

Programme Specification

Award and title: BA (Hons) History and Politics

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	Politics and International Relations; History, American Studies and War Studies
<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>	Not applicable
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Certificate of Higher Education History and Politics Diploma of Higher Education History and Politics BA (Ord) History and Politics
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Politics and International Relations 2023; History 2014
<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
<i>Excluding a year-long placement/professional experience, are there placement/field trip/work experience(s) totalling 20 days or more?</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.

History

The History programme is structured to enable you to study different types and periods of history while providing opportunities for more specialist independent study and research as you move from Levels 4 to 6.

- It begins in Level 4 with a range of modules which explore the skills and techniques necessary for the study of history at degree level. These modules will also familiarise you with different

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

approaches to the study of the past and provide an introduction to the main historical periods and approaches which will feature in later stages of the degree programme.

- In Level 5, modules concentrate on key periods or themes in British, European, American and world history, allowing you to develop your own interests and specialise if you wish in the history of particular periods or geographical regions. You will be given thorough guidance throughout your time here by your Academic Tutors in making your module choices.
- In Level 6, if you choose to complete a dissertation in History, you will research a topic of your choice alongside a chosen selection of modules which offer in-depth study of a particular period or historical debate.

The modularised structure of the programme means that at Levels 5 and 6 you have a choice of topics and periods of study, with freedom to construct a programme which combines a secure breadth of historical knowledge with your own interests and preferences.

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

- We offer a wide range of modules and specialisms which allows you to focus on the kinds of history which appeals to you.
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- We have a team of dedicated staff, who have an exceptional record of providing support to students (reflected in consecutive high scores in the support categories of the NSS).
- There is an option to study abroad for one semester (usually in Level 5) 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 careers or postgraduate study.
- You will be taught by academic staff who are active researchers. Our research informs our teaching. In Level 6, you will work with members of staff on their specific research specialisms at the same time that they are developing exciting new directions in their particular field.
- Field trips are an enhanced feature of the programme, you will be invited to attend trips, for example to museums, monasteries or castles as well as explore the history on their doorstep in York. Some field trips may involve a cost to students.
- You will belong to a community of dedicated historians, with the opportunity for celebratory moments, and work closely with a personal academic tutor.

Politics

Politics at York St John University is about more than the sound and fury of the daily headlines. It examines the point where power, principle and policy intersect, and gets to grips with the practical implications of some of the most pressing questions of our time: what is the condition and trajectory of contemporary democracy? How are political parties adapting and evolving to domestic and international challenges? How do we understand the continuing position and role of non-democratic and quasi-democratic regimes in domestic, regional and global politics? What security threats do states, and their citizens, face? What values and principles are driving government and society, and how do these conflict within and across borders?

The Politics degree at York St John will cover a wide range of themes and approaches. You will learn the skills of political analysis, exploring the complex and contested definitions of the political. You will then build on this, learning about how we actually study and research politics, and what is possible in terms of explaining political behaviour. Drawing upon historical and contemporary thinkers, you will explore the trajectory of political thought, tackling questions such as: why should we obey the state? What is 'good government'? How do we understand freedom, equality, and what makes for a just society? In doing so, you will consider the social and historical context, impact and legacy of key thinkers and ideological movements.

You will develop a fundamental understanding of the institutions and processes of modern states, both democratic and non-democratic. This will include a focus on the domestic government and politics of the UK, but also includes a comparative perspective. Going beyond local and national level analysis, you will explore politics from an international, and increasingly global, perspective. How do states interact with each other, and how has this been theorised? How do states respond to conflict and collective dilemmas, such as inequality, threats to national security and global pandemics? What other organisations and institutions play a critical role in contemporary global governance?

These themes and approaches will be examined with increasing depth as you progress through the programme, capturing the full diversity that the subject and study of politics has to offer. By the end of your degree, you will be able to explain the historical drivers of social change, analyse the current political landscape and identify the challenges that will shape our shared future.

A subject comes to life when it can be experienced and situated in a real-world context, and so there are a number of ways in which politics can be explored beyond the classroom:

- You will have the opportunity to take part in a range of field trips throughout your programme.
- In the second year of the programme, you will have the opportunity to undertake a project or work experience which will give you practical experience of working in the wider community and exploring the relevance of your studies in a variety of personal, cultural and career contexts.
- There will be a wider programme of work-related and experiential learning embedded throughout your studies, to help prepare you for the graduate workplace.
- There is an option to study abroad for one semester (usually in Level 5) at a university in North America.
- The School of Humanities benefits from a regular programme of visiting speakers, across a range of issues, and there will be the opportunity to attend a range of conferences, seminars and events within the School.

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)
HIS4008M	4	1	Researching and Presenting the Past	20	C	X
POL4007M	4	1	Foundations of Politics and International Relations	20	C	X
POL4008M	4	1	Understanding World Politics	20	C	X
HIS4012M	4	2	People and Nature: An Environmental History	20	C	X
HIS4015M	4	2	A Century in Crisis	20	C	X
POL4011M	4	2	International Security	20	C	X
HIS5002M	5	2	Making History	20	C	X
POL5019M	5	2	Practical Politics	20	C	X
Choose 60 credits for Semester 1 and 20 credits for Semester 2 from the options below. You must take 60 credits of Politics modules (containing the code POL) and 60 credits of History modules (containing the code HIS or AMS) overall at Level 5.						
HIS5004M	5	1 or 2	Watchers and the Watched: Society in Early Modern England, c. 1540-1670	20	O	X
HIS5005M	5	1 or 2	Tudor Women: Agency and Authority	20	O	X
HIS5006M	5	1 or 2	Reds! The Rise and Fall of Soviet Communism	20	O	X
HIS5007M	5	1 or 2	Victorian Grubs: Food, Science and Society	20	O	X
HIS5008M	5	1 or 2	A United Kingdom? Britain, 1707-1837	20	O	X
HIS5009M	5	1 or 2	The Great Society: America in the 1960s	20	O	X
HIS5010M	5	1 or 2	Mao's China: From Empire to Communism	20	O	X
HIS5011M	5	1 or 2	The Roman Empire: Tiberius to Domitian (14-96)	20	O	X
HIS5012M	5	1 or 2	Historical Specialisms	20	O	X
HIS5013M	5	1 or 2	The Republic in Danger	20	O	X
HIS5015M	5	1 or 2	Tyranny and Majesty: Kingship in Late Medieval England, 1300-1450	20	O	X
AMS5002M	5	1 or 2	From Slavery to Freedom	20	O	X
AMS5003M	5	1 or 2	The Nation Divided: America in the era of Civil War	20	O	X
AMS5006M	5	1 or 2	The United States since 9/11	20	O	X
POL5013M	5	1 or 2	Political Ideologies	20	O	X
POL5014M	5	1	International Relations: Theory and Practice	20	O	X
POL5015M	5	1 or 2	Democracies	20	O	X
POL5016M	5	1 or 2	The European Union in Crisis	20	O	X

POL5017M	5	1 or 2	Elections and Voters in British Politics	20	O	X
POL5018M	5	1 or 2	Political Analysis: Theory and Method	20	O	X
POL5020M	5	1 or 2	The Conservative Party	20	O	X
*Dissertation: you must choose a Dissertation in either History (HIS6001M) or in Politics (POL6014M)						
HIS6001M	6	1 & 2	Dissertation (in History)	40	C*	NC
POL6014M	6	1 & 2	Dissertation	40	C*	NC
Choose 40 credits for Semester 1 and 40 credits for Semester 2 from the options below. In addition to the Dissertation module, you must take 40 credits of Politics modules (containing the code POL) and 40 credits of History modules (containing the code HIS, AMS or WAR).						
HIS6003M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Ancient History	20	O	X
HIS6004M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Late Medieval England	20	O	X
HIS6005M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Early Modern British History	20	O	X
HIS6006M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Early Modern Social and Cultural History	20	O	X
HIS6007M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in European History, 1700-1900	20	O	X
HIS6008M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Social and Cultural History, 1750-1900	20	O	X
HIS6009M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in History of the Cold War	20	O	X
HIS6010M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in History of the Soviet Union	20	O	X
HIS6012M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Modern British History	20	O	X
AMS6010M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in American History	20	O	X
AMS6011M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in American Culture	20	O	X
WAR6007M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Modern International History	20	O	X
POL6015M	6	1 or 2	Authoritarianism	20	O	X
POL6016M	6	1 or 2	Global Governance in a Changing World Order	20	O	X
POL6017M	6	1 or 2	The Labour Party	20	O	X
POL6018M	6	1 or 2	Governance and Power in the British State	20	O	X
POL6019M	6	1 or 2	Global Justice	20	O	X
POL6020M	6	1 or 2	Politics and Religion of the Middle East	20	O	X
POL6021M	6	1 or 2	Britain in Crisis	20	O	X
POL6022M	6	1 or 2	The Politics of Global Health	20	O	X
POL6023M	6	1 or 2	Theorising Culture War: Media, Hegemony, Ideology	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.

