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YORK  
ST JOHN  
UNIVERSITY

## Programme specification

### BA (Hons) Photography

<i>School:</i>	Art, Design and Computer Science		
<i>Entry in:</i>	2019	<i>in:</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>	BA (Ord) Photography Diploma of Higher Education Photography Certificate of Higher Education Photography		
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	W64W		
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	Not applicable		
<i>QAA benchmark group(s):</i>	Art & Design		
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	Full-time for 3 years Part-time for 6 years		
<i>Language of study:</i>	English		

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### Introduction and special features

BA (Hons) Photography engages with current developments in photographic practice across a dynamic breadth of art forms, media and practices. The programme emphasises practice-based creative and critical enquiry to develop, sustain and extend your practice developing confidence, competence and increasing specialisation towards your personal ambitions and professional aspirations. The programme will provide a foundation in photographic practice centred on studio photography, lighting, digital imaging, darkroom techniques, moving image making and exhibition practice. It will engage you in the fundamental genres of photography through which you will explore commercial, editorial, fine art and documentary applications as well as exploring new possibilities such as socially engaged practice. You will learn both analogue and digital technologies in order to extend your practice. From this foundation you will evolve your own specialist practice through studio based and live projects leading to a professionally directed third year where you will focus your practice towards your personal, academic and professional ambitions.

A critical strand provides a framework for thinking about the future of your practice and the future of photography drawing on historical, contemporary and theoretical perspectives. This will enable you to situate and focus your practice clearly and to ask research questions which lead into research investigations and towards reasoned conclusions.

Photography is articulated as an interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary practice and throughout the programme you will have opportunities to collaborate with external professionals and students on other programmes. In particular you will have the opportunity to work with journalists, film makers and illustrators on projects which apply your image making practice to

new contexts. Through this you will also learn the value of your skills and knowledge and the ways in which you can exploit these for your future.

The programme requires students to develop a creative mind-set of independence, versatility, adaptability and innovation. This mind-set is the basis upon which graduates can evolve their skill set in response to the changing demands of worlds of work and professional practice. This skills set comprises highly developed levels of professional awareness, critical and creative thinking, articulacy and literacy, cultural entrepreneurialism and the ability to exploit in-demand practical skills in different contexts.

In Levels 5 and 6, you will have opportunities to develop your learning through external engagement: work based learning opportunities such as internships and live projects with industry professionals. As part of the Art and Design suite of programmes, you will be able to apply to well-established study abroad opportunities within influential institutions worldwide.

Assessment in the programme is centred on the development of your portfolio which captures the range and diversity of your work, both practically and critically, and helps you to make connections between different aspects of your practice. Self, peer, tutor and professional assessments provide an ongoing dialogue about your work. You will have regular one to one and small group tutorials which look in depth at your practice and agree feedforward actions with your academic tutor enabling you to focus and direct your learning.

Photography is situated within a supportive studio culture, with regular exhibitions and shared learning and social activities. Trips to exhibitions and major cultural cities are a regular feature throughout all three levels of the programme. Subsidised international trips to key cities enable you to enrich your cultural sources and references.

At the end of the programme you will mount a graduate exhibition for the public and industry. You will also have the opportunity to exhibit your work in national graduate exhibitions such as Free Range in London.

In summary, the programme offers a number of special features including:

- A material led practice approach
- Visiting speakers
- Engagement with live projects
- Supported work based learning opportunities
- Access to traditional and cutting edge equipment
- Specialist technician and tutor support
- National and international trips

### **Admissions criteria**

You must meet the University's general entry criteria for [undergraduate](#) study. In addition, you must have:

- A portfolio of work either digital or paper based.
- An interview which may be face to face or virtual

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 aims

1. To provide a high quality education in Photography that affirms its contribution to culture & society and its cross disciplinary interaction with other fields.
2. To provide exceptional teaching and learning that promotes understanding and potential of Photography practice driven by critical engagement and intellectual enquiry.
3. To provide students with experience of identifying and developing distinctiveness and specialisation in their emerging practice to refine their personal ambitions into a professional future.
4. To encourage and support creative risk taking, experimentation, and enquiry which engenders unexpected and imaginative responses.
5. To encourage independence, autonomy, collaboration, reflection and flexibility for students to develop a personal approach to their practice.
6. To enable the progressive acquisition of skills in relation to both Photography practice generally and the student's personal specialisation, through instructive and experimental approaches.
7. To support increasing, widening and diversifying participation in creative industries and in higher education.
8. To advance opportunities for student learning and development through institutional partnerships locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.
9. To broaden diversity of cultural experience to develop self-awareness and expand ambitions, experience and knowledge.
10. To offer opportunities for professional experience and networking through work-related learning, internships and external collaborative project work.
11. To ensure understanding of and compliance with ethical, sustainable, health and safety issues in educational and professional environments.
12. To ensure students situate their knowledge and practice within historical, professional, social, cultural and critical contexts.

## Programme learning outcomes

### Level 4

- 4.1 Collate, begin to evaluate and interpret research material.
- 4.2 Demonstrate curiosity and reflection in approaching Photography practice.
- 4.3 Demonstrate skills and technical competence in Photography practice.
- 4.4 Demonstrate responsibility in developing work and supporting the work of others.
- 4.5 Identify a range of approaches to practice.
- 4.6 Demonstrate an understanding of key histories, concepts, artefacts and practices that have informed the development of creative practice.
- 4.7 Communicate appropriately through a range of modes.

### Level 5

- 5.1 Critically analyse research material and form questions, arguments and conclusions.
- 5.2 Demonstrate an experimental and reflective approach to Photography practice.
- 5.3 Demonstrate technical expertise in selected aspects of Photography practice.
- 5.4 Demonstrate professionalism and responsibility in managing work and supporting the work of others.
- 5.5 Begin to evaluate an emerging approach.
- 5.6 Critically contextualise the knowledge, processes and methods of professional practice.

- 5.7 Apply an understanding of selected concepts & methods to contextualise ideas, artefacts and practices.
- 5.8 Engage an audience through appropriate modes of communication.

### Level 6

- 6.1 Construct coherent arguments through the systematic analysis of ideas, materials, and methods.
- 6.2 Articulate a professionally orientated practice that is characterised by intellectual curiosity, experimentation, reflection and scholarly rigour.
- 6.3 Demonstrate inventiveness and technical expertise to resolve high quality creative work.
- 6.4 Demonstrate leadership, autonomy, and ethical responsibility in managing work and supporting the work of others.
- 6.5 Articulate personal and professional ambitions through a body of work.
- 6.6 Analyse the practical, professional and ethical requirements of specified situations and contexts and apply creative, considered and scholarly responses.
- 6.7 Apply detailed subject knowledge and professional competencies, informed by relevant research and scholarship.
- 6.8 Understand and identify the particularity of audience and communicate effectively.

## Programme structure

### Modules for the Programme

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Status of Module*
1AR310	4	1	Critical Contexts 1	20	C
1AR311	4	2	Critical Contexts 2	20	C
1AR303	4	1	Photography Fundamentals	40	C
1AR306	4	2	Photography Explorations	40	C
2AR310	5	1	Critical Enquiry 1 (Photography)	20	C
2AR311	5	2	Critical Enquiry 2 (Photography)	20	C
2AR303	5	1	Photography Practice & Development	40	C
2AR306	5	2	Photography Exposition	40	C
3AR300	6	1	Independent Research Project	30	C
3AR321	6	1 & 2	Advanced Studio Practice	60	C
3AR322	6	2	Situated Professional Practice (Photography)	30	C

\***C**: Compulsory, **CP**: Compulsory for progression to the next level, **CA**: Compulsory for award, **O**: option or **E**: elective.

**Level 4** aims to provide an induction to the processes, materials and practices of Photography. This will centre learning the core techniques of both digital and darkroom photography, creating images under both studio controlled lighting conditions and also outside the studio, working with a range of cameras and technologies. The teaching will then progress to look at the fundamental genres of photography such as documentary, art, editorial and fashion photography, giving you're the opportunity to apply and understand your practice within these contexts. All through this process you will contextualise and critique your own work, the work of your peers and the work of professionals. You will begin to understand photography as storytelling through constructing and sequencing images, and contextualising your work with professional examples. Through this progressive development you will have an emerging sense of your personal approach as a reflective photographer.

Alongside the studio modules, the Critical Contexts module provides a foundational knowledge in the key theories and histories of Photography alongside other art forms. You will investigate topics and create essays and research projects which illuminate your understanding of these practices and contexts.

Also within Critical Contexts, you will begin to construct a personal reflective portfolio in which you will consider all your work, both practical and theoretical, and consider the connections, meanings and implications of this work for your future practice. This portfolio will be regularly reviewed with your academic tutor and tutor group and you will start to make judgements about the future direction of your studies.

**Level 5** is intended to develop more detailed knowledge and understanding of Photography through theory and practice building upon the work you have undertaken in Level 4. You will refine your practice in both studio and real world contexts, exploring the relationship to people, places and social narratives in more depth. Reflecting on your work using the lens of the different genres of photography will be key to furthering your understanding of your own practice. This will be developed through tutor led projects, live projects with external partners and the opportunity to initiate and develop your own projects.

Alongside the studio modules you will continue to build your skills and research and enquiry through the Critical Enquiry module which will enable you to learn diverse approaches to research and develop your own voice as a researcher. You will also continue to develop and review your reflective portfolio making connections between theory, practice and also external professional practice considering the impact of work related learning opportunities undertaken through the year.

Students who wish to study away for a semester during Level 5 will undertake (at York St John University, in the semester preceding or following their time away) 20 credits of Critical Enquiry (1 or 2) which still provides a holistic overview of the learning through the level, including the experience of studying away, but appropriately adjusts the submission requirements accordingly. Students studying away will also normally only undertake either Photography Practice & Development or Photography Exposition.

**At Level 6** you will be operating as an independent and autonomous thinking Photography practitioner, demonstrating increasing sophistication and critical judgements through practice, critique and reflection. You will also encounter ideas and debates at the leading edge of research which situate Photography as an interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary practice. You will further develop your skills and knowledge through undertaking an independent piece of research to explore innovative ideas through a variety of both practical and theoretical based methods of your choice. You will refine your Photography practice in an interdisciplinary context through advanced studio practice. The Situated Professional Practice module will enable you to situate and direct your ambitions into a professional future after graduation.

### **Teaching, learning and assessment**

Teaching, learning and assessment in Photography is centred on a progressive acquisition of skills, knowledge and experience through studio, critical and external projects which build your knowledge of your subject and your own practice within that subject. This form of practice based learning is aimed to introduce you to the core practices of Photography, (studio practice, darkroom skills, digital imaging, narrative construction) and the range of genres and possibilities within photographic practice as it intersects with other disciplines such as journalism, art, media, advertising and publishing, or social agendas such as sustainability, social justice, economics etc.. From this foundation you will evolve a personal practice based on your interests and strengths through experimentation, reflection, critical engagement and realising work of focus and resolution.

Your practice based learning will take place within the University, in studios and workshops (both practical and critical); externally through live projects, work based learning placements, internships; and virtually through digital engagement on the web, in online archives, social media and through University digital platforms such as Moodle (Virtual Learning Environment)

and forms which you will author such as your online portfolio. All these sites of learning integrate to stimulate and support your development as a reflective Photography practitioner.

Teaching activities are focused on an interactive engagement with you and your work. You will have regular informal tutorials in studio as well as regular formal portfolio review tutorials. Seminars and reading groups will engage you in critical debates, and workshops will engage you in skills development. Skilled technicians and technical tutors will also support your work through workshops and informal tutoring. A programme of visiting speakers, including international speakers through remote link up will connect you to current thinking, research and practice in Photography and related disciplines.

A key interactive mode of learning is the critique or “crit” where a group of peers, tutors or professionals will engage in a collective discussion about your work. You will participate in many crits of others works and also experience others critiquing your work. This is an important focus for development as it allows multiple voices to give a rounded view of your practice.

### **Portfolio and Assessment.**

One of the crucial ways that you develop as an independent practitioner is through assessment and evaluation. During the programme you will experience a range of approaches to assessment. You will experience assessment of your work by tutors, peers and also your own self assessments which ultimately are the most important as they demonstrate your own understanding of your practice. Assessment should be an ongoing dialogue which is centred on your work whether practical or theoretical, this dialogue is captured in your reflective portfolio.

*Formative assessment* is always focused on identifying your strengths and areas for development in order to focus your personal, academic and professional development. You will initiate and maintain a reflective portfolio which captures all your learning and enables you to make connections on your work within the curriculum and also externally to give a holistic perspective on your practice and direction. You will have regular one to one or small group tutorials centred on your portfolio with your academic tutor, this will collate formative assessment responses from all projects and activities happening in the review period as well as your self-evaluations of these activities in order to discuss and agree feedforward actions for you to develop your practice. Assessments will use the University assessment matrix which accounts for a range of assessment criteria in order to make it clear where your strengths and areas for development are.

*Summative assessments* usually take place at the end of the module and reflect the cumulative body of work that you have undertaken during the module which is reflected in a numerical mark. This cumulative approach is intended to enable you to respond to feedback and develop your work. It is also intended to encourage you to take risks with your work in the knowledge that you can reflect, refine and redirect your practice following formative feedback. For this reason, modules will formally end with some form of collection, exhibition or portfolio review which enables the work to be summarised and assessed. This will usually have an opportunity to discuss and clarify your work to an audience of tutors and/or peers.

### **Progression and graduation requirements**

The University's [general regulations for undergraduate awards](#) apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section.

### **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](#)

### **Further information**

Further information on the programme of study may be obtained from:

- Admissions entry profile (Admissions)
- Programme validation document (Registry – Academic Quality Support)
- Regulations (Registry – Academic Quality Support)
- Student programme handbook (school)
- Module handbooks (school)

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*Date written / revised: 15/02/16*

first delivery of the programme is 2016