

Programme Specification

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>	2021/22
<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>	TP7H American Studies and Film Studies
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	American Studies and Film Studies
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Area Studies 2019
<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 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 offer you an exciting programme which will encourage you to also reflect critically upon the predominance of the United States in political, cultural, historical and literary terms and contexts, as well as on American Studies as a truly interdisciplinary subject area. The taught modules take you on a series of journeys in order to offer multi-perspective interpretations of the United States, with moments in your second and third year of study to undertake a supported interdisciplinary approach.

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

Essential to American Studies is the integration of related disciplines (History, Literature and Film Studies), which, when integrated, results in a broad based and flexible 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; 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

- 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 about the United States to the programme.
- The programme is both multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary, meaning that you can study different aspects of American Studies from modules across Literature, History and Film, and bring those components together as you develop as an independent researcher.
- 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 USA.
- An inter-disciplinary independent project exclusive to the programme.

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

Programme structure

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensatable (NC) or compensatable (X)
AMS4006M	4	1	Introduction to American Studies	20	C	x
You must select TWO option modules with a minimum of 40 credits and a maximum of 80 credits in each subject overall						
FIL4002M	4	1	Filmmakers on Film	20	O	x
FIL4003M	4	1	Britain on Film	20	O	x
MED4004M	4	1	Research in Practice	20	O	x
AMS4002M	4	2	Cinema and Society	20	C	x
AMS4007M	4	2	The United States: Empire of Liberty?	20	C	x
You must choose either FIL4001M or FIL4004M						
FIL4001M	4	2	Film and Its Audience	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

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

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

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

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)

The American Studies Programme has the following aims:

1. To develop and achieve a growing sophisticated knowledge of the history, society, and culture of the United States.
2. To understand the significance of the United States within a transnational and global context.
3. To demonstrate an awareness of interdisciplinarity and exhibit an understanding of American Studies approaches and methodologies.

³ This is an American Studies option.

⁴ This is an American Studies option.

4. To demonstrate transferable employment-relevant or research key skills.

Programme learning outcomes

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

Level 4

- 4.1 Demonstrate understanding and content knowledge of the history and culture of the United States.
- 4.2 Apply a knowledge of the theoretical perspectives of interdisciplinarity for an understanding of the United States and the concept of American Studies.
- 4.3 Interpret a range of sources related to the United States to form a scholarly argument.
- 4.4 Understand American Studies as an interdisciplinary subject in its own right.

Level 5

- 5.1 Demonstrate an understanding and content knowledge of the history and culture of the USA, and its significance within a global and transnational context.
- 5.2 Ability to competently and effectively apply and communicate critical and theoretical approaches to historical and cultural sources.
- 5.3 Compose a coherent and critically structured argument, using an expanded range of materials related to the United States.
- 5.4 Apply key academic skills, including awareness of independent research strategies, and enhanced facility for written and oral analysis, argument, and expression.
- 5.5 Effectively demonstrate transferable skills including organisation, time-management, and decision-making.

Level 6

- 6.1 Demonstrate a systemic understanding of the history and culture of the United States, underpinned by a detailed awareness of historiographical and/or theoretical texts.
- 6.2 Utilise an advanced conceptual understanding of the application of interdisciplinary skills and approaches in American Studies.
- 6.3 Critically analyse and evaluate a diverse range of sources and information for the purposes of researching and understanding.
- 6.4 Construct and critically analyse complex arguments.
- 6.5 Demonstrate transferrable skills in communication and research.
- 6.6 Undertake focused interdisciplinary study about the United States' history and/or culture.

Learning, teaching and assessment

Each American Studies module is based on formal structured class contact (e.g. lectures, seminars, workshops), and independent study (reading, research, preparation of assignments). For all modules, individual tutorial contact between you and your tutor(s) is an integral part of the learning experience, ensuring that you can work with the programme team in addressing individual study needs and cultivating your academic progress. Many of our modules are interdisciplinary, focusing on history and culture through the means of, for instance, literature, music, art, podcasts, and film. You will be studying an interdisciplinary and inclusive curriculum.

The purpose of the American Studies programme is to develop your skills as an independent thinker and learner, within a collaborative learning environment, progressing from multidisciplinary study of the United States to interdisciplinary study. At level 4, you will be introduced to the key dimensions of American Studies: Literature, History, and Culture (Film), with Politics embedded within the Literature and History modules. Modules have a variety of assessment types, such as: essays, reviews, open and closed examinations, portfolios, and reflective pieces. You are assessed through different aspects of writing skills in line with the Area Studies benchmarking recommendations. At level 5, the compulsory *Making America* module is designed to support you as you progress from multi-discipline learning and research into an interdisciplinary scholar, bringing together all dimensions of American Studies. You will undertake advanced multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary study of the United States at level 6. This may include a dissertation in American Studies, based on interdisciplinary and independent research using primary source materials.

In your American Studies programme, you will be exposed to a variety of assessments. You will have the opportunity to ask for feedback on formative work, such as essay plans, and feedback about your assessments will offer advice about how to develop your ideas and work in the future. The American Studies team is committed to decolonising the curriculum, meaning that you will be encouraged, and supported in, studying a range of voices and experiences in the United States. Similarly, the diversity of the discipline extends to the use of technology and the development of your digital skills. For instance, you will have the opportunity to utilise data bases and digital archives based in the United States. Furthermore, you will have the opportunity to co-create your own curriculum in some modules, with staff consulting with you about topics you would like to see discussed in lectures, seminars and tutorials. Our commitment to supporting your development in critical thinking, project management and collaborative skills are underlined by the work-related learning module that you will take as a student at York St John in your second year of study. This commitment to employability is equalled by our commitment to offering an international experience: you will have the opportunity to study abroad in the United States during your second year.⁵

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 Subject to availability.

- 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](#)