

Programme Specification

Award and title: MA History

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	History
<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>	N/A
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Postgraduate Certificate in History Postgraduate Diploma in History
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	N/A
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	N/A
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	History 2019
<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

Our MA in History will offer you an exciting and challenging curriculum that speaks to the world in which we live; the transformations that have informed our past and present; and the questions that will shape our digital future.

With a broad geographical reach and a broad chronological range, from the early modern period through to contemporary society, our programme will encourage you to pursue your research interests alongside working with staff in areas based on their research expertise. The programme will offer you a selection of modules which will provide a distinctive and flexible opportunity to develop specialisms in the areas of history which interest you. You will be taught in small groups and in a stimulating environment. You will be joining a subject area with an established record of high levels of student satisfaction.

Our MA in History will enable you to become an independent, confident and digitally literate learner, thus improving your employability. The acquisition of an MA in History demonstrates high levels of specialism; you will gain postgraduate-level proficiencies through the development of a range of transferable skills including the application of digital humanities methods, such as creating digital portfolios, engaging in website development and creating and analysing historical databases. The transferable skills that you will gain will enable you to progress to doctoral research or employment in a wide variety of sectors, including for example the heritage industry, communication services and teaching.

Special features:

- An exciting and challenging curriculum delivered by a research active programme team.
- A student-led, research-informed teaching environment with opportunities for stimulating discussions within small groups.
- A subject area with an established record of high levels of student satisfaction.
- A range of transferable skills including digital humanities methods as well as other key skills of problem-solving and project planning and management in order to enhance employability. This will widen career prospects in a range of professional sectors, and including publishing, web development, marketing, communication, and data management.
- Varied and innovative forms of assessment which are authentic to the craft of historians but also develop skills for wider employment.
- Ongoing opportunities to collaborate with both staff and students. Based on long-standing relationships with the History programme at York St John University, further opportunities to collaborate with external partners in the city of York and beyond. This might include the archives at York Explore, the Yorkshire Film Archive, the National Railway Museum, the Borthwick Institute, Minster Library, the British Library at Boston Spa, and other local Record Offices. With support from academic staff, you are encouraged to make connections between your academic work and external organisations.
- A commitment to decolonising and decentring the curriculum. This involves emphasising the importance of critiquing conventional histories of the state, nation and empire, while acknowledging and understanding the existence and significance of marginalised voices and narratives, and incorporating them into our interpretations of the past.
- Access to a wide range of visiting speakers and events in the School of Humanities, such as those marking Black History Month and LGBT+ History Month, and the internal School research seminar series.
- The MA can be taken part-time or full-time which allows for flexibility.

Admissions criteria

You must meet the minimum entry requirements which are published on the programme specific webpage. In addition, you must have:

- Applicants will require a 2:2 or above. Candidates who do not have a first degree in History will be required to have an interview.

If your first language is not English, you need to take an IELTS test or an equivalent qualification accepted by the University (see <http://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 aim(s)

Our MA in History will provide you with the opportunity to bridge the gap between undergraduate learning and doctoral research by undertaking modules with political, international, environmental, social and cultural historical approaches, from the early modern period to contemporary society. You will also enhance your opportunities for academic, professional and personal fulfilment, including employability, by gaining awareness and practical experience of digital humanities methods and tools. We also provide a supportive learning environment which meets the needs of a diverse set of learners, where you will be invited to contribute to a vibrant postgraduate community, as well as 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

- 7.1 Communicate effectively in writing to demonstrate a specialist knowledge and mastery of historical methodologies and historiographical approaches.
- 7.2 Demonstrate sophisticated understanding of the nature of history as a discipline, which will involve synthesising and evaluating new knowledge and scholarship.
- 7.3 Appropriately select and use a range of digital tools to find and compare qualitative and quantitative sources of information relevant to the study of history.
- 7.4 Analyse, synthesise and critically evaluate historical evidence, explored from a variety of perspectives.
- 7.5 Design, plan and carry out an extended piece of independent and original historical research.

Programme structure

During your MA you will complete four optional modules. At the start of the Programme you will choose modules from either 'Option A' or 'Option B' module pathways, but there may also be the opportunity to combine pathways. You will choose two optional modules from a choice of four for term one and choose two optional modules from a choice of four for term two.

Code	Level	Term	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensable (NC) or compensable (X)
HIS7011M	7	1	Historians and the Writing of History	30	C	X
HIS7012M	7	2	Digital Humanities for Historians	30	C	X
HIS7013M	7	1,2, 3	Dissertation	60	C	NC
HIS7015M	7	1 or 2	Shatter Zones: Empires and the First World War in Europe (Option B)	15	O	X
HIS7017M	7	1 or 2	Bloody, Broken and Brave Communities: Microhistories of Everyday Life in the English Revolution (Option A)	15	O	X
HIS7018M	7	1 or 2	Peril and Progress: Security in the Post-Cold War World (Option B)	15	O	X
HIS7019M	7	1 or 2	The Setting Sun: British Decolonisation, c. 1945-1968 (Option B)	15	O	X
HIS7021M	7	1 or 2	Mindsets: Historical Perspectives on Mental Healthcare (Option A)	15	O	X
HIS7022M	7	1 or 2	Britain at War, c. 1800-1815 (Option A)	15	O	X
HIS7023M	7	1 or 2	Exile, Identity and Religious Experience in Early Modern Europe (Option A)	15	O	X
HIS7025M	7	1 or 2	History Today (Option B)	15	O	X

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 for PG) in order to progress.

Learning, teaching and assessment

The MA in History programme has a literary evidence-based approach which requires wide, critical reading and intelligent synthesis of ideas and information. It requires you to construct arguments in writing across a number of formats. All students on the MA programme will receive 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. Formative support and feedback will be provided throughout the programme's delivery, which will produce a dialogue between you and your tutors, in order to shape the development of your ideas and goal-orientated educational experience. As a transferable skill, you may be asked to present your work and ideas extensively throughout the course of your modules in informal class presentations, on which you can receive formative feedback and peer review. These will be used as a basis for feedback and will then feed into your written work. These exercises, amongst others, will develop your critical abilities as well as widen your familiarity with, and confidence in handling, a range of sources, preparing you for the modules' summative assessment stage, and the final dissertation. This programme places a strong emphasis on the development of independent research and writing. The programme's assessment strategies are designed to develop independent research skills as you pursue your own intellectual interests within each module's thematic scope.

The learning and teaching philosophy of the History MA 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 in which you will be expected to develop your own knowledge, skills and critical faculties in partnership with your tutors and your peers. To achieve this, the programme will predominately be taught in small seminar discussion groups, where you will have plenty of opportunity to interact with your peers through reflective dialogue. The tutors 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.

You will study for the MA in History through a combination of two taught 30 credit modules, a 60-credit research dissertation module, and select four 15-credit taught modules. Formative and summative assessment on taught modules will include portfolios, presentations, independent study, writing and research. In term 1, you will be introduced to key historiographical debates at postgraduate level in 'Historians and the Writing of History'. You will begin to apply your knowledge and understanding of these approaches in the study of your option modules. Term 2 will see the team support you in increasing independence in your research and development of ideas, particularly through the expertise and skills of digital humanities. The modules of your second term will strengthen the skills and understanding of academic history, providing a basis for you to undertake independent postgraduate research in your dissertation. Throughout the programme you will have the opportunity to emphasise your particular interests in social and cultural, political and international history through your selection of modules and subsequent seminar and coursework assignments, and through the development of an extended piece of independent research on a topic of your choice. This will enable you to demonstrate the full range of attributes required of the professional historian short of the PhD. While the writing-up of your dissertation project will take place at the end of your programme, you will begin the process of topic selection and preparation much earlier, and you will be supported through the research for the dissertation in tandem with your other modules.

Our MA offers you the opportunity to develop pathways that reflect your own research interests and support the development of your own specialisms. For instance, you could take modules in early modern social history, such as 'Bloody, Broken and Brave Communities: Microhistories of Everyday Life in the English Revolution' and 'Religious Exile in Early Modern Europe'. Modernists with an interest in international affairs could develop a specialism through a pathway offered by modules such as: 'Shatter Zones: Empires and the First World War in Europe', 'The Setting Sun: British Decolonisation, c.1945-1968', and 'Peril and Progress: Security in the Post-1945 World'. You may also choose modules that reflect an eclectic range of interests, opting to do modules as divergent as 'Mindsets: Historical Perspectives on Mental Healthcare' and 'Britain at War, c.1800-1815.'

Key transferable skills are embedded throughout the curriculum, including a core focus on higher-level digital training and on the use of digitisation in the humanities. The MA culminates in a 12,000-word original research dissertation, allowing you to pursue and develop your own specialist interests. While at York St John University, you will have access to the facilities of the University and to a range of important local and national collections, including the Yorkshire Film Archive, the Minster Library, the National Railway Museum, and the York City Archives. With appropriate academic support, you will be able to explore connections between your academic work and external organisations in the city and region. You will also have access to a varied programme of visiting speakers and research events hosted by the University.

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: March 2022

Programme originally approved: 11/05/2022