

## Programme specification

### BA (Hons) Human Geography with American Studies

<i>School:</i>	Humanities, Religion and Philosophy		
<i>Entry in:</i>	2018/9	<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>	Royal Geographic Society (with IBG)		
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Certificate of Higher Education Human Geography with American Studies Diploma of Higher Education Human Geography with American Studies BA (Ord) Human Geography with American Studies		
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	L7T7		
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	Not applicable		
<i>QAA benchmark group(s):</i>	Geography/Area Studies		
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	Full-time for 3 years Part-time for 6 years		
<i>Language of study:</i>	English		

### Introduction and special features

Human Geography has immediate relevance to some of the most pressing issues facing society in the twenty-first century. Concerns such as globalisation and its unequal impacts, growing population and resource imbalances, geopolitical instability, conflict and migration, and global economic change are central to the subject. Throughout the last century, the United States of America has played a pivotal role in such global issues. The BA (Hons) Human Geography with American Studies takes advantage of the clear overlap between two fields of study, offering a challenging and exciting curriculum that enables you to develop an in-depth, critical understanding of global society, culture and politics, along with the skills to aid future employment. The course particularly emphasises urban, social and cultural geographies, with socio-cultural analyses of America and its global significance.

This programme has been accredited by the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG). Accredited degree programmes contain a solid academic foundation in geographical knowledge and skills, and prepare graduates to address the needs of the world beyond higher education. The accreditation criteria require evidence that graduates from accredited programmes meet defined sets of learning outcomes, including subject knowledge, technical ability and transferable skills.

Teaching emphasizes real-world relevance, mixing class-based sessions with field trips, guest lectures from professionals in relevant fields, and opportunity to gain some professional experience for yourself. Fieldwork includes day visits in the City of York and further afield, as well as residential fieldwork at all three levels. The residential trips, which include UK and overseas destinations, are a core part of the curriculum, with transport and accommodation costs covered by your University tuition fees. (For students who are unable to participate in residential fieldwork, alternative activities and assessments will be available.) The *Geographers' Professional Practice* module (undertaken by all students)

provides a specific opportunity for you to embark on an individual project or placement relevant to your anticipated careers and interests.

While you are learning about the world through the subject content, you will also develop a range of skills through the degree. These include subject-specific skills such as fieldwork skills, data analysis and interpretation, and interpretation of cultural representations. Generic/transferable skills are also important: critical thinking, constructing an argument, decision-making, time management, self-management and interpersonal skills are all developed through the course.

Human Geography is directly relevant to our lives in all sorts of ways, and you will be encouraged to draw on your own experiences. The United States of America plays a crucial role as a global leader, yet is not without its problems. Combining the two through a carefully selected programme of modules, you will be well placed to make sense of what is going on in the world. As your degree progresses, you will increasingly be able to think independently and critically about current affairs and the influences shaping them.

A degree in geography opens the door to a wide variety of careers. Surveys consistently show that geography is one of the most valued degree subjects by employers because of the broad range of skills and experience that geography graduates can demonstrate. The Human Geography with American Studies degree combines these skills with a critical understanding of the USA and its role in contemporary global society.

### **Distinctive Features**

- A particular focus on social, urban and cultural geographies, with an understanding of the USA and its global influence
- Residential fieldwork at all levels
- Extensive use of non-residential fieldwork in the city of York and surrounding area
- Guest lectures from planners and policy-makers in the City of York and wider region
- A major emphasis on developing personal, study and 'transferable' skills to prepare you for employment or postgraduate study
- This programme has been accredited by the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)

### **Admissions criteria**

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

- A demonstrable interest in, and enthusiasm for, geography. An A' Level (or equivalent) in Geography is not essential requirement. You can use your UCAS personal statement to provide evidence of your interest in the subject, along with any relevant past experience.

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 [Accredited Prior \(Experiential\) Learning \(APL/APEL\)](#). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

## **Programme aims**

The BA (Hons) Human Geography with American Studies programme aims to enable students to develop:

1. An informed and critical; understanding of key themes and debates within human geography;
2. A range of skills in the collection, interpretation, analysis and communication of geographical data;
3. A range of transferable skills to equip them for employment, entrepreneurship and lifelong learning;
4. An informed and reflective appreciation of America's significance within a global context.

## **Programme learning outcomes**

### **FHEQ L4**

By the end of FHEQ Level 4 students will have:

1. Knowledge and understanding of key themes and debates in human geography
2. An understanding of how phenomena vary spatially and the implications of such variations
3. An appreciation of the significance of place in a global context
4. Knowledge and understanding of the history and culture of the USA
5. Skills in interpreting the characteristics of space, place and landscape in a fieldwork setting
6. Skills in communicating their understanding and ideas in a variety of ways
7. A range of transferable skills to equip them for further study and employment

### **FHEQ L5**

By the end of FHEQ Level 5 students will have:

1. Knowledge and critical understanding of key themes and debates in human geography and American Studies
2. A detailed and informed understanding of the relationships between society, space, place and culture in contemporary societies
3. An appreciation of geography as dynamic, plural and contested, with an awareness of its relation to other disciplines
4. An understanding of methodologies for collecting and analysing data, and the ability to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of individual methods
5. The ability to apply concepts, theories and ideas to different contexts (including, where appropriate, an employment context)
6. Effectively communicated information, ideas, arguments and interpretations in a manner appropriate to the task and audience
7. Furthered their transferable skills including organisation, time-management, decision-making and the ability to construct a coherent argument

### **FHEQ L6**

By the end of FHEQ Level 6 students will have:

1. A systematic understanding and critical knowledge of specialist areas of human geography and American Studies, including an engagement with ideas that are at the forefront of those fields
2. Capacity to develop their own understanding of complex issues, with a sensitivity to both local contingencies and broader (e.g. national or global) influences
3. An ability to critically interpret the significance of space, place and landscape in a range

of contexts and settings

4. An ability to critically evaluate geographical arguments, concepts and data, and communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions for a range of purposes and audiences
5. Transferable skills to an advanced level that prepares them for employment or further study

In addition to the above, Honours students will have:

6. Designed and undertaken a piece of independent research on a theme relevant to human geography

## Programme structure

The Human Geography with American Studies programme is designed to enable you to develop specialist knowledge in human geography with an understanding of America's culture and global influence.

In Level 4 (year 1 for full-time students) you will take six 20-credit modules. *Urban and Economic Geography* and *Social & Cultural Geographies* introduce you to key ideas and debates in human geography, while *American Foundations* and *America's Century* provide an introduction to American Studies and the global influence of the USA. In the first semester you will also take a module designed to introduce you to the norm and expectations of university-level study. This incorporates a residential field trip (UK based), so that you get to know the other geographers (students and staff) early in your degree. Fieldwork is a central component of the year. Induction week includes fieldwork within the City of York, introducing you to each other and the city. During both semesters you will find yourself on day trips in the local region. The second semester then includes the *Human Geography Fieldwork Studies* module, through which you will learn more about geography's fieldwork traditions and further develop your own field research skills.

In Level 5 you again take six 20-credit modules. You can focus in more detail on social geography (*Society and Space* module) or cultural geography (*Culture and Landscape* module). In the first semester you have a choice of American Studies modules, and in the second semester you will examine the origins, development, abolition and impact of slavery in America. Alongside these modules there is an emphasis on developing your understanding of research and your own research skills. The *Geographical Thought* module introduces you to a range of approaches to geographical research. The *Research Project* module involves residential fieldwork (in the UK or Europe) where you will work in small groups on a research project of your own design (under the guidance of a tutor). In the second semester you will undertake a period of professional practice with an appropriate geographical theme or setting (which you will be expected to arrange yourself, with the support and advice of a tutor), or a project related to professional geographical practice.

In Level 6 you take five modules. For the 40-credit *Human Geography Dissertation* you will work independently (guided by a tutor) on a piece of original research on any appropriate topic of your choosing. You will also take four 20-credit modules. *Cities in Transition* examines the changing nature of urban life, while a choice of modules in the first semester allows you to either further your cultural understanding of America (*Cinema of Conflict*), examine Anglo-American relations (*The Special Relationship*), or the influence of the US further afield (*US Conflict on the East Asian Mainland*). In semester 2, you can continue with a cultural emphasis (*Pop Americana*) or develop your understanding of the American Civil War (*The Nation Divided*). Also in your final semester you will take the *International/Cross-Cultural Fieldwork* module, involving residential fieldwork normally outside the UK. This is intended to be the culmination of your studies, enabling you to demonstrate a high level of skill in interpreting, understanding and representing contemporary processes in human geography. (Alternative arrangements can be made for students who are unable to participate in international

### Modules for the Programme

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Status of Module*
1GE301	4	1	Urban Geography	20	C
1AS200	4	1	American Foundations	20	C
1GE304	4	1	Critical Thinking and Academic Skills in Geography	20	C
1GE305	4	2	Social and Cultural Geography	20	C
1AS201	4	2	America's Century: United States Foreign Affairs in the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century	20	C
1GE311	4	2	Human Geography Fieldwork Studies	20	C
2GE301	5	1	Space and Society	20	O
2GE302	5	1	Culture and Landscape	20	O
2GE305	5	1	Geographical Thought	20	C
2FS101	5	1	Film and the American Imagination	20	C
2GE307	5	2	Research Project	20	C
2GE308	5	2	Geographers' Professional Practice	20	C
2AS201	5	2	From Slavery to Freedom	20	C
3GE301	6	1 and 2	Human Geography Dissertation	40	CA
3GE304	6	1	Cities in Transition	20	C
3AS202	6	1	The Special Relationship	20	O
3AS200	6	1	Cinema of Conflict	20	O
3HI104	6	1	US Conflict on the East Asian Mainland	20	O
3AS201	6	2	Pop Americana	20	O
3GE308	6	2	International/Cross-Cultural Fieldwork	20	C
3AS203	6	2	The Nation Divided	20	O

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

### Teaching, learning and assessment

For all of our geography degrees, our aim is to get you *doing* geography for yourself from the outset: collecting and analyzing data, applying theories for yourself, and developing your skills and abilities – generating your own knowledge. We use a range of teaching styles and settings to support you in this. This includes lectures and seminars (small groups of students with a tutor), tutorials (one-to-one meetings with a tutor), fieldwork, ICT workshops, independent study outside of formal teaching sessions, collaborative learning (working with your fellow students) and using online resources through the university's Virtual Learning Environment. Teaching sessions include discussions, problem-solving exercises, group work, debates and data analysis exercises. Throughout your degree you are encouraged to take an active part in teaching sessions, rather than just being a passive receiver of information. Sometimes students are even asked to take the lead in sessions.

Assessment of the human geography modules is entirely through coursework, with no exams. This is to ensure that the kinds of work you are doing through the degree reflect the kinds of work geographers undertake after graduation, in professional employment or postgraduate study. Some of the American Studies modules may include exams. You will therefore encounter a wide range of assessment methods including essays, reports (including fieldwork reports), verbal presentations, exams and portfolios (potentially with some multimedia elements in them). Many modules are assessed through one piece of coursework, with development of this work supported throughout the course of the module.

Feedback on assignments is designed to support you in your future learning, as well as assessing what you have already learned.

By your final year, you will be ready to take control of your learning for yourself. The dissertation involves you undertaking an independent research project (guided by a tutor) on a relevant topic of your choice, demonstrating self-reliance and developing skills of project management. The fieldwork module in your final semester brings together all that you will have learned through your degree, giving you plenty of scope to demonstrate your knowledge, abilities and creativity.

### **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](#)
- QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Geography (revised December 2014)
- QAA UK Quality Code: Chapter A1

### **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 23 Feb 2016 updated July 2017 to include accreditation detail and field trip info.*

*First delivery is in 2016/7*

*2EN480 removed from diet as module archived on parent programme. 2FS101 has been made compulsory to ensure an American studies module in sem1 of level 5. JR 12.2.19 (programme not yet run so approval not sought).*