doorstep in York. Some field trips may involve a cost to students.
- You will belong to a community of dedicated historians, with the opportunity for celebratory moments, and work closely with a personal academic tutor.

Admissions criteria

You must meet the minimum entry requirements which are published on the programme specific webpage.

If your first language is not English, you need to take an IELTS test or an equivalent qualification accepted by the University (see <https://www.yorks.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/>).

If you do not have traditional qualifications, you may be eligible for entry on the basis of [Recognition of prior learning \(RPL\)](#). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

Programme structure

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					compulsory or optional to take C or O	non-compensatable or compensatable NC or X
HIS4008M	4	1	Researching and Presenting the Past	20	C	X
LIT4002M	4	1	Introduction to Literary Studies 1	20	C	X

LIT4004M	4	2	Introduction to Literary Studies 2	20	C	X
<i>You must choose one of the following 20 credit modules in Semester 1:</i>						
HIS4009M	4	1	Global York: A Social and Cultural History of the City	20	O	X
HIS4010M	4	1	War and Society	20	O	X
LIT4003M	4	1	Writing, Research, and Literature	20	O	X
Choose two modules the following Semester 2 options, ensuring you have a minimum of 40 credits and a maximum of 80 credits in each subject overall						
HIS4011M	4	2	The Visible Past	20	O	X
HIS4012M	4	2	People and Nature: An Environmental History	20	O	X
HIS4013M	4	2	Empires	20	O	X
HIS4014M	4	2	European Revolutions	20	O	X
AMS4007M	4	2	The United States: Empire of Liberty?	20	O	X
HIS4015M	4	2	A Century in Crisis	20	O	X
LIT4005M	4	2	Theorizing Literature: Power and Identity	20	O	X
LIT4006M	4	2	Canonicity	20	O	X
Work-related learning: you must select one of the employability modules, either LIT5004M or HIS5001M						
LIT5004M	5	2	Literature at Work	20	O	X
HIS5001M	5	1	History, Community and Culture	20	O	X
You must select FIVE option modules, with a minimum of 40 credits and a maximum of 80 credits in each subject overall						
HIS5002M	5	2	Making History	20	O	X
HIS5003M	5	1 or 2	Pageantry, Power and Patriotism: Late Medieval England, 1300-1450	20	O	X
HIS5004M	5	1 or 2	Watchers and the Watched: Society in Early Modern England, c. 1540-1670	20	O	X
HIS5005M	5	1 or 2	Tudor Women: Agency and Authority	20	O	X
HIS5006M	5	1 or 2	Reds! The Rise and Fall of Soviet Communism	20	O	X
HIS5007M	5	1 or 2	Victorian Grubs: Food, Science and Society	20	O	X
AMS5002M	5	1 or 2	Slavery to Freedom	20	O	X
AMS5006M	5	1 or 2	The United States since 9/11	20	O	X
HIS5013M	5	1 or 2	The Republic in Danger	20	O	X
HIS5008M	5	1 or 2	A United Kingdom? Britain, 1707-1837	20	O	X
AMS5003M	5	1 or 2	The Nation Divided: America in the era of the Civil War	20	O	X
HIS5009M	5	1 or 2	The Great Society: America in the 1960s	20	O	X
HIS5010M	5	1 or 2	Mao's China: From Empire to Communism	20	O	X
HIS5011M	5	1 or 2	The Roman Empire: Tiberius to Domitian (14-96)	20	O	X
HIS5012M	5	1 or 2	Historical Specialisms	20	O	X
CRW5003M	5	1 or 2	Writing Reality: Creative Non-Fiction	20	O	X

LIT5002M	5	1	Adaptations	20	O	X
LIT5008M	5	1	Mapping America	20	O	X
LIT5001M	5	1 or 2	Literary Theory	20	O	X
LIT5013M	5	1 or 2	Dawn of Print	20	O	X
LIT5007M	5	1 or 2	Science Fiction for Survival	20	O	X
LIT5015M	5	1 or 2	The Romantic Imagination: Affect, Excess and Revolution	20	O	X
LIT5016M	5	1 or 2	Sick Stories: Narratives of Illness, Disease, and Infection	20	O	X
LIT5012M	5	1 or 2	Shakespeare: Perspectives	20	O	X
LIT5005M	5	2	Conflicting Words	20	O	X
You can choose a maximum of 20 credits from CRW5002M, CRW5003M, CRW5004M and CRW5005M.						
CRW5002M	5	1	Writing Fiction	20	O	X
CRW5003M	5	1	Writing Reality: Creative Non-Fiction	20	O	X
CRW5004M	5	2	Writing Poetry	20	O	X
CRW5005M	5	2	Scriptwriting	20	O	X
You must select FIVE modules, including a dissertation module, with a minimum of 40 credits and a maximum of 80 credits in each subject.						
You must choose either LIT6001M or CRW6005M or HIS6001M						
You can only take CRW6005M if you have taken/will take a Creative Writing module at Level 5 or 6						
HIS6001M	6	1 & 2	Dissertation in History	40	O	NC
LIT6001M	6	1 & 2	English Literature Research Project	40	O	NC
CRW6005M	6	1 & 2	Creative Writing Dissertation Project	40	O	NC
HIS6013M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in War Studies	20	O	X
HIS6003M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Ancient History	20	O	X
HIS6004M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Late Medieval England	20	O	X
WAR6007M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Modern International History	20	O	X
HIS6005M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Early Modern British History	20	O	X
HIS6006M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in European Early Modern Social and Cultural History	20	O	X
HIS6007M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in European History, 1700-1900	20	O	X
HIS6008M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Social and Cultural History, 1750-1900	20	O	X
HIS6009M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in the History of the Cold War	20	O	X
AMS6010M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in American History	20	O	X
HIS6010M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in the History of the Soviet Union	20	O	X

HIS6012M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Modern British History	20	O	X
AMS6011M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in American Culture	20	O	X
LIT6016M	6	1 or 2	Hunger, Rebellion, and Rage: The Victorians	20	O	X
LIT6017M	6	1 or 2	Experiments & Upheavals: Twentieth-Century Cultural Change	20	O	X
LIT6018M	6	1 or 2	Literary Legacies	20	O	X
LIT6009M	6	1 or 2	The Making of Modern Drama	20	O	X
LIT6014M	6	1	Research Now 1	20	O	X
LIT6011M	6	1 or 2	American Radicals: Outside the Canon	20	O	X
LIT6003M	6	1 or 2	Writing the Caribbean	20	O	X
LIT6019M	6	1 or 2	What Now? What Next? Twenty-First Century Literature	20	O	X
LIT6004M	6	2	Gender and Sexualities	20	O	X
LIT6015M	6	2	Research Now 2	20	O	X
You can choose a maximum of 20 credits from CRW6002M, CRW6003M or CRW6004M						
CRW6002M	6	1	Writing Genres	20	O	X
CRW6003M	6	1	Contemporary Writing 1: Innovation and Experimentation	20	O	X
CRW6004M	6	2	Contemporary Writing 2: Literary and Publishing Cultures Now	20	O	X

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the table above as non-compensatable. A non-compensatable module is one that must be passed at the relevant level (with a mark of 40) in order to progress.

English Literature

Programme aim(s)

1. To encourage students to develop an informed and critical understanding of key themes and debates within English Literature
2. To enhance students' development as independent learners and literary critics
3. To support students in developing a range of transferable skills to equip them for employment and lifelong learning
4. To develop in students an ability to reflect critically on the process of researching, writing, analysing, and forming an academic argument
5. To provide a supportive learning environment that meets the needs of a diverse set of learners

Programme learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the programme students will be able to:

Level 4

- 4.1 Apply key concepts including historical and theoretical perspectives appropriate to literary studies.
- 4.2 Show an engagement with formal and generic conventions.
- 4.3 Demonstrate competence in the analysis of a variety of texts.
- 4.4 Communicate effectively for the audience and purpose using a range of foundational skills.
- 4.5 Identify and practice foundational key transferable skills (including those for lifelong learning) appropriate for further study and future employment.
- 4.6 Demonstrate competence in applying critical and theoretical approaches to literary texts.
- 4.7 Evaluate and reflect on the research, analysis, and writing process.

Level 5

- 5.1 Utilise a critical understanding and knowledge of the discipline of English Literature, including an enhanced appreciation of historical and theoretical perspectives.
- 5.2 Show critical awareness of research strategies particular to literary studies.
- 5.3 Apply theoretical perspectives and concepts to a range of different texts.
- 5.4 Effectively communicate information, ideas, arguments, and interpretations in a manner appropriate to the audience and purpose.
- 5.5 Apply knowledge and skills effectively in decision making in the context of growing maturity as an independent learner.
- 5.6 Demonstrate transferable skills including organisation, time-management and the ability to construct a coherent argument.

Level 6

- 6.1 Demonstrate a systemic understanding of the discipline of English Literature, underpinned by a detailed awareness of historical and theoretical perspectives.
- 6.2 Synthesise and apply relevant critical and theoretical perspectives to their own research practice.
- 6.3 Deploy an advanced conceptual understanding of the application of research skills and theoretical approach to literary studies.
- 6.4 Critically reflect on individual learning as an advanced independent learner.
- 6.5 Demonstrate transferable skills to an advanced level that prepares for employment or further study.
- 6.6 Design and undertake a piece of extended independent research that demonstrates an in-depth knowledge of a specific area of English Literature.

Learning, teaching and assessment

English Literature

The aims of all our teaching are to help you to become a better writer and literary critic, to challenge you to consider new ideas and concepts, and to support you in understanding the complex connections between literature and contemporary society. Literature is a dialogic discipline: that is, informed discussions and debates are a crucial part of the learning process. We do not want students to be passive learners, but instead expect you all to be actively engaged and involved with your degree subject.

We use a range of teaching styles and settings to help support you during your time at University. You will attend lectures, seminars (groups of students with a tutor), tutorials (one-to-one meetings with a tutor), workshops, and experience collaborative learning (working with your fellow students), events, field trips, as well as independent study sessions, and times when you will need to use online resources through the University's Virtual Learning Environment.

Your first year with us is about supporting you in making the transition to university-level study and building confidence in using a set of foundational skills. You will be assigned your own Academic Tutor, a member of staff who will meet with you and other students regularly during your first semester at YSJU. Modules have been specially designed to help you adapt to the University environment and the requirements of the subject. As you progress to your second and third year, you will be able to shape your degree according to your own research interests. You can choose to specialize in a certain genre, historical period, or literary form. We have a diverse range of modules for you to choose from, and you will have lots of opportunities to study types of literature that you might not have experienced previously (such as, for example, Caribbean literature, utopian writing, and creative non-fiction). We offer an interdisciplinary approach to the study of literature, and you might find yourself studying a film or media adaptation of a text, or considering a specific performance of a play, as well as reading the original source material.

There are no exams, and your English Literature degree will be assessed through coursework. As well as writing essays, there are other assessment opportunities designed to help you develop new skills and prepare for graduate employment. You will encounter a wide range of assessment, including portfolios, close-reading exercises, and opportunities for reflective writing. Some modules are assessed by one piece of coursework (usually a portfolio) and you will have the chance to work on this throughout the semester. The feedback you will receive focuses on how you can improve your work for future assessment, and we encourage all students to keep a feedback folder to help keep track of their academic development. Feedback is provided through a range of methods, in addition to written feedback on your work, we also work with more dialogic methods and provide a range of opportunities for informal and formative feedback throughout the programme.

