

Programme specification

BA (Hons) American Studies (Single Honours)



<i>School:</i>	Humanities, Religion and Philosophy	
<i>Entry from:</i>	2018/19	
	<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) American Studies Diploma of Higher Education American Studies Certificate of Higher Education American Studies	
<i>UCAS Code / GTTR / Other:</i>	Not applicable	
<i>Joint Honours Combinations:</i>	Not applicable	This is the specialist programme
<i>QAA Benchmark Group(s):</i>	Areas Studies (2008)	
<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

American Studies reflects a range of critical approaches to explore the history and culture of the United States as well as an understanding of the American experience itself. It will, it is hoped, offer you an exciting programme which will encourage you to also reflect critically upon the predominance of the US over the last century or so in political, cultural, historical and literary terms and contexts, as well as on American Studies as a truly inter-disciplinary subject area. The taught modules have been carefully constructed to take you on a series of journeys in order to offer multi-perspective interpretations of the United States. It is hoped that you will engage in an inter-connected sequence of debates which will lead you to a greater understanding of the complexity of the United States as a dynamic cultural construct as well as a geographical and political entity, Captured under the QAA Subject Benchmarking for Area Studies, this approach enables you to 'acquire a unique depth and breadth of insight into the social, cultural and political dynamic of a particular region'.

Essential to American Studies (AS) is the approach of inter-disciplinarity: the study of the United States with the integration of related disciplines (History, Literature and Film Studies), and in particular the sharing of themes and methodologies of those other disciplines (particularly the approaches of cultural studies), which, when integrated, results in a broad-based and flexible programme. The American Studies stand-alone modules contained within American Studies programme themselves reflect an inherent inter-disciplinarity; (for example, there are strong history, film and literature elements within AS modules such as *From Slavery to Freedom* and *The Making of Modern America*). Certain broad themes will be addressed throughout each level, which can be summarised as follows: the exploration of the United States as an evolving cosmopolitan democratic culture shaped by immigration, ethnic diversity and racial tension; the emergence and evolution of the USA's global hegemony, and its impact upon the international community, especially Britain; and the nature and significance of contemporary US popular culture, especially film and TV, in a domestic and globalised context.

Each of these themes will be developed with greater complexity as you progress through the programme.

American Studies also supports a broad constituency of learners and offers a curriculum that is attractive to home and international audiences. The inclusion of an exciting optional, one semester exchange with the USA (as well as the nature of the subject itself) embraces the internationalisation ambitions of the University.

Special features

- At all levels of the programme key skills are fully integrated into academic study and you are encouraged to reflect self-critically on your performance and to prepare yourselves for your future careers.
- You will work with a team of enthusiastic and research-active staff throughout your time on the programme; they will support you and bring their own research to the programme.
- A specialised work-related American Studies module exclusive to the programme which will encourage you to reflect upon the wider application of your skills outside of the University setting.
- You will benefit from a regular programme of visiting speakers.
- A special feature of the programme is the optional international exchange, which presents you with the opportunity to study for one semester (in the first semester of the second year) at a university in the US.
- An inter-disciplinary dissertation exclusive to the programme

Admissions Criteria

You must meet the University's general entry criteria for [undergraduate](#) study. Tariff points are set for each given year.

In addition, you must have:

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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 American Studies Programme has the following aims:

1. To achieve a growing sophisticated knowledge of the history, society and culture of the USA
2. To understand the significance of the US within a global context.
3. To develop interdisciplinary study skills and approaches in relation to the study of the USA.
4. To demonstrate transferable employment-relevant or research key skills

Programme Learning Outcomes

Level 1 / FHEQ L4

Students who gain the award specified will have demonstrated the following learning outcomes:

1. An understanding and content knowledge of the history and culture of the USA, and its significance within a global context.
2. A knowledge of the theoretical perspective of inter-disciplinarity for an understanding of the USA and the concept of American Studies.
3. Academic skills relevant to American Studies, including an ability to evaluate, interpret and present in writing, as well as develop basic transferable skills.
4. An ability to reflect on American Studies as a Discipline in its own right.

Level 2 / FHEQ L5

Students who gain the award specified will have demonstrated the following learning outcomes:

1. Critical understanding and content knowledge of the history and culture of the USA, including an enhanced appreciation of historiographical and theoretical perspectives.
2. An ability to apply underlying concepts, inter-disciplinary skills and approaches to American Studies.
3. Academic skills development, including awareness of independent research strategies, and enhanced facility for written and oral analysis, argument, and expression; as well as enhanced transferable skills, within a career relevant context.
4. An ability to reflect on the nature of American studies as a discipline area

Level 3 / FHEQ L6

Students who gain the award specified will have demonstrated the following learning outcomes:

1. A systematic understanding of the history and culture of the United States, underpinned by a detailed awareness of historiographical and theoretical contexts.
2. Deploy an advanced conceptual understanding to the application of inter-disciplinary skills and approaches to American Studies.
3. An ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within the discipline
4. Undertake a substantial project focused on American studies (the dissertation)

And for Honours Degree:

5. Synthesise and apply complex theoretical perspectives and concepts to an extended piece of written work

Programme Structure

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Modules for the Programme

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Status of Module*
1AS203	4	1	Introduction to American Literature	20	C
1AS200	4	1	American Foundation	20	C
1EN601	4	1	Writing, Research and Literature	20	C
1AS204	4	2	The Modern American: Fact, Fiction, Myth	20	C
1AS201	4	2	America's Century	20	C
1AS202	4	2	Cinema and Society	20	C
2EN602	5	1	Mapping America	20	O
2AS200	5	1	Blues and Roots	20	O
2HI509	5	1	The Making of Modern America	20	O
2FS101	5	1	Film and the American Imagination	20	O
2EN450	5	1	Literary Theory	20	O
2EN510	5	2	Literature at Work	20	C*
2EN605	5	1 or 2	From Harlem to Hip-Hop: African American Literature and Culture	20	O
2HI502	5	2	History, Community and Culture	20	C*
2AS201	5	2	From Slavery to Freedom	20	O
2HI504	5	2	The Age of Anxiety	20	O
3AS204	6	1 & 2	Dissertation	40	CA
3HI504	6	1	US Conflict on East Asian Mainland	20	O
3AS200	6	1	Cinema of Conflict	20	O
3AS202	6	1	Special Relationship	20	O
3EN605	6	2	American Radicals: Outside the Canon	20	O
3AS203	6	2	The Nation Divided	20	O
3AS201	6	2	Pop Americana	20	O
3HI500	6	2	Great Society	20	O
3EN290	6	2	Gender and Sexualities	20	O

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

C* You must choose one of 2EN510 or 2HI502 but not both.

The Programme Levels will reflect an ascending order of complexity and sophistication with regard to content knowledge and skills, inter-disciplinarity and the objective of creating a cohesive and varied module diet:

FHEQ Four will be offered at foundation level, presupposing no previous knowledge of American Studies, nor requiring it as an admission criterion. Two new modules designed specially with a Literature focus complement 1AS200 American Foundations and 1AS201 America's Century. The modules pick up themes in the other level 4 modules and develop them further. Modules will focus on introducing you to the concept of American Studies, and provide you with a basic knowledge of the USA's history and culture, within a global context. There is a dedicated foundation module (*American Foundations*), defining key American themes; mission, immigration, race, westward expansion, the American Dream, politics,

freedom and the constitution. You will follow modules that explore America's impact upon, and standing within, the modern world; and the value of cultural evidence, in the form of cinema, as a tool for understanding the social history and key ideologies of the United States. Embedded within all the modules, and, especially in the foundation module, will be fundamental academic and transferable skills (essay writing and referencing); and they will also provide grounding in the inter-disciplinarity central to American Studies.

FHEQ Five will build upon the foundations of Level 4 content and skills. Modules explore inter-disciplinary context, critical aspects of American history and culture: the impact of depression, war and nuclear diplomacy; industrialisation and urban culture; slavery and race relations; popular culture and cinema, to name but a few. A work-based learning module will fulfil the University's commitment to the promotion of transferable skills, graduate-ness and career relevance. The employability module designed for the single honours programme provides a moment for you to reflect on your experience on an interdisciplinary programme. There is also an option to follow a one-semester exchange in the United States, where you take modules in the host institution approved by the Head of Programme; the module choice offers the opportunity for diversity, whilst still broadly mapping against the structure of the home programme, and generally enhancing your experience.

FHEQ Six will offer you advanced level modules, with specific focus, reflecting the research and teaching expertise of the existing programme team. These modules promote complexity and sophistication, with regard to knowledge, skills and inter-disciplinary understanding, expected of a final year degree student in American Studies. A key aspect is the Dissertation, a supervised independent research project on a topic relevant to American Studies, which represents the culmination of academic skills development taken as a forty-credit module, providing you with the opportunity to tilt the emphasis towards independent research. Modules, more narrowly defined than at previous levels, address, for example, the social and cultural ferment of 1960s/70s USA; the American Civil War and its heritage; the politics, strategy and culture of the Vietnam War; the Anglo-American 'special relationship'; contemporary popular culture and American literature. Transferable, as well as advanced academic, skills are embedded within all modules, thus preparing you for the world of employment or postgraduate study.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Level 4

American Studies modules are adapted to the Supported Open Learning format, providing 36 hours class contact time per 20 credit module, together with appropriate tutorial support; supported open learning strategies range from Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) support to independent group work.

Assessments include: essays, portfolios, exams, film reviews, document and text-based analysis.

Level 5

Level 5 modules build on the foundation established at Level 4 by enabling you to further apply ideas and concepts. Modules will also deepen your knowledge and understand of the context of American Studies. Assessment continues to be based on a combination of coursework essays,

reviews, timed assessment, research projects, portfolio and essays/exams to allow you to build upon those skills established at level 4.

You will engage in a greater level of analytical thinking and will be encouraged to embark upon, plan and execute work more autonomously and to take increasing responsibility for the process of your own learning.

Level 6

Level 6 modules enable you to take a higher degree of responsibility for the planning, direction and management of your own learning. You will be required to work with an enhanced degree of autonomy and independence.

The essay, essay/exam approach, together with the dissertation, is utilised to further your ability to develop and refine your skills.

Assessments include: research paper, essay, timed assessment, a review, research file and final dissertation.

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.

In addition, the following programme-specific regulations apply in respect of progression and graduation:

- BA American Studies Single Honours students will have to pass the 40 credit Dissertation 3AS204 to achieve honours.

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](#)
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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)
- [click here to enter text](#)

Date written / revised: 23.12.14

first delivery of this version of the programme is in 2015

QSC PASP Nov 2017 – reported changes module grid resulting in BA Literature revalidation

QSC PASP 24.10.18 approved replacement of 2AS202 with 2HI502 and 2EN510

2EN602 added as an option module wef sem 2 18/19. QSC PASP approved Jan 2019.