

Programme Specification

Award and title: BA (Hons) American Studies and Film Studies

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	American Studies Media and Film Studies
<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>	N/A
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Certificate of Higher Education American Studies and Film Studies Diploma of Higher Education American Studies and Film Studies BA (Ord) American Studies and Film Studies
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Area Studies
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	Undergraduate periods of study ¹ 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>Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:</i>	Yes

Introduction and special features

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 you to have a significant amount of choice and flexibility in relation to your learning experience. In addition, Joint Honours will engage you in a range of learning and teaching experiences and assessment opportunities.

American Studies

American Studies reflects a whole 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. It will also be appealing to those students who prefer greater diversity to the more narrow focus of a Single Honours degree. Captured under the QAA Subject

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

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. Although there are currently valuable pairings with History and Film Studies, many of the 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*). So, not only will American Studies be attractive to those students who may have an interest in America, yet who do not wish to make a total commitment, it will also appeal to students primarily interested in a paired subject, for whom linkages with American Studies offers diversity in an interesting and challenging way. American Studies offers therefore a flexible as well as an integrated programme.

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.
- Students will work with a range of staff throughout their time on the programme; they will support students and bring their own research to the programme.
- The School benefits from a regular programme of visiting speakers.
- A special feature of the programme is the optional international exchange, which involves students studying for one semester (in the first semester of the second year) at a university in the US.

Film Studies

The Film Studies programme at York St John University is made up of exciting and cutting-edge content which represent the changing nature of the subject area and the links between film and other disciplines.

A number of key strands can be found in the programme which aims to enhance your experience and also give you transferable skills. These include:

- The recent "de-Westernisation" of Film Studies and the growing body of academic research and scholarship into Transnationalism in Cinema
- The exploration of regional and national cinema as a cultural expression which reflects history, ideology and popular culture
- The trans-media emergence of "Screen Studies" as a discipline which incorporates the changes in media where film culture has blended with televisual forms and digital media such as video game and animation

- An incorporation of non-fiction film forms and Documentary Studies
- The developments of scholarly approaches to wider film culture, fandom, user generated content and convergence culture
- Curricula which encourage students to get involved in optional field trips (partly subsidised by the programme) to, for instance, film festivals
- Modules which require students to engage in enterprise activities such as organising and promoting film themed events and film publications.
- Engagement with the Yorkshire Film Archive.
- Opportunity to become involved with our own publication, Neutral Magazine (archived here) <http://neutralmagazine.com/>

We are also dedicated to the student enhancement strategy which includes:

- 1) The further integration of the Neutral project as an e-publication driven by the talent and dedication of our students (see our latest edition here: www.neutralmagazine.com)
- 2) A further development of part subsidised optional excursion events which allow you to explore film cultures on a local, national and international level (an excursion that is subsidised by the Programme and none of the other excursion are of any additional cost to students).
- 3) A healthy roster of visiting speakers, industry experts and academics who will enrich the discourse of your programme and provide practical insight into Film in a commercial and creative context

Admissions criteria

You must meet the minimum entry requirements which are published on the programme specific webpage.

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 [Recognition of prior learning \(RPL\)](#). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

Programme structure

Modules for the Programme

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					compulsory or optional to take C or O	non-compensatable or compensatable NC or X
AMS4004M	4	1	Introduction to American Studies	20	C	X
MED4004M	4	1	Research in Practice	20	C	X
FIL4002M	4	1	Filmmakers on Film	20	C	X
AMS4005M	4	2	America: Empire of Liberty?	20	C	X
AMS4002M	4	2	Cinema and Society	20	O	X
FIL4001M	4	2	Film and Its Audiences	20	O	X
FIL4004M	4	2	Cult and Extreme Cinema	20	O	X

You must choose either HIS5001M or MED5004M

HIS5001M	5	1	History, Community and Culture ²	20	O	x
MED5004M	5	2	Media Enterprise	20	O	x
You must select THREE option modules with a minimum of 40 credits and a maximum of 80 credits in each subject overall						
LIT5008M	5	1 or 2	Mapping America	20	O	x
AMS5003M	5	1 or 2	Nation Divided: The United States in the era of the Civil War	20	O	x
AMS5002M	5	1 or 2	Slavery to Freedom	20	O	x
LIT5011M	5	1 or 2	Harlem to Hip Hop: African American Literature and Culture	20	O	x
FIL5005M	5	1	Imaginary Worlds: Researching Science Fiction	20	O	x
FIL5002M	5	1	Film and the American Imagination	20	O	x
FIL5001M	5	2	Independent Cinema	20	O	x
You must choose either LIT5002M or MED5001M in semester 1						
LIT5002M	5	1	Adaptations	20	O	x
MED5001M	5	1	Culture, Controversy and Media	20	O	x
You must choose either FIL5004M or FIL5003M in semester 2						
FIL5004M	5	2	European Cinema	20	O	x
FIL5003M	5	2	Gothic and Horror (Film Studies)	20	O	x
You must choose either AMS6012M or MED6001M						
AMS6012M	6	1 & 2	Dissertation in American Studies	40	O	NC
MED6001M	6	1 & 2	Dissertation	40	O	NC
You must select FOUR option modules with a minimum of 40 credits and a maximum of 80 credits in each subject overall						
WAR6003M	6	1 or 2	The American Way of War ³	20	O	x
LIT6011M	6	1 or 2	American Radicals: Outside the Canon ⁴	20	O	x
AMS6011M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in American Culture	20	O	x
AMS6010M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in American History	20	O	x
FIL6001M	6	1	Animations	20	O	x
FIL6002M	6	1	Documentary Film Studies	20	O	x
FIL6003M	6	2	Transnational Cinema	20	O	x
LIT6004M	6	2	Gender and Sexualities	20	O	x

You must take a minimum of 20 credits in each of your subjects in each Semester.

Please note that not all options may be available every year as they depend on student demand and staff availability.

² This is the work-related learning option from American Studies.

³ This is an American Studies option.

⁴ This is an American Studies option.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the table above as non-compensatable. A non-compensatable module is one that must be passed at the relevant level (with a mark of 40) in order to progress.

American Studies

Programme aim(s)

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

Programme learning outcomes

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

Level 4

- 4.1 An understanding and content knowledge of the history and culture of the USA, and its significance within a global context.
- 4.2 A knowledge of the theoretical perspective of inter-disciplinarity for an understanding of the USA and the concept of American Studies.
- 4.3 Academic skills relevant to American Studies, including an ability to evaluate, interpret and present in writing, as well as develop basic transferable skills.

Level 5

- 5.1 Critical understanding and content knowledge of the history and culture of the USA, including an enhanced appreciation of historiographical and theoretical perspectives.
- 5.2 An ability to apply underlying concepts, inter-disciplinary skills and approaches to American Studies.
- 5.3 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.

Level 6

- 6.1 A systematic understanding of the history and culture of the United States, underpinned by a detailed awareness of historiographical and theoretical contexts.
- 6.2 Deploy an advanced conceptual understanding to the application of inter-disciplinary skills and approaches to American Studies.
- 6.3 An ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within the discipline.

And for Honours Degree

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

Learning, teaching and assessment

American Studies

Level 4 will be offered at foundation level, presupposing no previous knowledge of American Studies, nor requiring it as an admission criterion. 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.

American Studies level 4 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.

Level 5 will build upon the foundations of Level 4, with regard to content and skills, with modules exploring, in an 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. 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.

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 understanding of the context of American Studies. Assessment continues to be based on a combination of coursework essays, reviews 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 will offer you advanced level modules, with specific focus, reflecting the research and teaching expertise of the existing programme team; and which will promote the 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 will be the Special Study, a supervised independent research project on a topic relevant to American Studies, representing the culmination of academic skills development; it may be taken either as a twenty or forty-credit module, providing you with the opportunity to tilt the emphasis of your programme more, or less, 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.

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.

Film Studies

Programme aim(s)

1. Provide you with a comprehensive grounding in the concepts, theories, methodologies, issues and debates on the subject of cinema and screen studies.

2. Enable you to develop key academic, generic, cognitive and technical skills which will enhance employment potential.
3. Engage with the discipline as a de-westernised subject and explore the ways in which film operates in a global and transnational context.
4. Encourage you to explore the implications of your academic study in the wider society to which they belong.

Programme learning outcomes

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

Level 4

- 4.1 Gather and organise information from recommended sources in the discipline of Film Studies.
- 4.2 Identify and practice the key elements (e.g. essay writing, portfolio building, presentation, etc.) for both short-term and long-term academic development.
- 4.3 Demonstrate awareness of foundational conceptual, theoretical and historical perspectives relating to cinema and its cultural contexts.
- 4.4 Demonstrate competence in the analysis and evaluation of film texts.
- 4.5 Consider and evaluate some of the relevant skills and learning requirements for working independently and in groups.
- 4.6 Communicate effectively using a range of key skills appropriate for the audience and purpose.

Level 5

- 5.1 Demonstrate a critical understanding of the key theories and concepts relating to film and screen studies.
- 5.2 Critically analyse data and information relevant to study of film.
- 5.3 Demonstrate effective research skills and methodologies in preparation for dissertation level study.
- 5.4 Effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- 5.5 Make appropriate selections of materials and use them analytically and critically in the exploration of cinema.
- 5.6 Demonstrate professional and career skills, and utilise key skills in the context of work-related learning.

Level 6

- 6.1 Demonstrate the appropriate application of advanced research skills.
- 6.2 Deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry to the key strands of the degree; cinema and society; film and audience; genre fiction; transnationalism.
- 6.3 Demonstrate independence, innovation and entrepreneurial skills in working and academic practices.
- 6.4 Devise and sustain arguments, assumptions and abstract concepts and effectively engage with such matters as a critical thinker.
- 6.5 Demonstrate a complex understanding of subject-relevant information, ideas and arguments effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- 6.6 Synthesise and apply complex theoretical perspectives and concepts to a range of situations and issues relevant to film studies.

Learning, teaching and assessment

Film Studies

On the Film Studies programme you will experience and take part in lectures, seminars, workshops, task focused activities, field-trips and excursions and informative engagement with media practitioners and those working in the creative industry. Crucially, this is backed up by three distinct features. These are:

- research informed teaching where experts in their subjects will work with you and develop your knowledge
- a schedule of tutorial support where you will gain advice and guidance on how to progress academically
- technology enhanced programme instruction from experts that will help you to learn how to use media as a critical and creative tool

You will be assessed in a variety of ways including essays, portfolios, individual and group presentations (for example, voice-over commentaries on video essays using iPads and tablets), poster presentations, industry focussed 'proofs of concept', interactive e-portfolios (using platforms such as Mahara ePortfolio or blogging sites), creative visual pieces. All of these will be introduced at Level 4 and then developed throughout the degree.

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 and values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statements](#)
- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)
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Date written / revised: July 2020

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