

Programme Specification

BA (Hons) History and American Studies

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	History and American Studies
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2021/22
<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 History and American Studies Diploma of Higher Education History and American Studies BA (Ord) History and American Studies
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	VT17 History and American Studies
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Area Studies 2019
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	Undergraduate periods of study ¹ for full time / 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.

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.

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

- 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.

American Studies

American Studies reflects a range of critical approaches to explore the history and culture of the United States as well as an understanding of the American experience itself. It will offer you an exciting programme which will encourage you to also reflect critically upon the predominance of the United States in political, cultural, historical and literary terms and contexts, as well as on American Studies as a truly interdisciplinary subject area. The taught modules take you on a series of journeys in order to offer multi-perspective interpretations of the United States, with moments in your second and third year of study to undertake a supported interdisciplinary approach.

Essential to American Studies is the integration of related disciplines (History, Literature and Film Studies), which, when integrated, results in a broad based and flexible programme. Certain broad themes will be addressed throughout each level, which can be summarised as follows: the exploration of the United States as an evolving cosmopolitan democratic culture shaped by immigration, ethnic diversity and racial tension; the emergence and evolution of the USA's global hegemony, and its impact upon the international community; and the nature and significance of contemporary US popular culture, especially film and TV, in a domestic and globalised context. Each of these themes will be developed with greater complexity as you progress through the programme. American Studies also supports a broad constituency of learners and offers a curriculum that is attractive to home and international audiences. The inclusion of an exciting

optional, one semester exchange with the USA (as well as the nature of the subject itself) embraces the internationalisation ambitions of the University.

Special features

- You will work with a team of enthusiastic and research-active staff throughout your time on the programme; they will support you and bring their own research about the United States to the programme.
- The programme is both multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary, meaning that you can study different aspects of American Studies from modules across Literature, History and Film, and bring those components together as you develop as an independent researcher.
- A special feature of the programme is the optional international exchange, which presents you with the opportunity to study for one semester (in the first semester of the second year) at a university in the USA.
- An inter-disciplinary independent project exclusive to the programme.

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.yorksj.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 (C) or optional (O)	non-compensatable (NC) or compensatable (X)
AMS4006M	4	1	Introduction to American Studies	20	C	x
HIS4008M	4	1	Researching and Presenting the Past	20	C	x
You must take either HIS4009M or HIS4010M						
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
AMS4002M	4	2	Cinema and Society	20	C	x
AMS4007M	4	2	The United States: Empire of Liberty?	20	C	x
You must select ONE of the modules below 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
HIS5001M	5	1	History, Community and Culture	20	C	x
HIS5002M	5	2	Making History	20	C/O ²	x

² This module will be compulsory should you do Study Abroad in semester 1 as there can be a work-related learning element to the module in such circumstances.

Choose 40 credits in semester 1 and 40 credits in semester 2, ensuring you have a minimum of 40 credits and a maximum of 80 credits in each subject overall.						
LIT5008M	5	1 or 2	Mapping America	20	O	x
AMS5003M	5	1 or 2	Nation Divided: The United States in the era of the Civil War	20	O	x
AMS5002M	5	1 or 2	Slavery to Freedom	20	O	x
FIL5002M	5	1 or 2	Film and the American Imagination	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
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
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
You must choose either AMS6012M or HIS6001M						
AMS6012M	6	1 & 2	Dissertation in American Studies	40	O	NC
HIS6001M	6	1 & 2	Dissertation in History	40	O	NC
You must select FOUR option modules ensuring you have a minimum of 40 credits and a maximum of 80 credits in each subject overall.						
AMS6011M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in American Culture	20	O	x
AMS6010M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in American History	20	O	x
LIT6004M	6	2	Gender and Sexualities	20	O	x
LIT6011M	6	1 or 2	American Radicals: Outside the Canon	20	O	x
WAR6003M	6	1 or 2	The American Way of War	20	O	x
HIS6002M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Modern International History	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
WAR6002M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in War Studies	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
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
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Please note that not all options may be available every year as they depend on student demand and staff availability.

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.

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.

American Studies

Programme aim(s)

The American Studies Programme has the following aims:

1. To develop and achieve a growing sophisticated knowledge of the history, society, and culture of the United States.
2. To understand the significance of the United States within a transnational and global context.
3. To demonstrate an awareness of interdisciplinarity and exhibit an understanding of American Studies approaches and methodologies.
4. To demonstrate transferable employment-relevant or research key skills.

Programme learning outcomes

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

Level 4

- 4.1 Demonstrate understanding and content knowledge of the history and culture of the United States.

- 4.2 Apply a knowledge of the theoretical perspectives of interdisciplinarity for an understanding of the United States and the concept of American Studies.
- 4.3 Interpret a range of sources related to the United States to form a scholarly argument.
- 4.4 Understand American Studies as an interdisciplinary subject in its own right.

Level 5

- 5.6 Demonstrate an understanding and content knowledge of the history and culture of the USA, and its significance within a global and transnational context.
- 5.7 Ability to competently and effectively apply and communicate critical and theoretical approaches to historical and cultural sources.
- 5.8 Compose a coherent and critically structured argument, using an expanded range of materials related to the United States.
- 5.9 Apply key academic skills, including awareness of independent research strategies, and enhanced facility for written and oral analysis, argument, and expression.
- 5.10 Effectively demonstrate transferable skills including organisation, time-management, and decision-making.

Level 6

- 6.7 Demonstrate a systemic understanding of the history and culture of the United States, underpinned by a detailed awareness of historiographical and/or theoretical texts.
- 6.8 Utilise an advanced conceptual understanding of the application of interdisciplinary skills and approaches in American Studies.
- 6.9 Critically analyse and evaluate a diverse range of sources and information for the purposes of researching and understanding.
- 6.10 Construct and critically analyse complex arguments.
- 6.11 Demonstrate transferrable skills in communication and research.
- 6.12 Undertake focused interdisciplinary study about the United States' history and/or culture.

Learning, teaching and assessment

Each American Studies module is based on formal structured class contact (e.g. lectures, seminars, workshops), and independent study (reading, research, preparation of assignments). For all modules, individual tutorial contact between you and your tutor(s) is an integral part of the learning experience, ensuring that you can work with the programme team in addressing individual study needs and cultivating your academic progress. Many of our modules are interdisciplinary, focusing on history and culture through the means of, for instance, literature, music, art, podcasts, and film. You will be studying an interdisciplinary and inclusive curriculum.

The purpose of the American Studies programme is to develop your skills as an independent thinker and learner, within a collaborative learning environment, progressing from multidisciplinary study of the United States to interdisciplinary study. At level 4, you will be introduced to the key dimensions of American Studies: Literature, History, and Culture (Film), with Politics embedded within the Literature and History modules. Modules have a variety of assessment types, such as: essays, reviews, open and closed examinations, portfolios, and reflective pieces. You are assessed through different aspects of writing skills in line with the Area Studies benchmarking recommendations. At level 5, the compulsory *Making America* module is designed to support you as you progress from multi-discipline learning and research into an interdisciplinary scholar, bringing together all dimensions of American Studies. You will undertake advanced multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary study of the United States at level 6. This may include a dissertation in American Studies, based on interdisciplinary and independent research using primary source materials.

In your American Studies programme, you will be exposed to a variety of assessments. You will have the opportunity to ask for feedback on formative work, such as essay plans, and feedback about your assessments will offer advice about how to develop your ideas and work in the future. The American Studies team is committed to decolonising the curriculum, meaning that you will be encouraged, and supported in, studying a range of voices and experiences in the United States. Similarly, the diversity of the discipline extends to the use of technology and the development of your digital skills. For instance, you will have the opportunity to utilise data bases and digital archives based in the United States. Furthermore, you

will have the opportunity to co-create your own curriculum in some modules, with staff consulting with you about topics you would like to see discussed in lectures, seminars and tutorials. Our commitment to supporting your development in critical thinking, project management and collaborative skills are underlined by the work-related learning module that you will take as a student at York St John in your second year of study. This commitment to employability is equalled by our commitment to offering an international experience: you will have the opportunity to study abroad in the United States during your second year.³

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's [general regulations for](#) 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: Jan 2022

Programme originally approved: 16/12/2020

³ Subject to availability.