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.

History Programme aim(s)

The specific aims of the History programme are:

- To foster a lasting interest in, and enjoyment of, the study of History.
- To introduce you to a range of approaches to the study of the past, offering opportunities to explore different periods and types of history, as well as for specialisation and independent study and research.
- To encourage you to explore the implications and applications of their academic study in the wider society to which they belong.
- To enable you to compete successfully in a diverse employment market, by being able to demonstrate an ability to solve complex problems through independent critical thinking, utilising a range of information, and presenting solutions in oral and written form.

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 historical approaches to the past.
- 4.2 Interpret a range of sources, secondary and primary, with guidance from your tutor, to form a scholarly argument.
- 4.3 Identify the value and limitations of competing sources of historical information.
- 4.4 Demonstrate a basic proficiency in study skills relevant to the History Subject area.

Level 5

- 5.1 Apply knowledge and understanding of a range of historical themes, regions and periods, within a global context.
- 5.2 Compose a coherent and critically structured argument, using an expanded range of primary and secondary material.
- 5.3 Analyse the historiography of a topic in order to assess competing scholarly debates.
- 5.4 Employ skills in communication, research and independent study.
- 5.5 Apply subject expertise in a practical context related to the community and the world of work.

Level 6

- 6.1 Show a systematic understanding of specific historical issues, theories and contexts through a range of special subjects.
- 6.2 Evaluate a critical understanding of the development of history as a discipline and the relevance of historiographical debate in a specialist context.
- 6.3 Exemplify confidence and sophistication in the handling of specialist secondary sources and a range of primary source material.
- 6.4 Construct and critically analyse complex arguments.

- 6.5 Design and undertake a piece of extended independent research that demonstrates an in-depth knowledge, understanding and analysis of a specifically historical topic or theme.
- 6.6 Make use of necessary skills for employment or future study such as taking the initiative and asserting personal responsibility.

Learning, teaching and assessment

Each module has a programme of structured learning which will include, in various combinations, formal structured class contact (e.g. lectures, seminars, workshops), independent study (reading, research, preparation of assignments) and, in some modules, field trips and work-related activity. You are encouraged to use the widest possible range of resources for your studies, including books, journals, visual material, archives, e-learning sources, and the resources of the local community and region such as museums, galleries and historic buildings. For all modules, individual tutorial contact between you and your tutor(s) is an integral part of the learning experience and is a crucial vehicle for providing formative feedback on student work, addressing individual study needs and fostering students' personal academic development.

The aim of the programme is to develop the progressive skills of students as autonomous independent thinkers and learners, but within a collaborative learning environment. Modules have a variety of assessment types, such as: essays, primary source exercises, reviews, site reports, open and closed examination, and reflective pieces. You are assessed through different aspects of writing skills in line with the History benchmarking recommendations. *Making History* allows you to develop your research skills, conducting project work in groups and engage in independent research that will prepare you for the dissertation module. The dissertation at Level 6 meets the requirement for an extended piece of written work based on research and primary source material and is assessed on the basis of 10,000 words for 40 credits.

Politics Programme aim(s)

1. To develop you as a critical thinker, able to make considerate and ethical decisions based on your knowledge and understanding of a range of political ideas, institutions and processes.
2. To develop you as a resilient, independent learner, able to identify opportunities and resources for growth in your own learning.
3. To develop the professional skills and awareness to succeed in the graduate environment.

Programme learning outcomes

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

Level 4

- 4.1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of key concepts in politics and how they apply to political phenomena.
- 4.2 Identify and analyse political institutions, actors and processes in domestic and international contexts.
- 4.3 Explain the contributions of key figures to the development of politics and political ideas.
- 4.4 Find and evaluate relevant academic literature to inform understanding.
- 4.5 Accurately cite and reference academic sources.
- 4.6 Construct convincing arguments and communicate information and ideas clearly.

Level 5

- 5.1 Critically discuss political phenomena from theoretical, empirical and methodological perspectives.

- 5.2 Apply political concepts, theories and ideas to historical and contemporary political contexts and events.
- 5.3 Critically analyse, synthesise and evaluate relevant academic literature and primary sources.
- 5.4 Construct a coherent, structured argument, drawing on a wide range of accurately cited and referenced relevant literature.
- 5.5 Effectively communicate information, ideas, arguments and interpretations in a manner appropriate to the task and audience.
- 5.6 Demonstrate transferable skills, including organisation, time-management and independent working.

Level 6

- 6.1 Demonstrate a systematic understanding of concepts, theories, issues and debates in politics.
- 6.2 Critically analyse and evaluate historical and contemporary political institutions, events, processes and behaviours, informed by theoretical perspectives.
- 6.3 Analyse and construct complex arguments, drawing on an in-depth and sophisticated engagement with relevant academic literature and primary source material.
- 6.4 Demonstrate transferable skills that will prepare you for further study and be attractive to potential employers.
- 6.5 Design and undertake a piece of independent research that demonstrates an in-depth knowledge, understanding and analysis of a specific area of politics.

Learning, teaching and assessment

The aim of our teaching is to help you to think critically, to challenge you to consider new ideas and concepts, and to support you in understanding the complex connections between the individual, the state and society. Politics is a live discipline: it is constantly evolving in light of real-world events unfolding around us and being driven by us; political concepts and research also have direct impacts on the ideas and policies of governments. As such, we do not want you to be a passive learner, but instead expect you 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, You will 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. In the classroom you may find yourself leading a class discussion, engaging in Cabinet Office role plays, United Nations Security Council simulations or mock industrial action negotiations. To gain maximum benefit from class contact time, you will need to engage fully with academic literature, notably academic books, academic journal articles, original texts and official reports.

The Politics degree is committed to authentic, real-world assessment. As such, assessment is entirely through coursework, with no exams. This is to ensure that the kinds of work you are doing through the degree reflect the kinds of work graduates undertake, in professional employment or further study. You will experience a wide range of assessment modes designed to help you develop new skills and prepare for graduate employment, which may include essays, policy briefs, portfolios, video presentations, posters, group reports, book/article reviews, and case study reports. Feedback is essential in identifying what you have done well and how you can improve. Not only will you receive detailed feedback on the summative (credit-bearing) assessments on each module, but you will also have the opportunity to check your understanding and develop assessment skills through formative assessment. Formative assessment moves the focus away from end-result grades towards your learning process and positive, qualitative feedback. This can take the form of written and oral work, concept checking and mapping exercises, submitted and class-based activities. Ultimately, this will positively impact on your academic performance.

Your first year with us is about supporting you in making the transition to university-level study. You will be assigned your own Academic Tutor, a member of staff who you will meet with regularly during your first year at YSJU. Modules such as *Foundations of Politics and International Relations* 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.

In your final year, you will be ready to take on a bigger role in the management of your learning. There will be an increased emphasis on seminar learning and independence in your studies. You will write a dissertation on the subject of your choice, with the support of an academic supervisor. This can be seen as the intellectual culmination of your degree, as you become an independent researcher and are required to manage your own academic project. You will be putting into practice the skills you have gained and developed during your time at York St John University, giving you plenty of scope to demonstrate your knowledge, abilities and creativity.

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:

Programme originally approved: