

Programme Specification

MA International History

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	History, American and War Studies
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2020-21
<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>	Not applicable
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Postgraduate Certificate International History Postgraduate Diploma International History
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	Not applicable
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	Not applicable
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Not applicable
<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>Placement year opportunity:</i>	No

Introduction and special features

International history is a sub-discipline of history which has roots in the traditional diplomatic history of relations between nation states, and has come to encompass a more expansive view of its subject matter and approaches. These include economics, strategy, the domestic sources of foreign policy, ideology, propaganda, and cultural modes of analysis. Although formal relations between nation states remain important, international history increasingly emphasises non-state actors and transnational processes. Unlike global history, which is exclusively concerned with the production of a single integrated human story, international history offers the flexibility to examine the interaction of states and non-state entities from a wide variety of perspectives, utilising a multitude of disciplines. The concept is similar to that of transnational history, which also is concerned with the movement of ideas and people across borders, such that national history can be explored from a transnational perspective, but this term is likely to be less familiar to applicant to our programme than international history.

While diplomatic history largely confined itself to the use of government documents as its main primary source material, the discipline of history, and specifically the sub-discipline of international history have moved far beyond that to the point where almost any artefact might constitute a valid source which can be 'read' and deconstructed, and where a range of social science disciplines offer up their methodologies for adaptation by the historian. Students on the MA International History programme will take a series of taught modules that utilise these points of cross-fertilisation with the social sciences.

The programme explores the international history of the 20th and 21st centuries. First, you will be introduced to a range of different modes of analysis by which the international History of the 20th and 21st centuries might be apprehended, including a variety of approaches that range from traditional diplomatic

history through to methods of cultural analysis. This provides the methodological and subject-content underpinnings for the rest of the programme.

Like all historical periods, the 20th and 21st centuries can be further divided by more or less contested watersheds. The concept of the 'short 20th century', for example, avoids beginning with 1901 - a date that has no particular significance in itself - in favour of boundaries established by the watersheds of the outbreak of the First World War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Extending this period into the 21st century provides us with the convenient mid-point of the post-Second World War settlement. A logical device for exploring the international history of the period before this watershed is through the mechanism of imperialism which was, arguably, the dominant organising principle of the international world before the Second World War, but which was subject to ever-increasing stresses and strains during this period. It is through this lens that we explore the international history of the first half of the 20th century. It should be understood that this exploration is not Euro or western-centric, but takes as its point of departure the fact of the existence of imperialism and is mindful of the experience of imperial subjects as actors, assesses the emergence of various nationalist movements, explores the development of Asian imperialism and its clash with the west, and explores the development of transnational alternatives to the established imperial order.

Subsequent modules explore the international history of the post-1945 world from the perspective of the juxtaposition of promise and challenge. Once again, these modules will seek to establish the proper significance of non-western and non-state actors in the historical process with which you are concerned. You will interrogate the extent to which the international 'system' has met the very considerable promise and profound challenges offered by post-war developments in terms of decolonisation and the post-colonial world, and in terms of international security. With regard to the former, the programme will specifically consider the impact on the governments and peoples of the newly independent states and not simply consider decolonisation as a 'western problem'; while with regard to the latter the programme will consider non-aligned states, and the development of international structures.

Throughout the programme you will have the opportunity to emphasise your particular interests through choice of seminar and coursework assignments and, most significantly through the selection and development of an extended piece of independent research and critical writing, on a topic of your choice (in the field of international history, broadly defined), which will provide you with the opportunity to demonstrate the full range of attributes required of the professional historian short of the Ph.D. While the writing-up of this project will take place at the end of their programmes, you will begin the process of topic selection and preparation much earlier and the processes of research will take place in parallel with your other modules. Taken as a whole, the programme will enable you to better understand this seminal period in international history, offer you a window on the contemporary world, and foster the development of the higher-order generic transferable skills that should be the essence of 'postgraduateness'.

Special features

- All of the teaching team are research active in the area of international history.
- The MA can be taken part-time or full-time which allows for flexibility.
- Access to a visiting speaker series given by notable historians on campus and access to a series of lectures given locally by the York Historical War Analysis Group.
- Opportunities to contribute papers to various forums, including an integrated MA International History seminar series.
- You will be encouraged and guided by staff to publish your research work.
- The programme ethos extends beyond a Western approach, and emphasises global and transnational perspectives.

Admissions criteria

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

- UK/EU Students: Applicants will normally require a first degree at 2:1 or above. Candidates who do not have a first degree in History will be required to have an interview.
- International students will require a degree in a relevant subject area equivalent to British standards.

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 [Accredited Prior \(Experiential\) Learning \(APL/APEL\)](#). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

Programme aim(s)

1. To provide students with the opportunity to undertake a holistic, thematic, international MA history programme.
2. To enable students to develop a greater understanding of the processes shaping the contemporary world and a window on its dynamic trajectories by studying the international history of the 20th and 21st centuries.
3. To enhance students' opportunities for professional, personal and societal fulfilment, including employment and further postgraduate study.
4. To provide a supportive learning environment which meets the needs of a diverse set of learners.
5. To promote and contribute to a vibrant postgraduate community in the university.
6. To make a significant contribution to the development of a strong research culture within the university.

Programme learning outcomes

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

Level 7

Upon successful completion of a Master of Arts in International History students will be able to demonstrate:

- 7.1 An in-depth specialist knowledge and mastery of historical methods and approaches relating to International History, and professional historical practice.
- 7.2 A sophisticated understanding of the nature of international history as a discipline.
- 7.3 A comprehensive understanding of a series of issues, theories and contexts within the field of international history.
- 7.4 Critical engagement with an extensive range of historiographical and primary sources relevant to international history.
- 7.5 The ability to undertake advanced critical historical analysis rooted in empirical historical evidence apprehended from regional, global and transnational perspectives.
- 7.6 A comprehensive understanding of research methodologies in undertaking and successfully executing an extended piece of independent research and critical writing.

Programme structure

Code	Level	Term	Title	Credits	Module status	
					compulsory or optional to take C or O	non-compensatable or compensatable NC or X
HIS7001M	7	1	Main Currents in International History	30	C	NC
HIS7002M	7	1	Imperial Crisis	30	C	X
HIS7003M	7	2	Decolonisation and the Post-Colonial World	30	C	X
HIS7004M	7	2	Peril and Progress: Security in the Post-1945 World	30	C	X
HIS7005M	7	2&3	Research Dissertation in International History	60	C	NC

Learning, teaching and assessment

The learning and teaching philosophy of the MA International History programme concurs with the view that 'time taken talking at students should be minimised while the time for students to be involved actively in the development of their understanding and skills should be maximised and extended beyond the formally scheduled class time into personal and group study'. (Hunt, Chalmers & Macdonald, 2013, 22.) Learning and teaching on the programme is rooted in critical analysis and the creation of a permissive environment, in which you can develop your own knowledge, skills and critical faculties in concert with your lecturers and your peers.

To achieve this the programme will predominately be taught in small seminar discussion groups and there will be few formal lectures. The small groups will encourage a intimate environment, where you will have plenty of opportunity to interact with your peers both orally and receptively. The lecturers will establish the body of sources to be examined and will assign seminar papers to individuals, or groups but beyond these seminar papers you will be able to set the agenda on the basis of the material examined.

The module *Main Currents in International History* will provide you with a methodological foundation on which to build during the rest of the MA programme. It is designed to equip you with high-level scholarly research skills and to introduce you to a range of contemporary approaches to history, which will ensure all your cohort quickly have a shared understanding and will allow you to progress through the rest of the programme with confidence. The module seminars will deal with methodology, theory and research techniques within the context of the development of historiography over time. This first module will also include a section geared towards the preparation of dissertation proposals; advice on the use of archives and other primary sources; and discussions on the writing of history in general terms. In this way the programme will support you in preparing for, and carrying out, an extended piece of independent research, from the earliest part of the programme.

