Programme Specification

Master of Arts in Writing Audio

School: Humanities
Subject area: Creative Writing
Entry from academic year: 2020-21
in the month(s) of: September
Awarding institution: York St John University
Teaching institution: York St John University
Delivery location: York St John University
Programme/s accredited by: Not applicable
Exit awards:
  - Postgraduate Certificate Writing Audio
  - Postgraduate Diploma Writing Audio
UCAS code / GTTR / other: Not applicable
Joint Honours combinations: Not applicable
QAA subject benchmark statement(s): See the QAA Benchmark document on Creative Writing for reference (these do not extend in Creative Writing to any specifics for MA level and are therefore a guide only)

Mode/s of study: Postgraduate periods of study\(^1\) for part-time
Language of study: English
Paired with foundation year: No
Study abroad opportunities: No
Placement year opportunity: No

Introduction and special features

The MA in Writing Audio is part of the vibrant and exciting undergraduate and postgraduate provision in the York Centre for Writing. In this MA you will be exposed to and write for the major forms of audio narrative, including short and long drama, series and adaptation. As part of this process you will also develop a range of key skills in critical reflection and creative practice. The programme is designed to allow you the opportunity to develop the kinds of audio writing that interest you, within the formal constraints of industry practice and form.

You will gain an insight into audio writing as an academic subject, interrogating the place of sound in cultural, political and environmental contexts. You will also have the opportunity to deepen employability skills through the production of industry-focussed writing, a module analysing industry contexts, and to meet industry professionals in the final residential module. (NB: Students will need to fund their own travel and accommodation costs for a residential).

As well as the group sessions (online) and directed exercises you will work with tutors on a one-to-one basis.

\(^1\) The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated
You will gain:

- Enhanced strategies for creative practice in writing audio narratives.
- An introduction to a number of contemporary creative texts in audio drama and related forms.
- Critical skills in relation to both the reading and generation of new audio writing.
- Critical awareness of the contexts for the production of creative texts (political, psychological, environmental).
- A sense of belonging to a writing community (virtual and physical) via the York Centre for Writing.
- Opportunity to meet practitioners via the residential/summer school.

Key benefits of the MA in Writing Audio:

- Flexible online study.
- Modules which allow you to develop work which interests you.
- Modules which develop creative and critical skills, but also develop employability skills in terms of writing for audio.
- A focus on the relationship between critical thinking and creative writing.
- Opportunity to work with practitioners on a production of your work in the final term of study.
- The production and dissemination of your final piece of creative work.
- The opportunity to work with award-winning radio writers at our York and London campuses.

You will have the flexibility to pursue writing that you are passionate about, and will be supported by the expertise of the staff team. This allows for a range of diverse backgrounds in terms of learning experiences, ethnic diversity, disability, gender and age; projects will be developed and tailored to your learning needs. The staff team of award-winning writers have an exciting and diverse approach to creative writing and are able to supervise a huge range of proposed projects. All staff members are actively publishing their writing and have won several awards between them for creative outputs. The team have expertise in speculative fiction, historical fiction, scriptwriting, screenwriting, adaptation, poetry, experimental poetry, hybrid forms, horror fiction, literary fiction, creative non-fiction (including memoir and true-crime), and are able to support writing in a number of genres. In addition, the Creative Writing team at YSJ has a strong focus on the relationship between critical theory and creative writing and the intersection of a number of theoretical perspectives with creative practice, including eco-criticism, psychoanalysis, biopolitics and regionality. Members of the team have undertaken interdisciplinary and collaborative research exploring music, memory, medicine, uncanny landscapes and pollination. You will be able to follow the MA Writing Audio by undertaking the MFA or PhD routes within the York Centre for Writing.

MA Writing Audio is part of the York Centre for Writing. The Centre acts as a hub for a number of exciting writing events, projects and publications in collaboration with Valley Press, The York Literature Festival, and other community partners. In the past we have welcomed authors such as Kathleen Jamie, Sarah Hall, Michel Faber, Daljit Nagra and Margaret Atwood, who have inspired students and members of the local community alike. The Centre curates two print publications, Beyond the Walls, our student anthology, and The York Literary Review, our international creative writing journal, both published by Valley Press and providing commissioning, editing and publishing experience to undergraduate and postgraduate students. We also manage the Northern Independent Press Collection, supporting independent presses based in the North of England. The MA is informed by the ethos of the York Centre for Writing, and as such is further distinguished by:

- The integration of writing practice, critical appreciation of texts and employability skills.
- A focus on contemporary writing.
- Regular engagement with visiting speakers and writers.
- Partnerships with local publishers and writing festivals.
- Partnerships with national organisations.
- Research-led teaching.
• Diverse and inclusive syllabi.
• Opportunities for you to experience additional optional residential (residencies are subsidised by the University but you may be asked to pay a small contribution).

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

• MA candidates are those who have already excelled at BA study, and therefore require a BA in Creative Writing or English Literature (or close equivalent) that achieved at least a 2:1 grade (or equivalent). MA candidates also need to submit a sample of creative writing, either in prose or script of at least 1,000 words or 10 minutes of recorded audio drama in order for staff to ascertain if the writing is of an appropriately high standard.

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)
To provide:

• Advanced strategies for creative practice.
• Advanced analysis of contemporary and classic examples of audio drama.
• Critical skills in relation to the writing of original and adapted audio writing.
• Critical awareness of the contexts for the production of creative texts (political, psychological, environmental).
• An awareness of the audio and creative industries.
• The development of advanced professional skills.
• A virtual and physical writing community through the York Centre for Writing.
• Opportunity to work with practitioners.

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

Level 7
7.1 Critically reflect on the nature of audio narrative and its production in relation to wider political, social and cultural contexts.
7.2 Produce a body of original creative writing that engages with the technicalities and creative strategies within contemporary audio writing.
7.3 Critically apply employability skills through the effective communication of original ideas to appropriate audiences.
7.4 Employ genre techniques in relation to a comprehensive understanding of audience expectations.
7.5 Exhibit originality and independent scholarship in creating a collection or continuous piece of writing in your chosen audio genre.

NB: See the QAA Benchmark document on Creative Writing for reference (these do not extend in Creative Writing to any specifics for MA level and are therefore a guide only).
Programme structure

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<th>Code</th>
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Learning, teaching and assessment

The programme has two interconnected teaching methods: virtual/online work and face-to-face teaching and learning facilitated via the residency/summer school.

The central aim of the teaching is to support independent writing practice, the discussion and feedback on each other’s writing, drafting and redrafting and discussion of classic and contemporary examples.

Professional writers on the team will facilitate group discussion and offer one-to-one virtual and face-to-face (where possible) meetings for discussing work in progress, giving advice about redrafting, sources of research, advice on genre, language, characterisation, setting, form, etc. (as appropriate to the individual project). In terms of the Reflective Commentary component and Presentation assessments, supervisors will advise on the appropriate critical/reflective angle and on the use of secondary sources, which might include historical, theoretical, scientific or experiential research. You will hone your editorial skills in supportive virtual workshop and discussion environments, writing on a regular basis and producing work which can then be shared with your peers. Whilst portfolio work may include recorded elements all work submitted for assessment consists of composed text. The length of assessment is dictated by the requirements of form.

In seeking to emulate current practice the programme will utilise established tools to enable students to effectively share material. You will have access to Moodle for documentation. Google Classroom (or similar platform) will be used for the uploading and sharing of work and for engaging in extended ‘chat’ discussions of material for workshop and contemporary texts. There will also be formal regular scheduled classes (which will take place using Google Hangouts, Skype or an application such as ooVoo which would allow you to engage in group discussion via a smartphone or tablet for no extra cost). One-to-one tutorials will also take place remotely.

Assessment Criteria themselves are informed by the National Association of Writers in Education Benchmark guidance and the QAA benchmarks; notions of ‘publishable quality’ inform both of these. NAWE are a group comprised of educators, published writers and those with experience of editing journals and creative publications. This is a community and network of writers. An understanding of this wider context is also provided by the teaching team who are all published practitioners and bring this knowledge to the process. Supervisors will discuss the appropriate routes to possible dissemination of a particular work; i.e.: which production company might be best positioned to produce the work.

You will benefit from working on the modules in sequence, developing conceptual and writing skills at each stage. You will discuss the relationship between the creative and the critical, the relationship between convention and innovation and the relationship between writer and producer/industry. The modules reflect the broad categories that audio drama producers use; this ranges from short drama, through adaptations,
to drama series. There is also a module where you will examine a specific aspect of the audio industries that interests you and where they envisage your work being produced.

The final module, undertaken at a summer school, is where you will work with practitioners in evaluating your portfolio. You will also work on an original piece of drama which will then be produced.

**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]
- QAA subject benchmark statement
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications

(Date written / revised: 17/01/18
Programme originally approved: June 2019)