In your final year, you will be ready to take on a bigger role in the management of your learning. You might find yourself leading a class discussion, or doing a non-assessed presentation in a seminar. You will write a dissertation (an extended project that runs for the whole academic year) on the subject of your choice, and with the support of an academic supervisor. In many ways, this is in the intellectual culmination of your degree, as you become an independent researcher and are required to manage your own academic project. Many of our students note that this is one of the most enjoyable sections of their degree, as they are specialising in a literary topic that they are passionate about, and are putting into practice the skills they have accrued during their time at York St John University.

History

Programme aim(s)

The specific aims of the History programme are:

- To foster a lasting interest in, and enjoyment of, the study of History.
- To introduce you to a range of approaches to the study of the past, offering opportunities to explore different periods and types of history, as well as for specialisation and independent study and research.
- To encourage you to explore the implications and applications of their academic study in the wider society to which they belong.
- To enable you to compete successfully in a diverse employment market, by being able to demonstrate an ability to solve complex problems through independent critical thinking, utilising a range of information, and presenting solutions in oral and written form.

Programme learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the programme students will be able to:

Level 4

On successful completion of Level 4, you will be able to:

- 4.1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of historical approaches to the past.
- 4.2 Interpret a range of sources, secondary and primary, with guidance from your tutor, to form a scholarly argument.
- 4.3 Identify the value and limitations of competing sources of historical information.
- 4.4 Demonstrate a basic proficiency in study skills relevant to the History Subject area.

Level 5

On successful completion of Level 5, you will be able to:

- 5.1 Apply knowledge and understanding of a range of historical themes, regions and periods, within a global context.
- 5.2 Compose a coherent and critically structured argument, using an expanded range of primary and secondary material.
- 5.3 Analyse the historiography of a topic in order to assess competing scholarly debates.
- 5.4 Employ skills in communication, research and independent study.
- 5.5 Apply subject expertise in a practical context related to the community and the world of work.

Level 6

On successful completion of Level 6, you will be able to:

- 6.1 Show a systematic understanding of specific historical issues, theories and contexts through a range of special subjects.
- 6.2 Evaluate a critical understanding of the development of history as a discipline and the relevance of historiographical debate in a specialised context.
- 6.3 Exemplify confidence and sophistication in the handling of specialist secondary sources and a range of primary source material.
- 6.4 Construct and critically analyse complex arguments.
- 6.5 Design and undertake a piece of extended independent research that demonstrates an in-depth knowledge, understanding and analysis of a specifically historical topic or theme.
- 6.6 Make use of necessary skills for employment or future study, such as taking the initiative and asserting personal responsibility.

Learning, teaching and assessment

Each module has a programme of structured learning which will include, in various combinations, formal structured class contact (e.g. lectures, seminars, workshops), independent study (reading, research, preparation of assignments) and, in some modules, field trips and work-related activity. You are encouraged to use the widest possible range of resources for your studies, including books, journals, visual material, archives, e-learning sources, and the resources of the local community and region such as museums, galleries and historic buildings. For all modules, individual tutorial contact between you and your tutor(s) is an integral part of the learning experience and is a crucial vehicle for providing formative feedback on student work, addressing individual study needs and fostering students' personal academic development.

The aim of the programme is to develop the progressive skills of students as autonomous independent thinkers and learners, but within a collaborative learning environment. Modules have a variety of assessment types, such as: essays, primary source exercises, reviews, site reports, open and closed examination, and reflective pieces. You are assessed through different aspects of writing skills in line with

the History benchmarking recommendations. *History, Community and Culture* is structured around a work-related or practically based learning experience and is assessed by means of a learning journal and a work-related report. The dissertation at level 6 meets the requirement for an extended piece of written work based on research and primary source material and is assessed on the basis of 10,000 words for 40 credits.

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's [general regulations](#) undergraduate awards apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section as non-compensatable.

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University mission and values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statements](#)
- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)

Date written / revised:

Programme originally approved: