

# Programme Specification

## BA (Hons) Human Geography

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	Geography
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2020-21
<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>	Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Certificate of Higher Education Human Geography Diploma of Higher Education Human Geography BA (Ord) Human Geography
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	8B12
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	Not applicable
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Geography
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	<a href="#">Undergraduate periods of study</a> <sup>1</sup> for full time / part time
<i>Language of study:</i>	English
<i>Paired with foundation year</i>	Yes
<i>Study abroad opportunities:</i>	Yes
<i>Placement year opportunity:</i>	Yes

## 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. The BA (Hons) Human Geography offers a challenging and exciting curriculum that enables you to develop an in-depth, critical understanding of such issues, combined with the skills to aid future employment. The course particularly emphasises urban, social, cultural and tourism geographies. Themes of landscape, place, spatial variation, inequality and representation run throughout the degree.

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 emphasises 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 is an important part of your degree. This includes day visits in the City of York and further afield, as well as residential fieldwork opportunities at all three levels. The residential trips, which normally include UK and overseas destinations, are a core part of the curriculum, with transport and accommodation

<sup>1</sup> The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

costs covered by your University tuition fees. If residential fieldwork is not possible for any reason, or for any student, equivalent modules with non-residential and/or virtual fieldwork are available (noting that virtual fieldwork would only be used in conjunction with *in situ* fieldwork, or in the exceptional circumstances of no *in situ* fieldwork being possible). The *Geographers' Professional Practice* module 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 geographical skills such as cartography, the use of Geographical Information Systems, skills in data analysis and interpretation, research and fieldwork. Generic/transferable skills are also important: critical thinking, constructing and argument, decision-making, time management, self-management and interpersonal skills are all developed through the course. Human Geography is directly relevant to our daily lives in all sorts of ways, and you will be encouraged to draw on your own experiences. As your degree progresses, you will increasingly be able to question the world around you, thinking independently and critically about, for example: the ways that people and places are represented in the media (and the effects of these representations); or the implications of decisions made by planners and policy-makers.

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. BA Human Geography is designed to ensure you develop such attributes alongside your specialist knowledge of human geography.

### **Distinctive features**

- A particular focus on social, urban, cultural and tourism geographies
- 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.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)**

The BA (Hons) Human Geography 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 the importance of space, place and scale for understanding justice and difference in the contemporary world

## **Programme learning outcomes**

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

### **Level 4**

- 4.1 Knowledge and understanding of key themes and debates in human geography
- 4.2 An understanding of how phenomena vary spatially and the implications of such variations
- 4.3 An appreciation of the significance of place in a global context
- 4.4 Knowledge and understanding of the geography of the local area
- 4.5 Skills in interpreting the characteristics of space, place and landscape in a fieldwork setting
- 4.6 Skills in communicating their understanding and ideas in a variety of ways
- 4.7 A range of transferable skills to equip them for further study and employment

### **Level 5**

- 5.1 Knowledge and critical understanding of key themes and debates in human geography
- 5.2 A detailed and informed understanding of the relationships between society, space, place and culture in contemporary societies
- 5.3 An appreciation of geography as dynamic, plural and contested
- 5.4 An understanding of methodologies for collecting and analysing data, and the ability to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of individual methods
- 5.5 Ability to apply concepts, theories and ideas to different contexts (including, where appropriate, an employment context)
- 5.6 Effectively communicated information, ideas, arguments and interpretations in a manner appropriate to the task and audience
- 5.7 Furthered their transferable skills including organisation, time-management, decision-making and the ability to construct a coherent argument

### **Level 6**

- 6.1 A systematic understanding and critical knowledge of specialist areas of human geography, including an engagement with ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline
- 6.2 Capacity to develop their own understanding of complex issues, with sensitivity to both local contingencies and broader (e.g. national or global) influences
- 6.3 An ability to critically interpret the significance of space, place and landscape in a range of contexts and settings
- 6.4 An ability to critically evaluate arguments, concepts and data, and communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions for a range of purposes and audiences
- 6.5 Transferable skills to an advanced level that prepares them for employment or further study

In addition to the above, Honours students will have:

- 6.6 Designed and undertaken a piece of independent research on a theme relevant to geography

## Programme structure

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					compulsory or optional to take <b>C or O</b>	non-compensatable or compensatable <b>NC or X</b>
GEO4001M	4	1	Urban Geography	20	C	X
GEO4003M	4	1	Mapping the Geographies of Yorkshire	20	C	X
GEO4004M	4	1	Critical Thinking and Academic Skills in Geography	20	O	X
GEO4012M	4	1	Critical Thinking and Academic Skills in Geography (non-residential)	20	O	X
GEO4005M	4	2	Social and Cultural Geography	20	C	X
GEO4006M	4	2	Tourism Geographies	20	C	X
GEO4011M	4	2	Human Geography Fieldwork Studies	20	C	X
GEO5001M	5	1	Society and Space	20	C	X
GEO5002M	5	1	Culture and Landscape	20	C	X
GEO5005M	5	1	Geographical Thought	20	C	X
BMT5003M	5	2	Cultural and Heritage Tourism	20	C	X
GEO5008M	5	2	Geographers' Professional Practice	20	C	X
GEO5007M	5	2	Research Project	20	O	X
GEO5009M	5	2	Research Project (non-residential)	20	O	X
GEO6001M	6	1&2	Human Geography Dissertation	40	C	NC
GEO6004M	6	1	Cities in Transition	20	C	X
GEO6006M	6	1	Nature/Culture	20	C	X
You must choose either GEO6008M or GEO6010M						
GEO6008M	6	2	International/Cross-cultural Fieldwork	20	O	X
GEO6010M	6	2	International/Cross-Cultural Fieldwork (non-residential)	20	O	X
BMT6003M	6	2	Responsible Tourism	20	O	X
FIL6003M	6	2	Transnational Cinema	20	O	X

The Human Geography programme is designed to ensure that you develop specialist knowledge, understanding and skills in the subject.

In Level 4 (year 1 for full-time students) you will take six 20-credit modules. Two modules (*Urban and Economic Geography; Social & Cultural Geographies*) introduce key ideas and debates in urban, economic, social and cultural geography. The Tourism Geographies module introduces tourism geography and this enables you to follow a tourism 'strand' as part of your human geography degree. In the first semester you will take a module designed to introduce you to the norms and expectations of university-level study. This normally incorporates a residential field trip (UK based), so that you get to know the other geographers (students and staff) early in your degree. You also take a module focused on developing your skills in mapping and cartography. 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. In 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. The curriculum focuses in more detail on social geography (the *Society and Space* module) and cultural geography (the *Culture and Landscape* module), and you are able to continue with a tourism 'strand' through taking the *Cultural and Heritage Tourism* module. 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. In the *Research Project* module you will work in small groups on a research project of your own design (under the guidance of a tutor). This normally involves residential fieldwork (in the UK or Europe), although a non-residential version of the module is available. 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 in detail the changing nature of urban life, while *Nature/Culture* focuses on social and cultural understandings of 'nature' and how they are embedded in our daily lives. In the final semester you can choose between the option modules: *Responsible Tourism* and *Transnational Cinema*. These modules are offered by other subjects within the University, giving you opportunity to exchange ideas and perspectives with other students. Also, in your final semester you will take the *International/Cross-Cultural Fieldwork* module, normally involving residential fieldwork outside the UK (although a non-residential alternative is available). 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.

## **Learning, teaching and assessment**

For all of our geography degrees, our aim is to get you *doing* geography for yourself from the outset: collecting and analysing 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 degree 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 further study. You will encounter a wide range of assessment, including essays, reports (including fieldwork reports), verbal presentations, 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, at the same time 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 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](#)
- QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Geography (revised December 2014)
- QAA UK Quality Code: Chapter A1

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*Updated July 2017 to include accreditation detail and field trip info.*