

Programme Specification

BA (Hons) American Studies and War Studies

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	American Studies and War Studies
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2024-25
<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 War Studies Diploma of Higher Education American Studies and War Studies BA (Ord) American Studies and War Studies
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	TBC - American Studies and War Studies
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	American Studies and War 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 inter-disciplinary 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.

War Studies

Our War Studies programme offers you a range of theoretical approaches to war, including historical, political, international, sociological and philosophical. We provide you with a sophisticated understanding of war and global relations, both as subjects worthy of study and as intellectual preparation for a variety of career trajectories. Our research and teaching areas range from Ancient Rome to the Napoleonic Wars to the Cold War and the War on Terror.

Although there were some indications in the 1990s that organised human conflict was declining and the world was increasingly peaceful, there has in fact rarely been a time when the world has been at peace, and the evidence is that in the twenty-first century the incidence of warfare is again increasing. Our War Studies programme explores this depressingly consistent phenomenon, but it is not military history – though it may contain some. Nor is it, we would contend, peace studies, with which it shares many characteristics, but which normally has a wider remit including social violence and a more applied aspect. Put simply, War Studies is, as the name suggests, the study of war. But it is also much more than that. War Studies asks fundamental questions such as what is war, how do wars start, and how do they end? What are the laws of war, what are the morals and ethics of war – if indeed there are any - and is there such a thing as a 'just' war? How has war changed over time and how can wars be prevented? As Trotsky said, 'War is the locomotive of history' and so War Studies is also concerned with the accelerated social transformations that war brings in its wake, such as modernisation and mechanisation, social and cultural shifts, and multicultural and multinational revolutions.

Special features

The War Studies programme at York St John University is distinguished for the following reasons:

- We offer modules and specialisms which focus on the causes, nature and consequences of warfare from a broad disciplinary perspective.
- We have a team of dedicated staff, who have an exceptional record of providing support to students.
- There is an optional exchange, which involves students studying for one semester (usually in the first half of the second year) at a university elsewhere in Europe or North America.

- 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 yourself for your future career or postgraduate study.
- You will be taught by academic staff who are active researchers. Our research informs our teaching.
- The programme also makes use of local expertise and resources from the heritage industry such as the Yorkshire Air Museum; the York Cold War Bunker; the Kohima Museum at Imphal Barracks, York; and the York Army Museum; the Yorkshire Film Archive; and war veterans living in the local area. Some field trips may involve a cost to students.

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

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
WAR4004M	4	1	Introduction to War Studies	20	C	x
HIS4010M	4	1	War and Society	20	C	x
WAR4005M	4	2	War and the Media	20	C	x
FIL4006M	4	2	Cinema and The Americas	20	C	x
AMS4007M	4	2	The United States: Empire of Liberty?	20	C	x
You must choose either WAR5005M or LIT5004M						
WAR5005M	5	1	Experiential Learning for War Studies	20	O	x
LIT5004M	5	2	Literature at Work	20	O	x
WAR5004M	5	1	War in the West, 1940-45	20	C	x
You must select TWO option modules ensuring you have 60 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
AMS5006M	5	1 or 2	The United States since 9/11	20	O	x
FIL5002M	5	1 or 2	Film and the American Imagination	20	O	x
You must select TWO option modules ensuring you have 60 credits in each subject overall						
WAR5002M	5	1 or 2	The Face of Battle	20	O	x
WAR5001M	5	1 or 2	Peace Organisations	20	O	x
LIT5005M	5	2	Conflicting Words	20	O	x
You must choose either AMS6012M or WAR6004M						
AMS6012M	6	1 & 2	Dissertation in American Studies	40	O	NC
WAR6004M	6	1 & 2	Dissertation in War Studies	40	O	NC
WAR6003M	6	1 or 2	The American Way of War	20	C	x

You must select THREE option modules ensuring you have 40 credits in each subject in addition to the Dissertation						
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
LIT6011M	6	1 or 2	American Radicals: Outside the Canon	20	O	x
WAR6007M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Modern International History	20	O	x
WAR6001M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Military History	20	O	x

*The dissertation can be taken in either subject.

You must take 60 credits in each of your subjects at Levels 4 and 5. At Level 6, you must take 40 credits in each subject and a 40 credit Dissertation module.

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.
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.²

War Studies

Programme aim(s)

The specific aims of the War Studies programme are:

- To foster a lasting interest in, and enjoyment of, War Studies;
- To introduce you to a range of approaches to the study of war and peace;

² Subject to availability.

- To encourage you to explore the implications and applications of your academic study in the wider society to which you belong and a diverse employment market.

Programme learning outcomes

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

Level 4

- 4.1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of approaches to the study of war.
- 4.2 Interpret a range of primary and secondary sources to form a scholarly argument.
- 4.3 Identify the value and limitations of competing sources of information.
- 4.4 Show a basic proficiency in study skills relevant to the study of warfare.

Level 5

- 5.1 Apply knowledge and understanding of a range of particular themes relating to the nature and significance of warfare as a human activity over time.
- 5.2 Compose a coherent and critically structured argument, using an expanded range of primary and secondary material.
- 5.3 Apply a variety of concepts, theories and methods from a range of disciplines to the analysis of the phenomenon of warfare.
- 5.4 Effectively demonstrate an ability to effectively employ communication and research skills and demonstrate a capacity for independent study.

Level 6

- 6.1 Show a systematic understanding of specific issues and problems relating to the nature and significance of warfare as a human activity over time.
- 6.2 Critically evaluate the development of war studies as a discipline and the relevance of scholarly debate in a specialised context.
- 6.3 Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge, understanding, and analysis of a specific topic or theme related to the phenomenon of warfare.
- 6.4 Make use of necessary skills for employment or future study, such as manage your own learning and research, taking the initiative, constructing an argument, and demonstrating communication skills.

Learning, teaching and assessment

Teaching & Learning

The BA War Studies programme's teaching and learning methods are designed to foster your knowledge of and enthusiasm for the investigation of the phenomenon of war, stimulate your engagement with and ownership of the learning process; encourage in depth analysis; reinforce critical thinking skills; encourage you to reflect on and take responsibility for your own learning; and take proactive account of your particular circumstances and needs to ensure your maximum participation.

During the course of your programme you will deepen your knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon of war and develop the skills and qualities which will equip you for graduate employment, postgraduate study and lifelong learning. You will encounter a balance of different learning and teaching strategies, modes of analysis, types of sources and modes of assessment in order to explore the phenomenon of warfare from as many different perspectives as possible and to explore and test a broad expanse of subject knowledge and a wide range of competencies and skills. This approach also serves to foster your intellectual agility, while providing the variety and varying tempo to maintain your interest and engagement. Teaching in the classroom is supported by open learning and independent study, which are integrated within programme modules.

You will encounter an increasing variety of teaching forms and methods as you proceed through the programme from Level 4 through Levels 5 and 6 where the programme becomes increasingly specialised

with a view to developing your critical, reflective and research skills over time. You will be encouraged and assisted to develop your independent learning, and the promotion of increasingly independent research skills over the course of the programme will culminate with your completion of the dissertation in War Studies at Level 6.

Assessment

You will be assessed by a balance of different forms including: essays, seen and unseen exams, reports, portfolios, and an independent project dissertation. We use these different forms of assessment to help you develop different skills and abilities, including your ability to utilise knowledge creatively to construct a reasoned argument, your ability to identify conclusions and communicate these persuasively orally and/or in writing; your engagement with a wide range of sources in a variety of media to effectively extract and present key information, analyses and conclusions; your selection and assessment of sources in terms of their relevance and quality in support of fulfilling specific analytical tasks; your demonstration of appropriately wide-ranging theoretical, conceptual and empirical knowledge in relation to specific issue areas; your use of case-study knowledge to construct relevant theory in specific issue areas; and your selection and use of theory to assess competing explanations of outcomes in case studies. All of these skills are applicable beyond the immediate context of your programme of study here at YSJU and they will serve you well in the future. The portfolios will involve a series of related exercises such as a bibliography, a source exercise and an essay, and are marked as a single integrated point of assessment.

You will receive regular constructive feedback during the course of your programme to help you evaluate your progress and identify how you can improve further, with particular attention being paid to building the skills of self-reflection and self-criticality. The feedback process is integrated with the tutorial system. You can discuss any aspect of your modules or programme with your tutors in contact sessions and by email, and you can seek formal tutorials. You will receive written feedback for all assessed work via the VLE within three weeks of your submission of the assignment. Feedback and tutorials have a formative 'feed forward' role which involves you in a dialogue with your tutors.

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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