

Programme Specification

Award and title: MA Environment and Social Justice

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	Geography, English Literature, History, Theology & Religious Studies.
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2026-27
<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
<i>Programme/s accredited by:</i>	
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Postgraduate Certificate Environment and Social Justice Postgraduate Diploma Environment and Social Justice
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	Postgraduate periods of study ¹ for full time / part time
<i>Language of study:</i>	English
<i>Paired with Foundation Year</i>	No
<i>Study abroad opportunities:</i>	No
<i>Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:</i>	No

Introduction and special features

The MA Environment and Social Justice is designed for home and international students who wish to advance their knowledge and skills in using multidisciplinary approaches to address the environmental, social, economic and cultural impacts of global environmental challenges. The programme is also aimed at current and future policy-makers and professionals in governmental, non-governmental and third sector organisations, as well as anyone interested in pursuing work at the intersection of environment and social justice within their local context.

The global climate change and biodiversity crises are closely bound up with issues of social, environmental and ecological justice, at local to global scales. Through the MA Environment and Social Justice, you will explore insights from across humanities and social science disciplines to explore these interconnections in depth. The programme has a strong solution-focused orientation, supporting you to think through complex issues and develop potential outcomes that work towards a more just, sustainable world.

The programme is designed to support your progression to completion of a capstone project that tackles a real-world problem of your choosing. Two compulsory modules examine key concepts and topics of contemporary relevance and develop your understanding of research methods, culminating in a research proposal for your capstone project. Choose two of four optional modules to develop the breadth and depth of your knowledge, enabling you to further contextualise your project and consider it from different perspectives. Completion of the capstone project is the culmination of your studies. An important feature of this is that it is not solely about academic research: a requirement to engage with relevant stakeholders will

ensure you are undertaking work that has real-world impact or identifies the potential for such impact to be realised.

The MA Social and Environmental Justice is offered by the School of Humanities and aligns with the University's Institute for Social Justice. As a postgraduate student you will be invited to research seminars and events that take place within your period of study. The programme is taught by a team of internationally recognised researchers who have experience of a variety of relevant research approaches and methods, working in local, national and international contexts. Guest speakers from external organisations concerned with responding to environmental and social justice issues provide practitioner perspectives from relevant fields. On completion of the programme, should you wish to pursue your studies to doctoral level, potential research degree supervisors are available within the staff team, giving you opportunity to continue your studies within the University.

The values and ethos of York St John University closely align with environment and social justice, with sector leading environmental sustainability and biodiversity initiatives on campus, and an inclusive and socially transformative ethos.

Special features:

- Develop critical understanding of global challenges and their local implications;
- Explore multiple perspectives from across humanities and social science disciplines;
- Practice applying tools and methods for decision-making in complex circumstances;
- Engage with stakeholders to develop an independent research project with potential to make a real difference.

Admissions criteria

You must meet the University's general entry criteria for [postgraduate](#) study. In addition, you must have:

- An honours degree with a classification of 2.2 or above, or an equivalent qualification.
- Demonstrated how your Bachelor's degree or recent work experience will enable you to contribute to, and benefit from, the programme.

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 aim(s)

1. To facilitate students' exploration of environment and social justice from multi- and inter-disciplinary perspectives across the humanities and beyond as relevant;
2. To develop students' in-depth understanding of global challenges and global futures, foregrounding global-to-local connections;
3. To support students to develop an independent project that directly addresses a topic of concern, through engagement with stakeholders and the application of research skills to develop practical and/or policy solutions;
4. To provide a supportive learning environment, developing a vibrant and diverse postgraduate community.

Programme learning outcomes

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

Level 7

- 7.1 Demonstrate a systematic understanding of humanities concepts and theoretical frameworks relevant to the intersection of environment, society and justice;
- 7.2 Apply academic concepts and frameworks to critically analyse complex society-environment issues in specific contexts;
- 7.3 Identify a contemporary issue related to the intersection of environmental change and social justice, and justify and deploy an appropriate research methodology to develop new knowledge in relation to this issue;
- 7.4 Engage with stakeholders to identify and articulate a variety of perspectives on an issue;
- 7.5 Demonstrate creativity and self-direction in developing proposals to address complex problems through policy and/or practice;
- 7.6 Communicate arguments and conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

Programme structure

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensable (NC) or compensable (X)
GEO7001M	7	1	Environment, Society & Justice	30	C	X
GEO7002M	7	1	Researching, Representing & Communicating Environmental-Social Relations	30	C	X
Choose one module from the two options below						
GEO7003M	7	2	Environmental Humanities	30	O	X
GEO7004M	7	2	Environmental Policy	30	O	X
Choose one module from the two options below						
GEO7005M	7	2	Political Ecology	30	O	X
GEO7006M	7	2	Sustainability in Practice	30	O	X
GEO7007M	7	3	Environment and Social Justice Capstone Project	60	C	NC

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-compensable. A non-compensable module is one that must be passed at the relevant level (with a mark of 50) in order to progress.

Learning, teaching and assessment

Throughout the programme you are expected to take an active role in your learning, critically engaging with taught input and using the structure provided by modules and assessments to pursue your own interests and develop your own specialist knowledge. Staff on the programme take the role of facilitators, encouraging you to think both about and beyond your own experience and spheres of reference. You will be encouraged to share your insights and experiences through in-class dialogue, thus contributing to a collaborative learning environment.

The programme is structured to equip you with the knowledge and skills to understand and address environment and social justice problems, increasing your independence as you progress through the modules. The 30-credit modules will incorporate lectures, seminars and workshops, with a mix of staff-led and student-led activities. You are expected to engage in independent study alongside these, to further your understanding and tailor your learning to the issues that particularly interest you. Individual tutorial support is an integral part of the learning experience, helping you identify your individual study needs and supporting your personal academic development. The 60-credit capstone project is an independent project, for which you will have one-to-one support from a supervisor. This project requires you to engage with stakeholders, encouraging you to apply your knowledge and creativity in developing real-world solutions.

Throughout the programme you will be supported to acquire and develop key skills appropriate to taught postgraduate study. This includes self-reflection and self-management; time management; independent learning; constructive use of feedback; and capacities for life-long learning.

You will encounter a variety of assessment types, that align with the aims of the programme and purpose of each module, and support the development of an appropriate range of skills. Examples of assessment types across the programme include a case study report, research proposal, essay, and policy briefing, as well as the capstone project. Formative activities (that give you feedback on the development of your ideas, plans or work) during taught modules and tutorials will support you as you work towards the summative assessments. This is likely to incorporate a combination of tutor feedback, peer feedback and self-assessed feedback. You will receive feedback from tutors on all summative assessments.

Progression and graduation requirements

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

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

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](#)
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Date written / revised:

Programme originally approved: