

## Programme specification

### BA (Hons) Creative Writing and Media

<i>School:</i>	Humanities, Religion & Philosophy
<i>Entry from:</i>	September 2016
<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) Creative Writing and Media Diploma of Higher Education Creative Writing and Media Certificate of Higher Education Creative Writing and Media
<i>UCAS Code / GTTR / Other:</i>	WP83
<i>Joint Honours Combinations:</i>	Not applicable
<i>QAA Benchmark Group(s):</i>	English Communication, Media, Film and Cultural 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

The Media programme's underlying philosophy to 'think critically, write creatively' presents the Creative Writing and Media student with an opportunity to consider transitions from the critical thinking to creative practice and undertake assessment tasks that follows up work undertaken in Media (particularly on modules such as Writing the Media). Media and Creative Writing is designed to provide students with a comprehensive knowledge of Media and its key aspects with an emphasis on Creative Writing and its potential to communicate complex ideas to different audiences and through diverse platforms. Neutral magazine provides an ideal environment where Creative Writing and Media students can showcase their work and present their outputs to a public audience.

#### Creative Writing

Creative Writing is a thriving subject area at YSJU, with student and staff numbers quadrupling over the last four years. Exploration of a wide range of forms and genres and the production of original writing remains at the heart of the BA Creative Writing programme. But such practice-based study comes with a strong critical underpinning: Good writing doesn't happen without good reading. As a producer and consumer of literature, you will see for yourself how a deep engagement with a range of texts can inform and inspire your creative practice. Literature modules and the development of strong critical habits are key aspects of the degree; and we use a variety of assessments to encourage different modes of learning. The development of your writing as a practice-based and practice-led endeavour is key. You are facilitated in developing your writing as a craft which is informed by an understanding of literature. Overall, the degree will allow you to explore new possibilities and refine your creative practice, while developing the broader skills to prepare you for a career within the arts industry or beyond.

York St John takes a specific approach to Creative Writing which recognises it as a practice-based subject underpinned by a critical understanding of literature. As a Creative Writing student you will benefit from the opportunity to create original works, experiment with a range of genres, and develop your practice in a supportive and inspiring environment. At the same time, you study literature in a range of contexts and learn to become a sophisticated reader of texts, which in turn will inform your practice. The degree develops both intellectual skills, and the practical skills necessary for employability. You will become a confident, independent learner and practitioner with a passion for your subject and a range of transferrable skills.

The teaching team for Creative Writing are all practising, published prose writers, scriptwriters, or poets, who are also active scholars with a range of research specialisms. All teaching on the programme is therefore supported by a wealth of practical experience and expertise in the theoretical, social and cultural contexts of writing. The course is further enhanced by a range of visiting writers and literary professionals, whose masterclasses and events offer you an opportunity to engage with the wider world of the professional writer. YSJU's Arts Faculty also has strong links with the York Literature Festival and Aesthetica Short Film Festival, for which we host major public events each year.

The course's public website provides another bridge to that bigger world, gathering news, events and publishing opportunities for students across all levels. As part of the employability module, Publication, Production, and Performance, you will be involved in various projects offering real professional experience, including event and competition management, and the production, editing, marketing, and launch of our annual Beyond the Walls anthology. The aim is to foster an exciting community in which you can fulfil your own ambitions as a writer.

## Media

The Media Single Honours and Joint Honours programmes are progressive degrees which are up to date with recent developments in the discipline. Key things that you will experience through the degree are:

- An exploration of the “de-Westernisation” of Media Studies which offers a cosmopolitan view of the media in a global context
- A commitment to exploring power relationships in contemporary media; the ways in which media are central to some of the burning social and ideological issues of our time
- A creative and analytical immersion with technologies, project management and communication skills, resulting in opportunities for you to raise your profile as an employable graduate in the media and creative industries
- A critical investigation into the profound impact digital culture is having upon the world, and in turn individual, social and (inter)national identities

A number of exciting major factors will enhance the student experience and these are:

- 1) The integration of our *Neutral* project as an e-publication driven by the talent and dedication of our students. Here is our latest edition: [www.neutralmagazine.com](http://www.neutralmagazine.com)
- 2) A vibrant schedule of excursions, field trips and events which allow you to explore media cultures on a local, national and international level (an excursion that is subsidised by the Programme)
- 3) A healthy roster of visiting speakers, industry experts and academics who will enrich the discourse of the programme and provide you with a practical insight into media in a commercial and creative context
- 4) Dedicated mentoring across levels from professional designers and experts who will help you to develop your technical ability

Opportunities to engage with alumni who have successfully completed the programme

We maintain our pairings with Creative Writing, Literature and Film Studies and these subjects complement each other extremely well and allow students to develop their own interests both in and across their subjects.

We believe that the de-Westernised nature of the proposed programme and the inherently global discourse emblematic of contemporary Media Studies is an attractive product for an international audience as well as a UK audience interested in exploring the complex and influential nature of media in a personal, social and philosophical context.

### **Admissions Criteria**

The programme's admission criteria are in line with the University's general entry criteria for [undergraduate](#) study.

If your first language is not English, you need to take an IELTS test or an equivalent qualification accepted by the University. Please check with Admissions for further information.

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

### Creative Writing

- To provide opportunities for the production of original, creative writing.
- To encourage students to read in critically informed ways and 'as writers'.
- To develop an understanding of the various modes, forms and genres within the field of creative writing.
- To introduce students to, and develop, technical creative writing skills.
- To develop a regular writing practice.
- To develop an ability to reflect critically on the creative process.
- To provide a supportive learning environment which meets the needs of a diverse set of learners.
- To promote and develop a vibrant creative writing community in the university through events, workshops and visiting speakers, including partnerships with local arts events.
- To encourage critical as well as creative thinking and practice.
- To introduce students to the world of writing in various professional contexts.
- To enhance students' development as independent learners and practitioners.

### Media

- to provide students with a comprehensive grounding in the concepts, theories, methodologies, issues and debates on the subject of Media.
- to examine the evolution of communication through oral, visual, print and electronic media.
- to enable students to develop key academic, generic, cognitive and technical skills which will enhance employment potential.
- to facilitate personal development to enable students to be independent, effective in interpersonal and professional situations and be able to undertake further academic study.
- to engage with the discipline as a de-westernised subject and explore the ways in which media operates in a global and transnational contexts.
- to encourage students to explore the implications of their academic study in the wider society to which they belong.

## Programme Learning Outcomes

### Level 1 / FHEQ L4

#### Creative Writing

- Demonstrate awareness of key concepts in Creative Writing, including historical and theoretical perspectives.
- Demonstrate awareness of formal and generic conventions.
- Demonstrate competence in the production of their own, original compositions.
- Communicate effectively with an awareness of audience, register and readership.
- Evaluate their own creative process.
- Understand the process of giving and receiving constructive critical feedback on work in progress.

#### Media

Level one modules engage students with a range of analytical and research techniques and methods, as well as introducing them to various conceptual frameworks. Level one modules will enable the student to achieve a knowledge and application of generic core skills in communication, problem solving, team-work and personal management in order to establish the foundation to the programme of study.

Upon completion of level one, students will be able to:

- gather and organise information from recommended sources informed by a knowledge of ethical research practices.
- identify and practice the key elements for both short-term and long-term academic development
- demonstrate knowledge of underlying conceptual, theoretical and historical and ethical perspectives relevant to the study of Media
- demonstrate competence in the analysis and evaluation of media texts
- consider and evaluate the relevant skills and learning requirements for working independently and in groups
- communicate effectively using a range of key skills appropriate for the audience and purpose

### Level 2 / FHEQ L5

#### Creative Writing

- Develop, redraft and edit original creative writing.
- Demonstrate a technical proficiency in specific forms of writing.
- Effectively communicate within the constraints of convention, register and audience/readership.
- Reflect critically on their own creative process.
- Demonstrate a critical awareness of both the historical precedents and the contemporary forefront of their chosen genres.
- Develop professional and career based skills in the context of work related learning.

## Media

Level two modules build on the foundation established at Level one by enabling the student to apply theories and concepts and to continue practising generic core skills. Students engage in a greater level of conceptual thinking and are encouraged to embark upon, plan and execute work more autonomously (individually and in a team) and to take increasing responsibility for the process of their own learning. Students are prepared for more independent working practices, which use their ability to transfer academic learning into the real world.

Upon completion of Level two, students will be able to:

- demonstrate a critical understanding of the key theories, debates and concepts in Media, to which they have been introduced
- effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- use a range of established and ethical techniques to source materials and use them critically and creatively
- demonstrate a reflective understanding of their knowledge as Media students, its limits and how this influences analysis and interpretation
- develop professional, entrepreneurial and career skills, and utilise key skills in the context of work related learning (or equivalent module on Joint Honours subject pairing)
- critically analyse data and information relevant to study of Media

## Level 3 / FHEQ L6

### Creative Writing

- synthesise and apply relevant perspectives to their own creative practice.
- independently manage the writing and drafting process in terms of setting goals and meeting deadlines.
- situate their practice in relation to broader creative and academic contexts.
- produce an artistically coherent body of work which demonstrates technical ability and an awareness of tone, structure, genre and audience.
- apply in-depth understanding of their own work in relation to reading and practice, and be able to communicate this in a coherent and sustained manner.
- critically evaluate issues of innovation, experimentation and the 'boundaries' of the discipline.

### For Hons

- deploy the methods and techniques that they have learned toward the development of substantial creative writing project.

NB: 'for hons' is compulsory for award of BA (Hons) Creative Writing. Students taking a Joint Honours degree may choose to write their dissertation in their other subject.

## Media

Level three modules enable students to take a high degree of responsibility for the planning, direction and management of their own learning. Students are required to work with an enhanced degree of autonomy and independence, and demonstrate increased powers of self-criticism.

On completion of ordinary degree, students will be able to:

- demonstrate key aspects of the study of Media, including ethical acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge for the purpose of research
- Express a systematic understanding of the key strands of the degree; media power and ethics, audience; digital culture; transnationalism; visual culture
- demonstrate independence, innovation and entrepreneurial skills in working and academic practices
- explore and evaluate arguments, assumptions and abstract concepts and effectively engage with such matters as a critical thinker
- communicate subject-relevant information, ideas and arguments effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences

#### For Hons

- synthesise and apply complex theoretical perspectives and concepts to a range of situations and issues relevant to the subject areas studied

### **Programme Structure**

#### Creative Writing

Level one modules introduce you to a range of genres and forms of writing, providing the opportunity to reflect critically upon them and explore them through your own practice. The initial engagement with models in various forms is key to this level. You will begin to reflect on your own creative process and develop effective strategies for generating new creative work. Level one enables you to attain new knowledge, communicate effectively in a team, analyse texts and manage your studies. You will meet a variety of visiting, professional writers and begin to contextualise creativity within various cultural frameworks. This will prepare you for Level two, where you will select three Core Craft modules in particular forms, and develop your employability skills.

Level one provides you with comprehensive introduction of key issues, debates and study skills and involves the use of technology to enhance your learning. Also, there will be opportunities for short field trips and engagement with our outside partners. You will also be introduced to research skills and practices which will be developed throughout the degree.

Level two builds upon the foundation of Level one, progressing your writing skills through more focussed and sustained engagement with particular forms. Critical Self-Commentaries will encourage you to develop your reflective abilities in the production of original creative work. 'Core Craft' modules allow for deeper exploration of Fiction, Poetry, Non-Fiction, and Scriptwriting, both in technical terms and through the consideration of formative contexts and reader expectations. The ability to evaluate the work of peers, published writing, and your own work in progress is developed more generally. At Level two, you will also take an employability module, which not only develops your understanding of industry structures, but offers real professional experience in the form of various publishing and literary projects. The option to choose from among 'Core Craft' modules or other Literature modules makes Level two the stage where you begin to tailor the course to your developing interests. At the same time, all relevant learning outcomes are developed through the year's compulsory aspects, in the requirement to take at least one Core Craft module, over the year, (per semester) and the employability module.

Level two engages in key debates and emphasises the global nature of media and socio/political issues. In addition, more complex and creative approaches to technology enhanced learning are developed, specifically within the context of employability and media in a

commercial and cultural industry environment and visiting speakers will help you to see the study of media in practice. This will also include opportunities to participate in trips to other cities as media hubs. In addition, we will foster your research skills in preparation for specialist research in your final year.

Level three modules develop independent learning and encourage self-management, and offer the opportunity to produce a sustained portfolio of creative work. You will continue to develop an in-depth understanding of the wider contexts for creative writing, exploring the boundaries of the discipline through experimentation and critical reflection. You will also develop research skills appropriate to the forms of writing you have chosen, enabling you to situate yourself within a wider cultural and professional framework.

Level three focuses on specialised subjects that have been previously woven into the courses and you will have choices which allow you to study particular areas that you are passionate about. This final year of study also includes an international field trip (past destinations include Istanbul and Madrid) and the development of a dissertation special study to showcase your abilities. In this final chapter of your study at undergraduate level your research skills will be tested as a part of your special study and you will also be invited to take part in some exciting field study research.

### Modules for the Programme

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Status of Module*
1CP204	1	1	Media Culture and Society	20	C
1CW101	1	1	Forms of Narrative	20	C
1CP203	1	1	Media Research	20	O
1EN601	1	1	Writing, Research and Literature	20	O
1CW102	1	1	Introduction to Creative Writing	20	O
1CW100	1	2	Writing to Order	20	C
1CP200	1	2	Writing the Media	20	C
1CP205	1	2	The Medium is the Message: Media Evolution and History	20	O
1CP201	1	2	Critical Perspectives	20	O
1EN604	1	2	Canonicity	20	O
1EN630	1	2	Theorising Literature: Power and Identity	20	O
2CP201	2	1	Issues of Taste	20	O
2CP202	2	1	Popular Genres	20	O
2CP203	2	1	Visual Culture	20	O
2CW100	2	1	Writing Fiction	20	O <sup>1</sup>
2CW101	2	1	Writing Reality: Creative Non Fiction	20	O <sup>1</sup>
2EN470	2	1	Adaptations	20	O
2EN601	2	1	Science Fiction for Survival	20	O
2CP205	2	2	Media Enterprise	20	C if taken <sup>2</sup>
2CW102	2	2	Publishing, Production and Performance	20	C if taken <sup>2</sup>
2CP204	2	2	Globalisation	20	O
2CP200	2	2	Convergence Culture	20	O

<sup>1</sup> Students must choose 20 credits from Writing Fiction or Writing Reality: Creative Nonfiction

<sup>2</sup> Publishing Production and Performance and Media Enterprise are work related learning (WRL) modules. Joint honours students are required to choose one.



2CW103	2	2	Writing Poetry	20	O <sup>3</sup>
2CW104	2	2	Scriptwriting	20	O <sup>3</sup>
3EN820	3	1&2	Creative Writing Project	40	CA if taken <sup>4</sup>
3CP203	3	1&2	Special Study	40	CA if taken <sup>4</sup>
3CP200	3	1	Futures	20	O
3FS100	3	1	Animations	20	O
3CW101	3	1	Experimental Writing	20	O <sup>5</sup>
3CW100	3	1	Writing Genres	20	O <sup>5</sup>
3CW102	3	2	Creative Research in Practice	20	C
3CP201	3	2	Media Geographies	20	O
3EN290	3	2	Gender and Sexualities	20	O
3AS201	3	2	Pop Americana	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

Creative Writing at YSJU is a very practical and hands-on subject, and all of your learning will be structured around a dynamic engagement with texts, whether your own or others, as a writer and reader. Just as the programme structure will allow you to choose increasingly specialised modules to suit your writerly interests, every module and each level of study is designed to help you develop and refine a set of skills uniquely suited to your goals. The emphasis on the relationship between a wide range of creative, critical, and professional skills and between reading and writing, listening and sharing, ideas and practice is one of the things that defines our programme. The structure is designed for you to draw upon the mutual benefits of different ways of thinking and doing. You'll notice these are all active verbs, partly because successful creative writing study depends upon you taking a very active role, and partly because our emphasis on 'process' over 'product' means everyone on the course will always be looking for ways to improve and move forward.

### Skills

At each level of study, new, more advanced skills will be introduced and strengthened through continual practice. These fall into the three broad, but interlinked 'skillsets' of Creative, Critical, and Professional skills. The first involves all of the composition skills, techniques, and craft you might expect from a degree in writing, although our emphasis on variety within these means you're very likely to work in forms that are relatively new to you. **Creative skills** also include things like editing, creative problem solving, and the development of different creative projects. Again, these are balanced by the **Critical** strand, through which your ability to analyse texts within theoretical and historical contexts, conduct research, and reflect critically upon your creative process will all be strengthened. Finally, the **Professional** strand means learning to work to specific prompts and deadlines, developing oral and written communication, or moving

<sup>3</sup> Students must choose 20 credits from Writing Poetry or Scriptwriting

<sup>4</sup> Joint Honours students will have the choice of the Creative Writing Project or the dissertation/special study module from the other half of their pairing.

<sup>5</sup> Creative Writing Joint Honours students can pick only 20 credits from either Experimental Writing: Theory and Practice and Writing Genres

between self-management and effective teamwork. By design, all three of these skillsets are nurtured in conjunction with one another and throughout the degree.

### **Learning Time and Learning Space**

In practical terms, your learning will involve a combination of working in classrooms, individual study or extracurricular group work, and one-on-one meetings with tutors. Within that classroom-time, a typical week involves a range of settings and configurations. A large group session in a lecture hall will often be accompanied by smaller groups for seminars or workshops; and those sessions often involve even smaller group work for more focused discussion and feedback.

The 'workshop' setting is an important and distinctive feature of creative writing study. As a traditional model for the study of writing, there are a number of ways a writing workshop might be set up or run. In simplest terms, we think of it as a place where work is done. Beyond that, our use of workshops on modules at every level of your degree is intended to be flexible enough to fit the tasks at hand. Any given workshop session will often be divided into time for general discussion, in order to introduce new topics or work more critically with something we've all read together beforehand, perhaps followed by some writing exercises to be done in the classroom, and time to give and receive feedback on writing done outside the classroom.

In all of this, you and your peers will be your own greatest resource for helping each other to improve your writing and explore new possibilities. Your development as a writer will be inseparable from your development as a critic and reader, since your ability to offer constructive feedback is as important as your ability to take it on-board. Whatever the focus of a particular session, the workshop setting works to establish and ultimately depends upon a sense of trust and collaboration. Because every module focuses on the writing process as much as (or more than) the final product, discussions and feedback sessions will delve into areas of that process that often remain hidden. Whether that means sharing unfinished drafts, talking about points of influence or inspiration, or working to demystify the path from inkling to publication, the workshop environment is both a safe, supportive space and a space to push you further.

### **Beyond the Classroom**

Another distinguishing feature of our programme is the extent to which that workshop spirit and learning extends beyond the classroom. Across the degree, you will have the support of individual tutorials, with your module lecturers as well as a personal tutor, and plenty of opportunities for further collaboration with your community of peers. Rather than being an add-on, visiting speakers are brought in throughout the year with direct links to the teaching modules. Whether these are published authors or other literary professionals, these special events bridge between classroom experience and the working world, and widen the range of expertise and inspiration that might inform your work.

### **Assessment**

The most important thing about our approach to assessment is that it happens all the time. The feedback you receive on weekly assignments or classroom exercises throughout a term is just as crucial as the marked submission at the end of it. This formative feedback, which is just as likely to come from peers and group discussion as from your tutor, is the means by which you will refine your ideas and the work itself towards end-of-semester assignments. The nature of these summative, marked assignments reflects the emphasis on a longer, ongoing process behind your writing, and will generally incorporate work that has been developed over the course of a semester.

Across the degree, these assignments come in a range of forms, partly to encourage the development of different writerly skills. Although you will often be encouraged to keep a reflective, critical journal, some modules will require you submit this record of ideas and reflection, while others will require you submit proposals or presentations on ongoing work – again, with an emphasis on how you might take those projects further. Other modules will set more specific tasks, such as the preparation of a journal submission or adapt an existing text from one medium to another. The two most common modes of assessment, which are often linked, are the Portfolio and Critical Commentary.

### **The Portfolio**

Several modules, especially the 'Core Craft' modules in Level two, will require you to submit a portfolio of creative work for assessment. Unlike a traditional critical essay (which other modules will require), the writing for these portfolios will be compiled throughout the term, from weekly assignments within and outside the classroom. This will allow you to choose from among these drafts for those to be polished and perhaps expanded for inclusion in the portfolio. Although some portfolios might consist of a single, extended piece of writing, the portfolio form also allows and encourages you to submit different pieces and different kinds of work together.

### **The Critical Commentary**

In terms of your development and progress from one module to the next, the critical commentary is just as important as the production of creative work for the portfolio. The commentary is your chance to define the aims of your portfolio work and to relate what you've written to the material covered by the module. This may mean discussion of sources of inspiration or research, or consideration of audience, genre, and other formal conventions. In every case, it means reflecting seriously and critically upon the creative process and the work you have done towards producing the portfolio.

### **Resources**

Our core team is comprised of published, practising writers with both critical and creative backgrounds and teaching experience. The team is further supported by the literature team and staff teaching either part-time or across subject areas. The Literature Series and link with the York Literature Festival, and the visiting writers, are an essential enhancement to your student experience. Visiting speakers run student workshops and take part in events and presentations. As a creative writing student, these exciting events are open to you, and visiting writers often run workshops which form part of your curriculum. Visiting speakers have included:

- Simon Armitage, poetry, non-fiction
- Will Self, novels
- Germaine Greer, essays, commentary
- Daljit Nagra, poetry
- Graham Rawle, graphic novels
- Jackie Kay, fiction, autobiography, poetry
- Joe Dunthorne, fiction and poetry
- Helen Mort, poetry
- Emily Berry, poetry
- Rebecca Goss, poetry
- Paul Myerscough, editor London Review of Books
- Nicholas Royle, novelist and editor.
- Alison Moore, novelist
- Kate Atkinson, novelist
- Janelle Andrew, literary agent
- Tom Chivers, editor, publisher, poetry and non-fiction writer

- Luke Kennard, poetry, novels
  - Jon Stone, poetry and publisher
  - Kirsten Irving, poetry and publisher
  - Jack Mpange, autobiography, poetry
- The Creative Writing Beyond the Walls blog, hosted by Wordpress at YSJ, is an interactive forum for news, events and student opportunities. This has been very successful since being implemented in 2013. Students and staff contribute to its content. <http://blog.yorks.ac.uk/creativewriting/>

### **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](#)
- [Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy](#)
- [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 (faculty)
- Module handbooks (faculty)

---

*Date written / revised: 30/04/2014*

Additional module 1CW102 added as an option for 2015/16 (QSC PASP 17.4.15)