For all modules on the programme, individual tutorial contact between you and your tutor will be an integral part of the learning experience; allowing for ongoing feedback, addressing individual study needs and fostering your personal academic development. You will be able to ask for a tutorial at any time, but tutorial points will also be built into the contact sessions. The learning and teaching approach of the programme is mindful of the fact that History is, in fact, a fundamentally interdisciplinary subject, and international history perhaps particularly so. During its existence as a recognized sub-discipline, International History has brought the insights and techniques of any number of other disciplines to bear on the historical issues and periods within its remit. We will draw on this multiplicity of disciplines and interrogate a variety of different types of artefacts as source material. Much of the assigned reading for the modules will be historiographical, and sometimes 'traditional' primary material, such as government documents, but non-traditional sources will also be used, including fiction literature, in line with recent cultural approaches to the study of international history, filmic and audio materials and social media. Thus, contemporary stills, moving

images, audio and social media will form part of the Supported Open Learning packages for the modules, for critical analysis in seminars and in coursework.

Assessment

History, at all higher education levels, is a literary and evidence-based discipline which requires wide, critical reading and intelligent synthesis of information. It will also require you to construct arguments in writing. All students on the MA International History programme will receive critical and constructive comments on their progress as an integral part of teaching and learning, through individual meetings with tutors, feedback on written work or specific coursework tutorials. The programme's assessment points will also work as a formative mechanism, which will produce a dialogue between you and your tutors, in order to shape your development and goal-orientated educational experience. You will be formatively assessed in every module; for example, you will be asked to prepare seminar papers. These exercises will develop your critical faculties and widen your familiarity with a range of sources, establishing confidence and preparedness for the modules' summative assessment and the final dissertation.

This programme places a strong emphasis on the development of the independent researching and writing skills, which are the stock-in-trade of the professional historian. The programme's assessment strategies are designed to develop independent research skills; the ability to structure and write a sophisticated critical essay and longer academic monographs, and the opportunity to pursue your own intellectual interests within each module's thematic scope. The modules will be summatively assessed mostly by means of research essays.

Given the importance of conducting presentations in professional historical practice and, as a transferable skill, you will present seminar papers during the course of your modules. These will be used as a basis for feedback and will then feed into your written work.

The programme culminates in a final submission of a 15,000 word extended piece of research and critical writing. This piece will be on a subject of your choice, which is proposed and agreed with your tutor. The independent project will conform as closely as possible to the standards expected of a professional historian and will be supported by one-to-one supervision by those school members most closely associated with the subject area of the dissertation in question. In preparation for your dissertation, you will be asked to complete a literature review which will be formatively assessed. The purpose of the literature review is to frame your dissertation topic within the historiography of your subject area, hence clarifying the focus of your project. Your supervisor will schedule a number of one-to-one sessions to advise you during the course of your dissertation and formatively evaluate your progress towards the completion of your dissertation. Additional tutorials can be requested if required.

You can benefit from the development of your language skills as both a marketable asset and as a practical aid to your work as historians. Consequently, you can take language courses as adjuncts to your programme through the Business School's language programme for a relatively small additional cost per course. These language courses will not count towards your degree classification for MA International History.

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-compensatable.

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University Mission Statement](#) [see page two]
- [Strategic Plan 2015-20](#) [see page four]
- [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#)
- QAA quality code for higher education descriptors for qualification at level 7: Master's Degree (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/Quality-Code-Chapter-A1.pdf>)
- York St John's 'Qualifications Descriptors' document (YSJU Registry 2011)
- School Assessment Handbook 2011
- The HEA
- YSJU Strategic Plan, 2012-2015
- Hunt, L; Chalmers, D. & Macdonald, R. 'Effective Classroom Teaching', Hunt, L. & Chalmers, D. eds. (2013) *University Teaching in Focus: A Learning Centred Approach*, London: Routledge
- Race, P. & Pickford, (2007) *Making Teaching Work: 'Teaching Smarter' in Post-Compulsory Education*, Los Angeles: Sage.

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Programme originally approved: