

Programme Specification

Award and title: MA Publishing and Creative Writing

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	Creative Writing
<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 St John University
<i>Programme/s accredited by:</i>	Not applicable
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Postgraduate Certificate in Publishing and Creative Writing Postgraduate Diploma in Publishing and Creative Writing
<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>Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:</i>	No

Introduction and special features

The MA in Publishing and Creative Writing is part of a thriving postgraduate writing and creative industries community housed within the York Centre for Writing. MA Publishing and Creative Writing allows you to combine core skills and knowledge in Publishing with the study and practice of creative writing. We offer modules which allow you to develop key skills in publishing, creative writing, critical reflection and creative practice. Class sizes are kept to small, intimate groups to enable collaborative practice so that you can share and workshop ideas and your creative work. You are provided with the opportunity to understand, analyse and engage with the world of publishing with a focus on the independent sector and to write with the publishing process in mind. You will have the opportunity to submit work to the Beyond the Walls anthology. You will also have the opportunity to deepen your professional skills through a range of exciting opportunities, including meeting with industry professionals and an agent or publisher as part of your course. You will also have the opportunity to engage with literary festivals to further develop your skills.

You will work on modules which trace the journey of the book from concept to published text and examine the business of publishing. You will work on creative writing modules which provide a foundation of critical approaches to creative writing, using voice and applying creative writing skills in a practical context. As well as the taught modules, you will research and write a final creative writing portfolio under one-to-one supervision, allowing you to produce a sustained, independent project as part of what will become an extensive portfolio of original work. You will also undertake a sustained independent publishing project in term 3 of the MA. Depending on your career aspirations this project can take the form of a work placement with you producing a final report on your experience. You will have the opportunity to work alongside students who are taking the MA in Publishing, the MA in Creative Writing, the MA in Contemporary Literature and the MA in Publishing and Contemporary Literature.

In addition, York is a fantastic place to be if you love books and reading. There is a rich literary history in the city, and each year, the city celebrates its literary heritage with the York Literature Festival, for which our department organises several events. We are also instrumental in the annual York Big City Read with our partner institution York Explore, and academics from the programme have led a number of events associated with this yearly celebration of reading. In recent years, our students have had the chance to attend talks and readings by Margaret Atwood, Germaine Greer, Will Self, Carol Ann Duffy, Mark Gatiss, Polly Toynbee, Roger McGough, Ian McMillan, and Michel Faber. As part of the York Centre for Writing, you will have the chance to get involved in a wide range of similar activities, as well as the opportunity to attend free workshops, writing sessions, and readings as part of your postgraduate degree experience.

You will gain:

- Enhanced and developed strategies for creative practice in publishing;
- Enhanced and developed strategies for creative practice in creative writing;
- An introduction to a number of contemporary creative and critical texts in a range of forms to enhance your knowledge of texts suitable for a market;
- Critical skills in relation to both the reading, generation, selection, development and publication of new creative texts;
- Critical awareness of the contexts for the production and reception of creative texts and creative writing;
- A sense of belonging to a community through the York Centre for Writing;
- Opportunity to meet agents, publishers, editors and published authors;
- Opportunity to engage in writing retreats in regional settings (these are heavily subsidised and are at a small cost to students).

Special Features:

- Members of staff, who are practising, published, award-winning writers in a range of forms and genres including: creative non-fiction; fiction (short stories/novels); script (radio, screen, stage), contemporary poetry. Members of staff who have a range of critical interests including climate change, motherhood, body politics, northern writing, experimental poetry, history, science, speculative fiction, and historical fiction;
- Small teaching groups of students to allow for in-depth discussion and the development of collaborative practice;
- Modules which develop creative and critical skills, but also develop professional skills in terms of publication experience;
- A focus on the relationship between critical thinking, publication, contemporary literature and creative writing;
- 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;
- Opportunity for one-to-one meetings with an agent/publisher;
- Opportunity to attend a weekend residential writing retreat;
- Progression to the MFA, taught on a one-to-one supervised basis (low residency) for those wanting to continue to complete a full-length work (novel, collection, script) – only offered at a small number of UK universities;
- Progression to PhD in Creative Writing or Literature or Creative Practice if appropriate.

You will be supported by the expertise of the staff team; 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, literature and publication and are able to supervise a huge range of proposed projects. Staff members are actively publishing their writing in creative and academic forms. 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 work in a number of genres. In addition, the creative writing and literature teams at YSJ have 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 and the importance of these themes to an audience. Members of the team have undertaken interdisciplinary and collaborative research exploring music, memory, medicine, uncanny landscapes and pollination.

You are encouraged to take a professional approach and attend the variety of events provided by the York Centre for Writing and the School of Humanities, which include visits from agents, publishers, editors and writers and fosters an important sense of belonging and community.

Publishing at YSJ is further distinguished by:

- The integration of publishing with creative writing and literature
- A focus on contemporary independent publishing and emergent themes in writing.
- Regular engagement with visiting speakers, publishers and writers.
- Publications in partnership with Valley Press
- Partnerships with local publishers and writing festivals
- Research-led teaching.
- Diverse and inclusive syllabi.
- Opportunities for you to experience field trips as part of your learning experience. Some field trips may involve a cost to students.

Admissions criteria

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

- We normally require a BA degree at **2:2 grade or higher** (or equivalent). We are open to considering previous degrees in the Humanities, Arts, Sciences and Social Sciences, or other related subjects.
- MA candidates also need to submit a sample of creative writing, either in Prose, Script or Poetry of at least 1,000-2,000 words (or 3 poems) 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.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)

- To develop a portfolio of creative writing.
- To analyse the writing process to further enable creative practice
- Developing subject specific skills and knowledge in publishing.

Programme learning outcomes

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

- 7.1 Critically reflect on the nature of the literary text and its production in relation to wider political, social and cultural contexts.
- 7.2 Proactively formulate employability skills through the effective communication of original ideas to appropriate audiences.

- 7.3 Demonstrate specialist, in-depth knowledge of contemporary publishing with an emphasis on the independent publishing sector
- 7.4 Critically analyse the worlds of contemporary publishing,
- 7.5 Exhibit originality and independent scholarship in the development of an independent research project
- 7.6 Recognise and define the contemporary publishing landscape in relation to its historical development,
- 7.7 Produce original creative writing that engages with the technicalities and creative strategies within contemporary writing.
- 7.8 Employ genre techniques in relation to a comprehensive understanding of audience/reader expectations.

Programme structure

Code	Level	Term	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensable (NC) or compensable (X)
CRW7021M	7	1	The Journey of the Book: the Publishing Process	30	C	X
CRW7001M	7	1	Critical Approaches to Creative Writing	30	C	X
CRW7023M	7	2	The Business of Publishing	30	C	X
CRW7003M	7	2	Writing in the World: Facilitation, Collaboration and Publication	30	O	X
CRW7004M	7	2	Writing and the Environment	30	O	X
CRW7025M	7	3	Publishing Project	30	C	X
CRW7026M	7	3	Project Portfolio (Publishing and Creative Writing)	30	C	X

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

You will be taught via peer workshops aimed to support collaborative practice in both creative writing and publishing. The nature of the workshops will vary by module. Publishing modules are portfolio based and involve aspects of practice and reflection on practice.

The Journey of the Book: the Publishing Process examines the practical process of publishing from conception to distribution; as part of this module you will learn about the production of a book and key roles in the process. This module is followed by Publishing Then and Now which examines the changing nature of the publishing industry, examining key moments historically that have shaped the world of publishing as it is now. You will gain a firm foundation by also taking the Critical Approaches to Creative Writing module which develops a strong creative practice, hones peer workshoping skills and encourages discussion of a range of model texts in both primary forms (poetry, fiction, script etc.) and theoretical, reflective approaches. You will discuss the relationship between the creative and the critical, the place of creative writing in the academy, and consider various approaches to the notion of creative practice. This is followed by The Business of Publishing, which examines fundamental issues such as intellectual property and copyright. Writing in the World concentrates on the possible dissemination of writing, from collaboration and facilitation, to publication. In the third term you will undertake a project module which can take the form of, for example, collaboration with a writer, a critical publishing project or a work placement. This project is introduced early in the programme to give you maximum time to prepare and negotiate with a supervising tutor. In creative writing the final Portfolio is supervised one-to-one with an expert writer on the team, matched closely to your creative interests. In terms of the context 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 workshopping and discussion environments, writing on a regular basis and producing work which can then be shared with your peers.

Assessment balances the acquisition of skills essential to the world of publishing whilst offering flexibility in the choice of (for example) publishers for analysis and the form of final project undertaken. We provide the opportunity for you to reflect in a written form and a verbal form on the progress and development of a practical project. Our reading lists are diverse and innovative, often promoting the work of authors who have been marginalised and the publishers who champion them. This is an important element of our ongoing work to decolonise the curriculum. The contemporary focus of the MA encourages this approach, given that both texts and approaches to writing and discussion ask students to situate their practice and study within wider political, environmental and cultural contexts.

The School's inclusive learning policy asks that all teaching materials are made available to you 48 hours in advance of class, and this approach is central to our teaching on the MA. Reading lists are usually available several months in advance and the programme team ensure that all assessment types and tasks are accessible to all students. The MA has a special induction event each year to welcome all new students and explain the general approach to inclusivity and diversity, and what this means in terms of contemporary literary cultures.

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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