

## Programme specification

### BA (Hons) Creative Writing and English Literature

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YORK  
ST JOHN  
UNIVERSITY

<i>School:</i>	School of Humanities, Religion & Philosophy		
<i>Entry from:</i>	2019/20	<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>			
<i>Exit awards:</i>	BA (Ord) Creative Writing and English Literature Diploma of Higher Education Creative Writing and English Literature Certificate of Higher Education Creative Writing and English Literature		
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>			
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>			
<i>QAA benchmark group(s):</i>			
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	<a href="#">Undergraduate periods of study for 3 years</a> <sup>1</sup> Full-time		
<i>Language of study:</i>	English		
<i>Study abroad opportunities:</i>	Yes		

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## Introduction and special features

The pairing of Creative Writing and English Literature develops skills in critical thinking in relation to a range of texts. Good writing comes from attentive and sophisticated reading, and writers develop these skills in their English Literature modules, alongside the reading and analysis they undertake in some of their Creative Writing modules. Creative writing is beneficial as a mode of engagement and inquiry in relation to literary texts. The two subjects work in dialogue with one another; creative writing's practice-based focus complimenting and supporting English Literature's critical and analytical approach and vice-versa. Joint Honours programmes give students the opportunity to combine two subjects from a range of areas in a structured way. The selected pairings are designed to complement one another and allow students to have a significant amount of choice and flexibility in relation to their learning experience. In addition, the Joint Honours pairings involve students engaging in a range of learning and teaching experiences and assessment opportunities.

English Literature is a rich and vibrant area of study. At YSJU, we are a dynamic, engaged, and research-active team who are committed to providing our students with a cutting-edge education. By studying English Literature, you will have the opportunity to learn about a range of different genres, historical periods, and literary forms. Our philosophy is simple: *words matter*. Words shape the world we live in (books can and have changed the world) and the connections between the written page and the concerns of the 'real' world are a crucial part of the programme. Overall, the degree will enable you to develop your expertise as a reader and critic of a range of literary materials, whilst also supporting you in the development of a portfolio of professional skills which will aid you in the wider job market. As you become adept at independent learning, you will become a more sophisticated reader of texts, and you will find that your confidence as a writer and as a critic will increase as your degree progresses.

Through the course of a wide-ranging suite of modules, you will develop an extensive knowledge of both classic and contemporary texts, and will have the opportunity to gain some

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

professional experience on our dedicated employability module, 'Literature at Work'. The choice of modules on offer will help you to develop your own interests and allow you to shape your degree accordingly. For example, students can choose to follow an historical pathway that might include modules such as 'Revolution and Response', which examines writing from the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, or 'The Victorian Novel', which focuses on nineteenth-century fiction. In addition, students can focus on other specialised areas represented by modules including 'Mapping America', 'Sick Novels: Literature and Disease', 'Science Fiction for Survival', and 'Gothic Origins'. We pride ourselves on a diverse and stimulating syllabus, and you might find yourself studying Native American writing, prison narratives, radical poetry, avant-garde writing, political polemics, Civil Rights literature, speculative fiction, LGBT rights literature, experimental writing, and literature of the Caribbean, as well as canonical writers such as Shakespeare, Dickens, and Austen, all as part of your English Literature degree.

A team of research-active academics who are all recognised in their respective specialisms will facilitate and guide your learning. We use a variety of assessment methods to help you develop different types of learning. You will not sit any traditional exams as part of your degree in English Literature, and instead you will be encouraged to try new forms of writing. In addition to more traditional assessments such as the essay, you might be asked to write a blog post, to compile a research portfolio, or even to curate an online exhibition. Field trips are an integral part of the programme, and students in recent years have had the opportunity to visit London, Stratford-upon-Avon, and Whitby, as well as local sites including Castle Howard and York Theatre Royal.

During your degree, you will develop a range of subject-specific and transferable skills. As well as having the opportunity to become an adept reader, critic, writer, and researcher, you will also become highly skilled in critical thinking, problem solving, constructing and developing an argument, time-management, public speaking, and project management. These skills are all valued highly by employers, and you have the chance to develop more professional skills on our bespoke employability module 'Literature at Work'. On this module, you will be able to experience an external work placement, or choose to work on a team project (such as designing a publication or curating a small exhibition). Students regularly contribute to our popular Literature blog, *Point Zero*, which is an excellent way to gain relevant professional experience and exposure for your critical and creative perspectives.

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. The department 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.

### **Admissions criteria**

You must meet 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 (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 encourage students to develop an informed and critical understanding of key themes, approaches and debates within English Literature;
2. To enhance students' development as independent learners and literary critics;
3. To provide opportunities for the production of original, creative writing;
4. To encourage students to read in critically informed ways and 'as writers';
5. To develop an understanding of the various modes, forms and genres within the fields of creative writing;
6. To develop a regular writing practice;
7. To support students in developing a range of transferable skills to equip them for employment and lifelong learning;
8. To develop an ability to reflect critically on the process of researching, writing, analysing, and forming an academic argument;
9. To promote and develop a vibrant creative writing community in the university through events, workshops and visiting speakers, including partnerships with local arts events such as the York Literature Festival.
10. To encourage critical as well as creative thinking and practice.
11. To provide a supportive learning environment that meets the needs of a diverse set of learners;
12. To enhance students' development of appropriate skills in communication, analysis, collaboration, research, and self-management.

### **Programme learning outcomes**

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

#### **Level 4**

- 1.1 Demonstrate awareness of key concepts in English Literature, including historical and theoretical perspectives.
- 1.2 Demonstrate awareness of key concepts in Creative Writing, including historical and theoretical perspectives
- 1.3 Demonstrate awareness of formal and generic conventions.
- 1.4 Demonstrate competence in the analysis of a variety of texts.
- 1.5 Communicate effectively using a range of basic skills appropriate for the audience and purpose.
- 1.6 Demonstrate a range of basic key transferable skills (including those for lifelong learning) appropriate for further study and future employment.
- 1.7 Evaluate their research, analysis, and writing process.
- 1.8 Demonstrate competence in the production of their own, original compositions.
- 1.9 Communicate effectively with an awareness of audience, register and readership.
- 1.10 Evaluate their own creative process.

- 1.10 Understand the process of giving and receiving constructive critical feedback on work in progress.

### Level 5

- 2.1 Demonstrate a critical understanding and knowledge of English Literature, including an enhanced appreciation of historical and theoretical perspectives.
- 2.2 Demonstrate critical awareness of research strategies particular to English Literature.
- 2.3 Apply theoretical perspectives and concepts to a range of different texts.
- 2.4 Effectively communicate information, ideas, arguments, and interpretations in a manner appropriate to the task and audience.
- 2.5 Effectively communicate within the constraints of convention, register and audience/readership.
- 2.6 Demonstrate an ability to apply knowledge and skills effectively in decision making in the context of growing maturity as an independent learner.
- 2.7 Demonstrate transferable skills including organisation, time-management, decision-making, and the ability to construct a coherent argument.
- 2.7 Develop, redraft and edit original creative writing.
- 2.8 Demonstrate a technical proficiency in specific forms of writing.
- 2.9 Reflect critically on their own creative process.
- 2.10 Demonstrate a critical awareness of both the historical precedents and the contemporary forefront of their chosen genres.

### Level 6

- 3.1 Demonstrate a systemic understanding of English Literature, underpinned by a detailed awareness of historical and theoretical perspectives.
- 3.2 Synthesise and apply relevant critical and theoretical perspectives to their own research and creative practice.
- 3.3 An ability to deploy an advanced conceptual understanding of the application of research skills and theoretical approaches to English Literature.
- 3.4 Work autonomously within a structured environment.
- 3.5 Manage and reflect critically upon individual learning.
- 3.6 Demonstrate transferable skills to an advanced level that prepares them for employment or further study.
- 3.7 Situate their practice in relation to broader creative and academic contexts.
- 3.8 Produce an artistically coherent body of work which demonstrates technical ability and an awareness of tone, structure, genre and audience.
- 3.9 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.
- 3.10 Design and undertake a piece of extended independent research that demonstrates an in-depth knowledge of a specific area of English Literature or deploy the methods and techniques that they have learned toward the development of substantial creative writing project.

**Please note:** 3.10 is compulsory for the award of BA (Hons) English Literature and Creative Writing. Students enrolled on a Joint Honours degree may choose to write their dissertation in either subject.

## Programme Structure

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Status of Module*
1EN600	4	1	Introduction to Literary Studies I	20	C
1EN601	4	1	Writing, Research and Literature	20	O
1CW201	4	1	Introduction to Creative Writing	20	O
1CW200	4	1	Forms of Narrative	20	C
1CW202	4	2	Writing to Order	20	C
1EN602	4	2	Introduction to Literary Studies II	20	C
1EN603	4	2	Theorising Literature: Power and Identity	20	O
1EN604	4	2	Canonicity	20	O
2EN450	5	1 or 2	Literary Theory	20	O
2EN600	5	1 or 2	Civil War to Civil Society: British Literature, 1640-1740	20	O
2EN470	5	1	Adaptations	20	O
2EN601	5	1 or 2	Science Fiction for Survival	20	O
2EN602	5	1	Mapping America	20	O
2EN510	5	2	Literature at Work	20	O
2EN511	5	2	Conflicting Words	20	O
2EN603	5	1 or 2	Revolution and Response: British Literature, 1740-1840	20	O
2EN604	5	1 or 2	Sick Novels: Literature and Disease	20	O
2EN605	5	1 or 2	From Harlem to Hip-Hop: African American Literature and Culture	20	O
2EN606	5	1 or 2	Shakespeare: Perspectives	20	O
2CW201	5	1	Writing Fiction	20	O
2CW202	5	1	Writing Reality: Creative Nonfiction	20	O
2CW203	5	2	Writing Poetry	20	O
2CW204	5	2	Scriptwriting	20	O
2DD002	5	2	Politically Engaged Practice II	20	O
2CW200	5	2	Working with Words: Publishing and Performance	20	O
3EN996	6	1 & 2	English Literature Dissertation	40	CA if taken
3CW204	6	1 & 2	Creative Writing Dissertation (40 credit)	40	CA if taken
3EN600	6	1 or 2	The Victorian Novel: Realism, Sensation, Naturalism	20	O
3EN601	6	1 or 2	The Experimental Century: Cultural Change in the Twentieth Century	20	O
3EN602	6	1 or 2	Gothic Origins	20	O
3EN603	6	1 or 2	The Making of Modern Drama	20	O
3EN604	6	1	Special Topics in English Literature I	20	O
3EN605	6	1 or 2	American Radicals: Outside the Canon	20	O
3EN270	6	1 or 2	Writing the Caribbean	20	O
3EN606	6	1 or 2	Cultures of the Now: Contemporary Writing	20	O
3EN290	6	2	Gender and Sexualities	20	O
3EN607	6	2	Special Topics in English Literature II	20	O
3CW201	6	1	Writing Genres	20	O
3CW202	6	1	Contemporary Writing 1: Innovation and Experimentation	20	O

3CW203	6	2	Contemporary Writing 2: Literary and Publishing Cultures Now	20	C
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\***C**: Compulsory, **CA**: Compulsory for award, **O**: option or **E**: elective.

**Please note:** all modules are subject to staffing and timetable availability each year, in accordance with CMA regulations.

#### Level 4 choices:

Students must choose 20 credits from either 1EN601: Writing, Research and Literature or 1CW201 Introduction to Creative Writing.

Students must select 6 modules, with a minimum of 40 credits and a maximum of 80 credits in each subject.

#### Level 5 choices:

**Work-related learning:** students must select one of the employability modules, either 2EN510: Literature at Work or 2CW200: Working with Words: Publishing and Performance.

For both Semesters 1 and 2, students must choose a maximum of 20 credits from the English Literature modules and 20 credits from the Creative Writing modules offered. These modules will be taken in addition to the choice of 20 credits from 2EN470: Adaptations or 2EN601: Science Fiction for Survival in Semester 1, and choice of the two employability modules, 2EN510: Literature at Work or 2CW200: Working with Words: Publishing and Performance in Semester 2.

Students must select 6 modules, with a minimum of 40 credits and a maximum of 80 credits in each subject.

#### Level 6 choices:

Students must choose either 3EN996: English Literature Dissertation or 3CW204: Creative Writing Dissertation.

Students must select 5 modules, including a dissertation module, with a minimum of 40 credits and a maximum of 80 credits in each subject.

## Learning, teaching and assessment

English Literature:

The aims of all our teaching is to help you to become a better writer and literary critic, to challenge you to consider new ideas and concepts, and to support you in understanding the complex connections between literature and contemporary society. Literature is a dialogic discipline: that is, informed discussions and debates are a crucial part of the learning process. We do not want students to be passive learners, but instead expect you all to be actively engaged and involved with your degree subject.

We use a range of teaching styles and settings to help support you during your time at University. You will attend lectures, seminars (groups of students with a tutor), tutorials (one-to-one meetings with a tutor), workshops, and experience collaborative learning (working with your fellow students), events, field trips, as well as independent study sessions, and times when you will need to use online resources through the University's Virtual Learning Environment.

Your first year with us is about supporting you in making the transition to university-level study. You will be assigned your own Academic Tutor, a member of staff who will meet with you and other students on a weekly basis during your first semester at YSJU. Modules such as 'Writing, Research and Literature' have been specially designed to help you adapt to the University environment and the requirements of the subject. As you progress to your second and third year, you will be able to shape your degree according to your own research interests. You can

choose to specialise in a certain genre, historical period, or literary form. We have a diverse range of modules for you to choose from, and you will have lots of opportunities to study types of literature that you might not have experienced previously (such as, for example, Caribbean literature, utopian writing, and creative non-fiction).

There are no exams, and your English Literature degree will be assessed through coursework. As well as writing essays, however, there are other assessment opportunities designed to help you develop new skills and prepare for graduate employment. You will encounter a wide range of assessment, including portfolios, close-reading exercises, and opportunities for reflective writing. Some modules are assessed by one piece of coursework (usually a portfolio) and you will have the chance to work on this throughout the semester. The feedback you will receive focuses on how you can improve your work for future assessment, and we encourage all students to keep a feedback folder to help keep track of their academic development. You will have the chance to work with published and professional writers, as our resident Royal Literary Fellow is available for additional tutorials and writing support.

In your final year, you will be ready to take on a bigger role in the management of your learning. You might find yourself leading a class discussion, or doing a non-assessed presentation in a seminar. You will write a dissertation (an extended project that runs for the whole academic year) on the subject of your choice, and with the support of an academic supervisor. In many ways, this is in the intellectual culmination of your degree, as you become an independent researcher and are required to manage your own academic project. Many of our students note that this is one of the most enjoyable sections of their degree, as they are specialising in a literary topic that they are passionate about, and are putting into practice the skills they have accrued during their time at York St John University.

#### Creative Writing:

Creative Writing 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, which 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 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 2, 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 each 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

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 sophisticated readers of texts, which in turn will inform your practice. The degree develops both intellectual skills, and the practical skills necessary for employability. We aim to produce confident, independent learners and practitioners with a passion for their subject and a range of transferrable skills.

### Progression and graduation requirements

The University's [general regulations for](#) choose an item: 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](#)

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*Date written / revised: 18/08/17*