

Programme Specification

Award and title: BA (Hons) History and Religion

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	Religion History
<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 Religion Diploma of Higher Education History and Religion BA (Ord) History and Religion
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	V200
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	Religion and History
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Theology and Religious Studies History
<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.

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

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 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. All site visits on the programme carry no cost to students.
- 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.

Religion

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.

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)
REL4017M	4	1	Studying Religion	20	C	NC
HIS4017M	4	1	Researching and Presenting the Past	20	C	X
HIS4018M	4	1	Global York: A Social and Cultural History of the City	20	C	X
REL4020M	4	2	Religion Peace and Conflict	20	C	X
REL4018M	4	2	Values and Virtues	20	C	X
HIS4021M	4	2	People and Nature: An Environmental History	20	O	X
Work-related learning: you must select one of the employability modules, either REL5031M or HIS5028M						
REL5031M	5	1 or 2	Worked Related Learning: Religion	20	C*	NC
HIS5028M	5	1	History Pathways	20	C*	NC
You must select FIVE option modules, ensuring you have 60 credits in each subject overall						
HIS5028M	5	2	Making History	20	O	X
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
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
You must select one Dissertation module You must then choose a further 40 credits in each subject						
*Dissertation: you must choose one of the dissertation modules either REL6026M or HIS6014M (and cannot do more than one)						
HIS6014M	6	1 & 2	Dissertation in History	40	C*	NC
REL6026M	6	1 & 2	Long Dissertation (Religion)	40	C*	NC
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
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
REL6027M/ REL6028M	6	1 or 2	Negotiated Study	20	O	X
REL6035M	6	1 or 2	Religion and Genocides	20	O	X
REL6029M	6	1 or 2	Spirituality and Public Life	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

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.

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 aims 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.

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