

Programme Specification

Award and title: BA (Hons) History and Politics

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	History and Politics
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2027-28
<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 History and Politics Diploma of Higher Education History and Politics BA (Ord) History and Politics
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	L2V1
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Politics and International Relations 2023 History 2022
<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

Studying BA History at York St John University gives you the opportunity to explore a broad range of historical periods and themes while developing your skills as a critical thinker, researcher, and communicator. From the early medieval world to the present day, the programme encourages you to

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

consider how the past shapes contemporary society and to engage directly with the rich historical landscape of the city of York and the wider region.

At each level of study, the degree builds your confidence and independence as a historian. You begin in first year by exploring diverse approaches to the past and developing the skills and techniques necessary for the study of history at degree level. In second year, modules adopt a narrower focus in key periods and themes in British, European, American, and wider world history. In the third year, you progress to specialist modules aligned with staff research interests, where you will engage with current scholarly debates and controversies. The third year culminates in an extended dissertation project, in a subject of your choice, where you exercise your advanced skills as an independent researcher. Throughout your degree, you will be supported by a team of dedicated lecturers who are also active researchers in areas such as social, cultural, political, international, and military history.

The modularised structure of the programme means that you have a choice of topics and periods in each year of study, with freedom to construct a journey through the programme which combines a secure breadth of historical knowledge with your own interests and preferences.

Distinctive features include:

- We offer a wide range of modules, allowing you to focus in areas of interests and developing specialism, from the early medieval period to histories of the twenty-first century.
- You are taught by research-active historians, meaning you will engage with current scholarly debates and discoveries.
- Modules such as *Global York: A Social and Cultural History of the City* and *History Pathways* connect your learning to the city of York's archives, museums, and heritage organisations. Modules such as *The Visible Past* and *People and Nature: An Environmental History* take learning further afield in the Yorkshire region through studying monasteries, castles, and the wider natural landscape.
- You will be treated as an active participant in shaping your learning through student-staff collaboration.
- You will develop transferable professional skills in each year of study. Through assessments testing a diverse range of skillsets, to placements and group projects, you gain valuable professional experience for life after university.
- You can spend a semester studying in North America during your second year.

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.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)
HIS4017M	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
HIS4023M	4	2	The United States: Empire of Liberty?	20	C	X
HIS4022M	4	2	World in Crisis	20	C	X
POL4011M	4	2	International Security	20	C	X
HIS5029M	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) overall at Level 5.						
HIS5016M	5	1 or 2	The Chinese Revolutions: From Empire to Communism	20	O	X
HIS5017M	5	1 or 2	European Conflict, c. 1660-1815	20	O	X
HIS5018M	5	1 or 2	From Slavery to Freedom: African American History and Culture	20	O	X
HIS5019M	5	1 or 2	Alfred the Great and the Idea of England	20	O	X
HIS5020M	5	1 or 2	Tyranny and Majesty: Kingship in Late Medieval England, 1300-1450	20	O	X
HIS5021M	5	1 or 2	'You've Never Had It So Good!' Britain 1945-1997	20	O	X
HIS5022M	5	1 or 2	Living and Dying in Revolutionary England, c. 1620 – c. 1670	20	O	X
HIS5023M	5	1 or 2	C'est La Vie! An Everyday History of Nineteenth-Century France	20	O	X
HIS5024M	5	1 or 2	Lives and Experiences of Sixteenth-Century Women	20	O	X
HIS5025M	5	1 or 2	The Great Society: America in the 1960s	20	O	X
HIS5026M	5	1 or 2	Russia between Lenin and Stalin, 1917-1953	20	O	X
HIS5027M	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 (HIS6014M) or in Politics (POL6014M)						
HIS6014M	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).						

HIS6015M	6	1 or 2	Cold War, Hot War: The International History of the Korean War	20	O	X
HIS6016M	6	1 or 2	The Assassination of John F. Kennedy: secrets, spies and security and Historical Inquiry	20	O	X
HIS6017M	6	1 or 2	Doomed Youth: A Social and Cultural History of the First World War	20	O	X
HIS6018M	6	1 or 2	Life After Death in the Early Middle Ages: Saints, Ghosts, and Dynasties	20	O	X
HIS6019M	6	1 or 2	Roads to War: The International Origins of World War Two	20	O	X
HIS6020M	6	1 or 2	A Cultural History of the Reformation	20	O	X
HIS6021M	6	1 or 2	The Wars of the Roses	20	O	X
HIS6022M	6	1 or 2	Myth, Murder, Memory: Traumatic Histories and the American Experiences	20	O	X
HIS6023M	6	1 or 2	Napoleonic Europe	20	O	X
HIS6024M	6	1 or 2	Life Through Letters, c. 1780-1850	20	O	X
HIS6025M	6	1 or 2	Watchers and the Watched: Surveillance in Early Modern England	20	O	X
HIS6026M	6	1 or 2	War Without Fronts: The Wars in Indochina, 1946-1975	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 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.

History Programmes aim(s)

The History programme aims to:

- Foster curiosity and enthusiasm for the study of the past while developing your ability to interpret, question, and communicate historical knowledge.
- Enable you to understand how different societies, ideas, and events have shaped the world and to evaluate history's relevance to contemporary life.
- Equip you with the research, analytical, and communication skills necessary for professional and personal success, aligned with York St John's Graduate Attributes of confidence, authenticity, resilience, enterprise, and professionalism.

- Provide valuable experiences beyond the University that connect academic study of history with its practice in York and the wider region.

Programme learning outcomes

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

Level 4

- 4.1 Demonstrate understanding of a range of historical approaches, frameworks, and methods for interpreting the past.
- 4.2 Engage with and interpret primary and secondary sources to construct evidence-based arguments.
- 4.3 Identify the value and limitations of different kinds of historical evidence and perspectives.
- 4.4 Apply key academic and study skills relevant to the discipline of History.
- 4.5 Demonstrate awareness of how historical narratives are shaped by a range of contexts, including cultural and global.
- 4.6 Gain experience in applying historical thinking skills in practical, community or professional settings.

Level 5

- 5.1 Apply knowledge of a range of historical themes, regions, and periods within global and comparative contexts.
- 5.2 Construct coherent and persuasive arguments using a diverse body of primary and secondary sources.
- 5.3 Analyse historiographical debates and evaluate competing scholarly interpretations.
- 5.4 Demonstrate independence and initiative in research, communication, and critical thinking.
- 5.5 Reflect on how history connects to contemporary issues such as identity, memory, social justice, and sustainability.
- 5.6 Apply historical methods and insights in practical, community or professional contexts

Level 6

- 6.1 Demonstrate systematic and critical understanding of specialised historical topics, theories, and contexts.
- 6.2 Use advanced methods in analysing and interpreting specialist primary and secondary materials.
- 6.3 Evaluate the development of History as a discipline and the relevance of historiographical debate in a specialised context.
- 6.4 Construct and critically evaluate nuanced, evidence-based arguments.
- 6.5 Demonstrate an informed understanding of how historical knowledge contributes to civic engagement and global awareness.
- 6.6 Evaluate and apply transferable and professional skills, including communication, digital literacy, problem-solving, and self-management, with initiative and independence.
- 6.7 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.

Learning, teaching and assessment

Teaching on the BA (Hons) History programme is research-led and designed to immerse you in an active and supportive scholarly community. You will learn from staff who are specialists in a wide range of fields in historical study and whose current research directly informs module content, ensuring that your learning is connected to the latest debates and discoveries.

Learning in BA (Hons) History is active and inquiry driven. From your first year onwards, you will work with a wide range of primary and secondary sources, developing the skills needed to ask complex historical questions and construct evidence-based arguments. You will be encouraged to take ownership of your learning through independent projects, group debates, and creative outputs such as podcasts, exhibitions, and policy papers. As you progress, you will move from guided learning to increasing autonomy, culminating in the Level 6 dissertation — an extended piece of original research on a topic of your choice, supervised individually by an expert in the field.

The programme combines traditional and innovative teaching methods to support your intellectual development and independence. On the one hand, you will take part in lectures, seminars, workshops, and student-led discussions, alongside one-to-one tutorials with your tutors. On the other, many modules integrate site-based learning, including teaching activities in archives, museums, and historic locations across York and the wider region. Modules such as *Global York: A Social and Cultural History of the City* and *The Visible Past* make use of York's rich heritage and built environment, allowing you to experience first-hand how history is interpreted and presented to the public. These activities strengthen your ability to engage with competing narratives of the past and connect the academic study of History with contemporary heritage and cultural practices.

Assessment at each year of study is varied, inclusive, and designed to support both academic and personal development. You will complete essays, primary source analyses, research portfolios, and reflective commentaries, as well as more applied assessments such as policy papers, exhibition plans and heritage reports, and outputs for a popular audience. Regular formative assessment helps you to respond to feedback and build confidence in your academic skills. The programme offers flexibility in assessment design, accessible learning materials and responsive tutor support.

Employability activities are embedded at all years of study to ensure that transferable skills important for life after university are in continuous development. In completing diverse assessment types, you will learn new skills, build intellectual flexibility and improve resilience. Through our connections to external organisations, and through the opportunity to complete a placement or group project in *History Pathways* you will apply skills in new settings and see how historical knowledge operates in public and professional contexts. Reflective assessments in each year of study encourage regular articulation of skills development and self-understanding of personal growth.

By the end of the programme, you will have completed an extended piece of independent research with confidence, evidence of the successful application of professional skills. You will also have developed a sophisticated understanding of how history is studied and communicated; the ability to evaluate evidence and argument with rigour; and the confidence to contribute to both scholarly debate and the public understanding of history.

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-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](#)
- [Freedom of Speech Code of Practice](#)
- [The University's Approach to Dignity and Respect](#)

Date written / revised:

Programme originally approved: 17 March 2026