

Programme Specification

Award and title: BA (Hons) Creative Writing and English Literature

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	Creative Writing and English Literature
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2026-27
<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 Creative Writing and English Literature Diploma of Higher Education Creative Writing and English Literature BA (Ord) Creative Writing and English Literature
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	WQ8H
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	English / Creative Writing
<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>	No

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.

Creative Writing and English Literature are naturally complementary subjects which enrich and enhance one another. At York St John University, students benefit from the opportunity to explore and experiment with their own creative voice while grounding their practice in a rich understanding of literary history, form, and theory. Creative Writing fosters originality and innovation, while English Literature deepens critical thinking and interpretive skills. Together, they enable students to become both accomplished writers and

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated; ; please refer to the Regulations for Undergraduate Awards <https://www.yorks.ac.uk/policies-and-documents/regulations/> for information on standard periods of study

sophisticated readers, capable of engaging with fiction, prose, poetry and other forms from multiple perspectives. Our interdisciplinary approach nurtures creativity, analytical rigour, and a broad set of transferable skills for future careers.

Creative Writing

Creative Writing is a thriving subject area at York St John University (YSJU), with a growing undergraduate programme and a large postgraduate community. Exploration of a wide range of literary forms and genres and the production of original creative writing is at the heart of Creative Writing. York St John takes a specific approach which recognises it as a practice-based subject underpinned by a critical understanding of literature. As a Creative Writing student, you will benefit from the opportunity to create original works, experiment with a range of forms and genres, and develop your writing in a supportive and inspiring environment. At the same time, you will study literature in a range of contexts and learn to become a sophisticated reader of texts, which in turn will inform your own writing. The degree develops your creative and analytical skills, and the practical skills necessary for the workplace. You will become a confident, independent learner and practitioner with enhanced creativity and a range of transferrable skills.

The teaching team for Creative Writing are acclaimed, published writers and critics, who are also active scholars with a range of research specialisms. The teaching on our programme is supported by a wealth of practical experience and expertise in the theoretical, social and cultural contexts of writing. The programme is further enhanced by a range of visiting writers and literary professionals, whose masterclasses and events offer you an opportunity to engage with the wider world of the professional writer. The subject area has strong links with the York Literature Festival, and we host major public events each year, with students often having the opportunity to study and then learn directly from writers appearing at the Festival. Students have the opportunity to get involved in a host of events and extra-curricular activities each year. At York St John University, you will be part of vibrant community in which you can fulfil your own creative, academic and professional ambitions.

English Literature

English Literature is a rich and vibrant area of study. At 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' 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 What Now? What Next? Twenty-First Century Literature. 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, LGBTQIA+ 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 Bar 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 Bronte 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. In addition, you must have:

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-compensable (NC) or compensable (X)
In Level 4, you must take SIX modules, ensuring 60 credits in each subject overall (CRW and LIT).						
CRW4006M	4	1	Forms of Narrative	20	C	X
LIT4002M	4	1	Introduction to Literary Studies 1	20	C	X
You must choose either CRW4007M or LIT4003M						
CRW4007M	4	1	Being a Writer	20	O	X
LIT4003M	4	1	Writing, Research, and Literature	20	O	X
CRW4009M	4	2	Writing to Order	20	C	X
LIT4004M	4	2	Introduction to Literary Studies 1	20	C	X
You must choose one of the following optional modules						
CRW4010M	4	2	Research for Writers	20	O	X
LIT4005M	4	2	Theorizing Literature: Power and Identity	20	O	X
In Level 5, you must take SIX modules, ensuring 60 credits in each subject overall (CRW and LIT).						
You must choose either LIT5002M or LIT5007M						
LIT5002M	5	1	Adaptations	20	O	X
LIT5007M	5	1	Science Fiction for Survival	20	O	X
Choose 40 credits from the options below						
CRW5006M	5	1	Writing Fiction	20	O	X
CRW5007M	5	1	Writing Reality: Creative Non-Fiction	20	O	X
LIT5013M	5	1	Dawn of Print	20	O	X
LIT5008M	5	1	Mapping America	20	O	X
LIT5001M	5	1	Literary Theory	20	O	X
Work-related learning: you must select one of the employability modules, either LIT5004M or CRW5008M						
CRW5008M	5	2	Working With Words: Publishing and Performance	20	O	X
LIT5004M	5	2	Literature at Work	20	O	X
Choose 40 credits from the options below						
CRW5009M	5	2	Writing Poetry	20	O	X

CRW5010M	5	2	Scriptwriting	20	O	X
LIT5015M	5	2	The Romantic Imagination: Affect, Excess and Revolution	20	O	X
LIT5016M	5	2	Sick Stories: Narratives of Illness, Disease, and Infection	20	O	X
LIT5012M	5	2	Shakespeare: Perspectives	20	O	X
In Level 6 you must take a 40 credit Dissertation module and an additional 40 credits in each subject (CRW and LIT)						
You must choose either LIT6001M or CRW6010M						
LIT6001M	6	1&2	English Literature Research Project	40	O	NC
CRW6010M	6	1&2	Creative Writing Dissertation Project	40	O	NC
and choose at least 40 credits in each semester from:						
CRW6007M	6	1	Writing Genres	20	O	X
CRW6008M	6	1	Contemporary Writing: Innovation and Experimentation	20	O	X
LIT6018M	6	1	Literary Legacies	20	O	X
LIT6016M	6	1	Hunger, Rebellion, and Rage: The Victorians	20	O	X
LIT6009M	6	1	The Making of Modern Drama	20	O	X
CRW6009M	6	2	Literary and Publishing Cultures Now	20	O	X
LIT6011M	6	2	American Radicals: Outside the Canon	20	O	X
LIT6004M	6	2	Gender and Sexualities	20	O	X
LIT6019M	6	2	What Now? What Next? Twenty-First Century Literature	20	O	X

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/Capstone 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-compensable. A non-compensable module is one that must be passed at the relevant level (with a mark of 40) in order to progress.

Creative Writing

Programme aim(s)

- help you to become a better writer and a more informed reader;
- support you in understanding and analysing the connections between your own work and its literary and cultural contexts;
- provide you with an introduction to the creative industries and provide opportunities for the development of your professional skills;
- provide a supportive learning environment that meets the needs of a diverse set of learners;
- promote and develop a vibrant creative writing community as part of the York Centre for Writing through events, workshops and visiting speakers, and through partnerships with local and national arts organisations.

Programme learning outcomes

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

Level 4

- 4.1 Demonstrate the development of a creative practice in the generation of original written works
- 4.2 Create and utilise constructive feedback, as part of a process of editing and revision
- 4.3 Demonstrate an understanding of literary form and historical tradition
- 4.4 Reflect with insight on relevant contexts for their own creative practice
- 4.5 Plan and create writing to a brief in professional or other contexts
- 4.6 Employ research to develop their creative work and to inform their reflective process

Level 5

- 5.1 Create and revise effective works of creative writing in specific forms
- 5.2 Apply an understanding of the importance of audience and register in producing writing for a particular readership
- 5.3 Employ the expressive, imaginative and affective resources of language and story, including structure and form
- 5.4 Reflect critically on a wide range of creative and cultural contexts for the production and consumption of writing
- 5.5 Demonstrate a critical awareness of the historical precedents and the contemporary dimensions of particular literary forms and genres

Level 6

- 6.1 Create written work that shows sophistication in thought and expression
- 6.2 Analyse their creative practice in relation to contemporary creative and academic contexts
- 6.3 Demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of genre traditions and formal conventions in relation to their own work
- 6.4 Apply critical insight and theoretical perspectives to literary works
- 6.5 Critically evaluate issues of proficiency, innovation and experimentation in relation to their own work
- 6.6 Demonstrate a critical understanding of the significance of editing work over successive drafts, both independently and in discussion with tutors and fellow students through peer review
- 6.7 Design, plan and undertake independent research to devise an original piece of creative writing that demonstrates an in-depth understanding of particular literary form(s) and genre(s)

Learning, teaching and assessment

Creative Writing at YSJU is a practical and hands-on subject and your learning will be structured around a dynamic engagement with texts, as a writer and a reader. The programme structure will allow you to choose increasingly specialised modules to suit your writerly interests: every module and each level of study is designed to help you develop and refine a set of skills uniquely suited to your goals. The emphasis on the relationship between a wide range of creative, critical and professional skills - between reading and writing, listening and sharing, ideas and practice - defines our programme.

At each level of study, new and more advanced skills will be introduced and strengthened through continual practice. These fall into three broad, but interlinked 'skillsets' of creative, critical and professional skills. The first involves the composition skills, techniques and craft you might expect from a degree in writing. Creative skills also include things like editing, creative problem-solving and the development of different creative projects. These are aided by critical thinking: your ability to analyse texts within theoretical and historical contexts, conduct research, and reflect critically upon your creative process will all be strengthened. Finally, you will develop professional skills by learning to work to specific briefs and deadlines, developing oral and written communication, and moving between self-management and effective teamwork. You will also have the chance to work on real-life publishing projects and get involved with literary events. All three of these skillsets are nurtured in conjunction with one another and throughout the degree.

In practical terms, your learning will involve a combination of working in timetabled classes, individual study, group work and one-to-one meetings with tutors. Within classroom-time, a typical week involves a range of settings. A large group session in a lecture hall will often be accompanied by smaller groups for seminars or workshops; and those sessions often involve even smaller group work for more focused discussion and feedback. The 'workshop' setting is an important and distinctive feature of creative writing study. As a traditional model for the study of writing, there are a number of ways a writing workshop might be set up or run. In the simplest terms, we think of it as a place where new work is created and shared. Your development as a writer will be inseparable from your development as a critic and reader, and your ability to offer constructive feedback is as important as your ability to take it on-board.

There are no exams, and your Creative Writing degree will be assessed through coursework. Across the degree, assignments come in a range of forms, to encourage the development of different writerly skills. The two most common modes of assessment, which are often linked, are the Creative Portfolio and Contextual Reflection. Many modules will require you to submit a portfolio of creative work for assessment. The writing for these portfolios will be compiled throughout the semester, from weekly assignments within and outside the classroom. This will allow you to choose from your drafts which pieces of writing you wish to develop and perhaps expand for inclusion in your portfolio. The Contextual Reflection is your chance to reflect on the aims and process of writing your portfolio work, and to relate what you have written to the material covered by the module as well as to other contexts that are important to you as a writer. This may mean discussion of sources of literary traditions and form, inspiration or research, or consideration of audience and genre. In every case, it means reflecting seriously and critically upon the creative process and the work you have done towards producing the portfolio.

We offer lots of opportunities for you to learn outside the classroom. The York Centre for Writing is a hub for exciting writing events, projects and publications, and we collaborate with regional independent publishers Valley Press, the York Literature Festival, and other community partners. Visitors include successful writers (including Simon Armitage, Jackie Kay, Fiona Mozley, Julia Armfield, and Lemn Sissay) as well as industry specialists: publishers, editors, agents, publicity experts and literary organisers and activists. For those wishing to continue to study Creative Writing, we have a thriving postgraduate community, and offer Creative Writing at MA, MFA and PhD level.

English Literature

Programme aim(s)

- To encourage students to develop an informed and critical understanding of key themes and debates within English Literature
- To enhance students' development as independent learners and literary critics
- To support students in developing a range of transferable skills to equip them for employment and lifelong learning
- To develop in students an ability to reflect critically on the process of researching, writing, analysing, and forming an academic argument
- 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

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 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, Culture and Values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statements](#)
- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)

Date written / revised:

Programme originally approved: