

Programme Specification

Award and title: BA (Hons) English Literature and Religion

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	Religion English Literature
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2025-26
<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>	
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Certificate of Higher Education English Literature and Religion Diploma of Higher Education English Literature and Religion BA (Ord) English Literature and Religion
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	English Literature and Religion
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Theology and Religious Studies 2019 English Literature
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	Full time for three years Part time for six years
<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.

Religion has historically shaped and influenced the lives of individuals and societies politically and culturally. Today religion is more relevant than ever, so we believe that an understanding of religion is central to understanding what is happening in the world. Accordingly, the distinctive features of this programme arise from the clear relationship between the study of religion, theology, and issues in contemporary society. Modules cover the connections between religion and controversial issues in modern life, such as the gap between wealth and poverty; the relationships between races and genders; sexuality; equal opportunities; the influence of the media; the role of ethics in life and death decisions; religion and politics; religious communities living as minorities, theological responses to environmental issues, religion and sustainability, whether war is a viable and moral option; religion and genocide. You will also learn

about foundational philosophical and theological thinkers and historical events that underpin global societies. Additionally, you will be able to explore how aspects of religion and theology manifest in contemporary culture through visual culture, film and literature as well as expressing your own ideas through artwork, posters, and creative writing.

This programme will equip you to think in an attentive, critical and rigorous manner, to investigate a diverse range of beliefs with curiosity and respect, and to articulate your own views clearly, confidently and effectively. As well as having their own intrinsic worth, these abilities will also prepare you well for working in a range of occupations. Students completing the programme will take with them generic transferable skills such as: research competence; analytical clarity; effective written and oral communication; self-management; teamwork; effective use of IT.

The Religion degrees have a range of special features:

- Annual away days in each year of the programme help to develop academic skills and foster a sense of community (at the university's expense, non-staff budget permitting).
- Many modules include trips to relevant sites, like convents, mosques, galleries or local archives (at the university's expense, non-staff budget permitting).
- Optional research modules in the final year allow students to focus on their own areas of interest.
- The programme includes focus on career and the development of work-related skills. A compulsory second-year module includes a work-placement and support from the careers service.
- Members of the staff team are closely connected to the prestigious Ebor Lectures, hosted by York Minister, where prominent public intellectuals give lectures on topics like science and religion, global justice, immigration or austerity.
- You will be taught by members of the staff team who are active researchers in exciting, contemporary issues, and who have published articles and books in a range of topics, including: religion and gender; peace-building and reconciliation; public theology and global justice; the problem of evil; psychology and religion.
- The opportunity to study abroad for a semester during the second year.

English Literature

English Literature is a rich and vibrant area of study. At York St John University (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 (writing and narrative 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 transferable 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. You will also be part of a wider culture of learning and be able to think about what your studies will enable you to accomplish personally, professionally and as an engaged citizen within society.

Through the course of a wide-ranging suite of modules, you will have the opportunity to develop an extensive knowledge of both classic and contemporary texts, and will have access to a range of employability opportunities and skills development throughout your time on the programme. 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 'The Romantic Imagination: Affect, Excess and Revolution' which examines writing from the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, or 'Hunger, Rebellion, and Rage: The Victorians', which focuses on nineteenth-century fiction. In addition, students can focus on other specialised areas represented by modules including Mapping America, Sick Stories: Narratives of Illness, Disease, and Infection, Science Fiction for Survival, and Twenty-First Century Literature: What Now? What Next? 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, satire, LGBTQ+ rights literature, experimental writing, and literature of the Caribbean, as well as canonical writers such as Shakespeare, Dickens, and Austen.

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 your learning through a broad range of skills and approaches. 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 Car Convent, York Explore Archive, York Castle Museum 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, **Words Matter**, which is an excellent way to gain relevant professional experience and exposure for your critical and creative perspectives.

York is a fantastic place to be if you love books and reading. There is a rich literary history in the city, and you will have the chance to explore and learn more during your degree. W.H. Auden was born in York, as was contemporary novelist Kate Atkinson. Dickens and the Brontë sisters all knew York well, and Laurence Sterne's classic *Tristram Shady* was published in York in 1760. Each year, the city celebrates its literary heritage with the York Literature Festival, for which our department organises several events. In recent years, our students have had the chance to attend talks and readings by Jeffrey Boakye, Jason Williamson, Pat Barker and Kate Atkinson. As part of the YSJU Literature department, you will have the chance to get involved in a wide range of similar activities, as well as the opportunity to attend free workshops, writing sessions, and readings as part of your degree experience.

A degree including English Literature will open diverse and exciting opportunities when you enter the job market. This is because Literature graduates are able to think independently, write and present their ideas fluently and persuasively, and are skilled researchers and critical thinkers.

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 or optional to take C or O	Non-compensatable or compensatable NC or X
REL4017M	4	1	Studying Religion	20	C	X
LIT4002M	4	1	Introduction to Literary Studies 1	20	C	X
LIT4003M	4	1	Writing, Research, and Literature	20	C	X
LIT4004M	4	2	Introduction to Literary Studies 2	20	C	X
REL4018M	4	1 or 2	Values and Virtues	20	C	X
REL4020M	4	1 or 2	Religion Peace and Conflict	20	C	X

***Work-related learning: you must select one of the employability modules, either REL5031M or LIT5004M (and cannot do both)**

REL5031M	5	1 or 2	Work Related Learning: Religion	20	C*	X
LIT5004M	5	2	Literature at Work	20	C*	X

You must select FIVE optional modules, ensuring 60 credits in each subject overall

REL5024M	5	1 or 2	From Descartes to the Death of God	20	O	X
REL5025M	5	1 or 2	Matters of Life and Death	20	O	X
REL5026M	5	1 or 2	Problems of Evil	20	O	X
REL5027M	5	1 or 2	Religion and Literature	20	O	X
REL5028M	5	1 or 2	Religion and Politics	20	O	X
REL5029M	5	1 or 2	Religious Mapping	20	O	X
REL5032M	5	1 or 2	Sociology of Religion	20	O	X
REL5030M	5	1 or 2	Theology and the Environment	20	O	X
LIT5002M	5	1	Adaptations	20	O	X
LIT5008M	5	1	Mapping America	20	O	X
LIT5001M	5	1 or 2	Literary Theory	20	O	X
LIT5013M	5	1 or 2	Dawn of Print	20	O	X
LIT5007M	5	1 or 2	Science Fiction for Survival	20	O	X
LIT5015M	5	1 or 2	The Romantic Imagination: Affect, Excess and Revolution	20	O	X
LIT5016M	5	1 or 2	Sick Stories: Narratives of Illness, Disease, and Infection	20	O	X
LIT5012M	5	1 or 2	Shakespeare: Perspectives	20	O	X
LIT5005M	5	2	Conflicting Words	20	O	X

You must select one Dissertation module

**If you choose a 40 credit Dissertation you must choose a further 40 credits in each subject
If you choose the 20 credit Dissertation, you must ensure you have 60 credits in each subject overall**

***Dissertation: you must choose one of the dissertation modules either REL6026M, REL6034M or LIT6001M (and cannot do more than one)**

REL6026M	6	1 & 2	Long Dissertation (Religion)	40	C*	NC
REL6034M	6	1	Short Dissertation (Religion)	20	C*	NC
LIT6001M	6	1 & 2	English Literature Research Project	40	C*	NC
REL6023M	6	1 or 2	Great Philosophical Texts	20	O	X
REL6024M	6	1 or 2	Feminist Ethics and Religion	20	O	X
REL6025M	6	1 or 2	Theology and Ethics through Film	20	O	X
REL6028M	6	1 or 2	Negotiated Study	20	O	X
REL6035M	6	1 or 2	Religion and Genocides	20	O	X

REL6030M	6	1 or 2	Religion and Globalisation	20	O	X
REL6031M	6	1 or 2	Religion and Myth	20	O	X
REL6033M	6	1 or 2	Religion and Visual Culture	20	O	X
REL6032M	6	1 or 2	Religion in the Public Sphere	20	O	X
REL6029M	6	1 or 2	Spirituality and Public Life	20	O	X
LIT6016M	6	1 or 2	Hunger, Rebellion, and Rage: The Victorians	20	O	X
LIT6017M	6	1 or 2	Experiments & Upheavals: Twentieth-Century Cultural Change	20	O	X
LIT6018M	6	1 or 2	Literary Legacies	20	O	X
LIT6009M	6	1 or 2	The Making of Modern Drama	20	O	X
LIT6014M	6	1	Research Now 1	20	O	X
LIT6011M	6	1 or 2	American Radicals: Outside the Canon	20	O	X
LIT6003M	6	1 or 2	Writing the Caribbean	20	O	X
LIT6019M	6	1 or 2	What Now? What Next? Twenty-First Century Literature	20	O	X
LIT6004M	6	2	Gender and Sexualities	20	O	X
LIT6015M	6	2	Research Now 2	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.

Religion Programme aim(s)

The aims of the Religion programmes are to:

1. Encourage students to develop a sophisticated understanding of religious traditions across the world, as well as the complex role they play in philosophical, ethical and political discourses;
2. Inspire students to pursue their own philosophical and/or theological questions in a lively, informed and disciplined way, based on self-directed research and respectful learning from and about others' perspectives;
3. To cultivate a community of learning that encourages open, rational discussion, and which promotes qualities of respect, ethical sensitivity, social responsibility, and global awareness.

Programme learning outcomes

Level 4

Upon successful completion of level 4 students will be able to:

- 4.1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of key figures, sources or texts relevant to the study of religion (e.g. Thomas Aquinas; the Talmud; Emile Durkeim)

- 4.2 Identify and explain central themes, concepts and debates relevant to religion (e.g. the nature of religion; arguments for the existence of God; key theoretical approaches used in the study of religion) using primary and secondary sources.
- 4.3 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, institutions and practices, showing awareness of their wider social and cultural contexts.
- 4.4 Present arguments to support their own views, whilst representing the beliefs and arguments of others fairly and accurately, demonstrating sensitivity and respect.
- 4.5 Communicate with clarity and precision of expression, whilst adhering to academic conventions and demonstrating a basic proficiency in essential study skills relevant to the subject area.

Level 5

Upon successful completion of level 5 students will be able to:

- 5.1 Demonstrate knowledge and critical understanding of key figures, sources or texts relevant to religion;
- 5.2 Analyse central themes, concepts and debates relevant to a range of contexts within religion (e.g. climate change; globalisation; the ethics of film) whilst making critical use of primary and secondary sources;
- 5.3 Demonstrate knowledge and critical understanding of religious beliefs, institutions and practices, showing detailed awareness of their wider social and cultural contexts.
- 5.4 Compose coherent and effectively structured arguments, whilst representing the beliefs and arguments of others fairly and accurately, demonstrating sensitivity and respect;
- 5.5 Communicate with clarity and precision of expression, whilst adhering to academic conventions and demonstrating competence in a range of study skills relevant to the subject area.
- 5.6 Work collaboratively through fieldwork and placement experiences to demonstrate the development of skills in preparation for the workplace, (e.g. dialogue, encounter and observation) and generic skill building (e.g. teamwork, problem-solving and communication).

Level 6

Upon successful completion of level 6 students will be able to:

- 6.1 Demonstrate detailed knowledge and systematic understanding of selected figures, sources or texts relevant to religion informed by recent scholarship at the forefront of relevant fields
- 6.2 Critically evaluate scholarly interventions in range of discussions relevant to religion whilst making effective critical use of a wide range of primary and secondary sources;
- 6.3 Critically apply detailed knowledge and systematic understanding of religious traditions to a range of discussions within the contemporary understanding of religion, showing sensitivity to their social, political and global contexts.
- 6.4 Construct rationally persuasive, balanced arguments within religion drawing critically on independently gathered primary and secondary sources, and in dialogue with other disciplines as appropriate (e.g. politics, social theory, peace studies).
- 6.5 Communicate complex material with clarity and precision of expression, whilst adhering to academic conventions and demonstrating effective use of a range of study skills relevant to the subject area.
- 6.6 Design and undertake a piece of extended independent research that demonstrates an in-depth knowledge, understanding and analysis of a specialised area within religion, philosophy and ethics.

Learning, teaching and assessment

The Religion team aim to provide you with a stimulating and supportive environment in which you can achieve your potential during your degree. Academic support is provided in a range of ways. Module tutors will be available to consult with you regarding particular topics or pieces of assessed work. You will also be assigned a personal/academic* tutor, who will meet with you throughout your degree to discuss your progress, to respond to any concerns you may have, and point you in the direction of more specialised support if necessary. Academic staff are all experts in their fields, and work hard to ensure that your

lectures and seminars are clear, accessible, lively and thought-provoking. We also encourage our students to challenge, inspire and support each other as they learn. At some point in each year you will take part in an away-day/writing retreat with the whole year group, which aims to develop and strengthen the sense of community within the group, and gives opportunities for learning in a different environment.

Modules of study are based on a number of different forms of learning, including: formal class contact (lectures, seminars or workshops); group activity (e.g. discussions, preparing presentations or posters); independent study (reading, note-taking, research, preparing assignments). You will be given opportunities to actively participate in the teaching sessions and to develop your confidence through learning activities such as group discussion and presentations. This will enable you to develop both independence and collaborative skills as you learn both with and from your peers. Your tutor will guide you in preparing for these activities. In addition, there are also additional trips attached to some modules (for example, to local sites of religious significance), and a work placement that forms part of our 'work-related learning' module. Throughout your degree you will be given 'formative' opportunities to practice the skills needed in your assessment (for example, constructing an argument, or researching a new topic). This means that you will be continually reflecting on your progress, and working with tutors as you improve your academic skills

Your degree will be based on a variety of forms of assessment, ranging from traditional essays to posters, commentaries, presentations and portfolios. This will ensure that you develop a range of skills that will be valuable to you as you prepare to leave university: research competence; argumentative skill; communicative clarity; cultural sensitivity, etc. At the same time, we ensure that you are given chances to develop and hone your abilities through repeated efforts at the same kind of task. In your final year you will refine these skills as you write your dissertation, which offers you the chance to independently research a topic of your own choice, whilst supervised by an expert in your area of study.

English Literature Programme aim(s)

1. To encourage students to develop an informed and critical understanding of key themes and debates within English Literature
2. To enhance students' development as independent learners and literary critics
3. To support students in developing a range of transferable skills to equip them for employment and lifelong learning
4. To develop in students an ability to reflect critically on the process of researching, writing, analysing, and forming an academic argument
5. To provide a supportive learning environment that meets the needs of a diverse set of learners

Programme learning outcomes

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

Level 4

- 4.1 Apply key concepts including historical and theoretical perspectives appropriate to literary studies.
- 4.2 Show an engagement with formal and generic conventions.
- 4.3 Demonstrate competence in the analysis of a variety of texts.
- 4.4 Communicate effectively for the audience and purpose using a range of foundational skills.
- 4.5 Identify and practice foundational key transferable skills (including those for lifelong learning) appropriate for further study and future employment.
- 4.6 Demonstrate competence in applying critical and theoretical approaches to literary texts.
- 4.7 Evaluate and reflect on the research, analysis, and writing process.

Level 5

- 5.1 Utilise a critical understanding and knowledge of the discipline of English Literature, including an enhanced appreciation of historical and theoretical perspectives.
- 5.2 Show critical awareness of research strategies particular to literary studies.
- 5.3 Apply theoretical perspectives and concepts to a range of different texts.
- 5.4 Effectively communicate information, ideas, arguments, and interpretations in a manner appropriate to the audience and purpose.
- 5.5 Apply knowledge and skills effectively in decision making in the context of growing maturity as an independent learner.
- 5.6 Demonstrate transferable skills including organisation, time-management and the ability to construct a coherent argument.

Level 6

- 6.1 Demonstrate a systemic understanding of the discipline of English Literature, underpinned by a detailed awareness of historical and theoretical perspectives.
- 6.2 Synthesise and apply relevant critical and theoretical perspectives to their own research practice.
- 6.3 Deploy an advanced conceptual understanding of the application of research skills and theoretical approach to literary studies.
- 6.4 Critically reflect on individual learning as an advanced independent learner.
- 6.5 Demonstrate transferable skills to an advanced level that prepares for employment or further study.
- 6.6 Design and undertake a piece of extended independent research that demonstrates an in-depth knowledge of a specific area of English Literature.

Learning, teaching and assessment

English Literature

The aims of all our teaching are 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 and building confidence in using a set of foundational skills. You will be assigned your own Academic Tutor, a member of staff who will meet with you and other students regularly during your first semester at YSJU. Modules 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 specialize 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). We offer an interdisciplinary approach to the study of literature, and you might find yourself studying a film or media adaptation of a text, or considering a specific performance of a play, as well as reading the original

source material.

There are no exams, and your English Literature degree will be assessed through coursework. As well as writing essays, 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. Feedback is provided through a range of methods, in addition to written feedback on your work, we also work with more dialogic methods and provide a range of opportunities for informal and formative feedback throughout the programme.

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.

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-compensable.

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University mission and values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statements 2019](#)
- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)

Date written / revised:

Programme originally approved: