

Programme Specification

Award and title: MA Publishing and English Literature

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	Creative Writing/English Literature
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2027-28
<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>	
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Postgraduate Certificate in Publishing and English Literature Postgraduate Diploma in Publishing and English Literature
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	English Literature
<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
<i>Excluding a year-long placement/professional experience, are there placement/field trip/work experience(s) totalling 20 days or more?</i>	No

Introduction and special features

The MA Publishing and English Literature is part of a thriving postgraduate writing and creative industries community housed within the York Centre for Writing. MA Publishing and English Literature offers modules which allow you to develop key skills in publishing alongside the critical analysis of literary texts. Wherever possible, class sizes are kept to small, intimate groups to enable collaborative practice so that you can share and discuss ideas. 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. This degree will also enable you to develop your existing expertise as a sophisticated reader and critic of a range of literary materials, whilst also supporting you in the development of a growing portfolio of professional skills which will aid you in the wider postgraduate job market. You will deepen your professional skills through a range of exciting opportunities, including meeting with industry professionals as part of your programme. You will also have the potential to engage with literary festivals to further develop skills.

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated; please refer to the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Awards <https://www.yorks.ac.uk/policies-and-documents/regulations/> for information on standard periods of study

As well as the taught modules, you will write a final publishing project 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, or analytical work by the end 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 also work on a dissertation module for English Literature, writing on the literary topic of your choice. For this, you will have free reign to work on texts from any literary period. You will be assigned a supervisor from our team, whose research expertise span a wide range of specialisms.

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. In recent years, our students have had the chance to attend talks and readings by Margaret Atwood, Susanna Clarke, Jessica Andrews, Julia Armfield, David Almond, Sarah Hall, Carol Ann Duffy, Mark Gatiss, Andrew McMillan, and Lemn Sissay. 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. As a student on our MA Publishing and English Literature programme, you will also be joining a vibrant and ever-growing research culture, with the MA sitting at the heart of several active and welcoming Research Groups including: The Hauntology and Spectrality Research Group, the Interdisciplinary Witches Research Group, the Music, Memory and Memoir Research Group, the York Research Unit for the Study of Satire and the York Centre for Writing.

You will gain:

- Enhanced and developed strategies for creative practice in publishing;
- 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;
- A sense of belonging to a community through the York Centre for Writing;
- Opportunity to meet agents, publishers, editors and published authors.

MA Publishing & English Literature at YSJ is distinguished by:

- Integration of publishing with literary study, highlighting the creative and critical relationship between writing, production, and readership.
- Emphasis on contemporary independent publishing, emergent writing, and transhistorical literary connections.
- A blend of text-led, criticism-led, and practice-based approaches that foreground key questions about participation in today's literary and publishing landscapes.
- Research-led and creatively informed teaching, with syllabi that are diverse, inclusive, and responsive to current cultural debates.
- Regular engagement with visiting speakers, publishers, and writers, alongside events hosted through YSJU or local festivals such as the York Literature Festival, York Festival of Ideas, and the York Georgian Festival.
- Partnerships and collaborations with local publishers, writing festivals, archives, and repositories, including York Minster Library and the Bar Convent Archive.
- A flexible part-time route that allows for returning learners as well as those wishing to take an MA as a route to further postgraduate study.

The staff team of award-winning writers and academics 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 YSJU

have a strong focus on the relationship between critical theory and creative writing and the intersection of a number of theoretical perspectives with publishing processes. Members of the team have undertaken interdisciplinary and collaborative research exploring music, memory, medicine, uncanny landscapes and pollination. There are also members of the team who specialise in teaching and researching publishing as an academic discipline.

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.

Special Features:

- Members of staff who are practicing, 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 contemporary publishing cultures, micropress publishing, climate change, motherhood, body politics, northern writing, experimental poetry, history, science, speculative fiction, and historical fiction.
- Small teaching groups of students wherever possible to allow for in-depth discussion and the development of collaborative practice.
- Working on a live project in the form of the York Literary Review from conception to publication and distribution.
- Modules which develop creative and critical skills, but also develop professional skills in terms of publication experience and transferable skills development.
- 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.
- 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.
- Possible 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.
- Possible progression to PhD in Creative Writing or Literature or Creative Practice if appropriate. PhD study in Publishing is also an option.

Admissions criteria

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

- MA candidates have usually already excelled at BA study; we therefore 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

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 create, collaborate, and publish through real-world projects that take ideas from concept to market.
- To connect with industry leaders — publishers, agents, editors, and authors — and gain insight into how the literary world works today.
- To develop both the practical expertise and critical understanding needed to shape the future of publishing.
- To explore how reading, writing, and literary value evolve across academic, creative, and commercial contexts.

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 Evaluate current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline of Literary Studies
- 7.3 Proactively formulate employability skills through the effective communication of original ideas to appropriate audiences
- 7.4 Demonstrate specialist, in-depth knowledge of contemporary publishing with an emphasis on the independent publishing sector
- 7.5 Critically analyse the worlds of contemporary publishing
- 7.6 Exhibit originality and independent scholarship in the development of an independent research project
- 7.7 Advance their knowledge and understanding of the contemporary publishing landscape in relation to its historical development.

Programme structure

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensable (NC) or compensable (X)
CRW7040M	7	1	The Journey of the Book: the Publishing Process	30	C	X
LIT7011M	7	1	Influence and Intertext	30	C	X
CRW7042M	7	2	The Business of Publishing	30	C	X
LIT7013M	7	2	Readers, Markets and Literary Value	30	C	X
CRW7043M	7	3	Publishing Project*	30	C	NC
LIT7016M	7	3	Dissertation (Publishing and English Literature)	30	C	NC

*Placement/Internship or project work can take place at any point within the academic year. Semester 3 is allocated as the module assessment period.

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. The nature of the workshops will vary by module. The *Journey of the Book* 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. The *Business of Publishing*, which examines fundamental issues such as intellectual property and copyright. In the third semester you will undertake a project module which can take the form of, for example, collaboration with a writer, a critical research paper 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.

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 English Literature modules demand wide, critical reading and intelligent synthesis of ideas and information. You will be analysing and engaging with complex ideas in written form. 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 help shape the development of your ideas.

Across the MA you will also encounter a diverse range of assessment types, for which you will be fully supported. Again, these have been designed in consultation with external collaborators with a wide range of industry perspectives. These include, but are not limited to: Annotated bibliography, Presentation, Essay, Abstract, Critical Reflection, and Roundtable discussion.

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.

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, Culture and Values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statements](#)
- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)

Date written / revised:

Programme originally approved: