

Programme specification

BA (Hons) Creative Writing



<i>School:</i>	Humanities, Religion and Philosophy
<i>Entry in:</i>	September 2018
<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>	BA (Ord) Creative Writing Diploma of Higher Education Creative Writing Certificate of Higher Education Creative Writing and English Literature
<i>UCAS Code / GTTR / Other:</i>	W800
<i>Joint Honours Combinations:</i>	None – this is the specialist programme
<i>QAA Benchmark Group(s):</i>	English (2007)
<i>Mode/s of Study:</i>	Full-time for 3 years Part-time for 6 years
<i>Language of Study:</i>	English

Introduction and Special Features

Creative Writing is a thriving subject area at YSJU, with student and staff numbers quadrupling over the last four years. Exploration of a wide range of forms and genres and the production of original writing remains at the heart of the BA Creative Writing programme. But such practice-based study comes with a strong critical underpinning: Good writing doesn't happen without good reading. As a producer and consumer of literature, you will see for yourself how a deep engagement with a range of texts can inform and inspire your creative practice. Literature modules and the development of strong critical habits are key aspects of the degree; and we use a variety of assessments to encourage different modes of learning. The development of your writing as a practice-based and practice-led endeavour is key. You are facilitated in developing your writing as a craft which is informed by an understanding of literature. Overall, the degree will allow you to explore new possibilities and refine your creative practice, while developing the broader skills to prepare you for a career within the arts industry or beyond.

York St John takes a specific approach to Creative Writing 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 genres, and develop your practice in a supportive and inspiring environment. At the same time, you study literature in a range of contexts and learn to become a sophisticated reader of texts, which in turn will inform your practice. The degree develops both intellectual skills, and the practical skills necessary for employability. You will become a confident, independent learner and practitioner with a passion for your subject and a range of transferrable skills.

The teaching team for Creative Writing are all practising, published prose writers, scriptwriters, or poets, who are also active scholars with a range of research specialisms. All teaching on the programme is therefore supported by a wealth of practical experience and expertise in the theoretical, social and cultural contexts of writing. The course 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 School also has

strong links with the York Literature Festival and Aesthetica Short Film Festival, for which we host major public events each year.

The course's public website provides another bridge to that bigger world, gathering news, events and publishing opportunities for students across all levels. As part of the employability module, Publication, Production, and Performance, you will be involved in various projects offering real professional experience, including event and competition management, and the production, editing, marketing, and launch of our annual *Beyond the Walls* anthology. The aim is to foster an exciting community in which you can fulfil your own ambitions as a writer.

Admissions Criteria

This programme's admission criteria are in line with the University's general entry criteria for [undergraduate](#) study.

If your first language is not English, you need to take an IELTS test or an equivalent qualification accepted by the University. Contact University Admissions for further information (<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 [Accredited Prior \(Experiential\) Learning \(APL/APEL\)](#). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

Programme Aims

1. To provide opportunities for the production of original, creative writing.
2. To encourage students to read in critically informed ways and 'as writers'.
3. To develop an understanding of the various modes, forms and genres within the field of creative writing.
4. To introduce students to, and develop, technical creative writing skills.
5. To develop a regular writing practice.
6. To develop an ability to reflect critically on the creative process.
7. To provide a supportive learning environment which meets the needs of a diverse set of learners.
8. To promote and develop a vibrant creative writing community in the university through events, workshops and visiting speakers, including partnerships with local arts events.
9. To encourage critical as well as creative thinking and practice.
10. To introduce students to the world of writing in various professional contexts.
11. To enhance students' development as independent learners and practitioners.
12. To develop appropriate skills in communication, collaboration and self-management.

Programme Learning Outcomes

Level 4 / FHEQ L4

Upon completion students will be able to:

- 1.1 Demonstrate awareness of key concepts in Creative Writing, including historical and theoretical perspectives.
- 1.2 Demonstrate awareness of formal and generic conventions.
- 1.3 Demonstrate competence in the production of their own, original compositions.

- 1.4 Communicate effectively with an awareness of audience, register and readership.
- 1.5 Evaluate their own creative process.
- 1.6 Understand the process of giving and receiving constructive critical feedback on work in progress.

Level 5 / FHEQ L5

Upon completion students will be able to:

- 2.1 Develop, redraft and edit original creative writing.
- 2.2 Demonstrate a technical proficiency in specific forms of writing.
- 2.3 Effectively communicate within the constraints of convention, register and audience/readership.
- 2.4 Reflect critically on their own creative process.
- 2.5 Demonstrate a critical awareness of both the historical precedents and the contemporary forefront of their chosen genres.
- 2.6 Develop professional and career based skills in the context of work related learning.

Level 6 / FHEQ L6

Upon completion students will be able to:

- 3.1 synthesise and apply relevant perspectives to their own creative practice.
- 3.2 independently manage the writing and drafting process in terms of setting goals and meeting deadlines.
- 3.3 situate their practice in relation to broader creative and academic contexts.
- 3.4 produce an artistically coherent body of work which demonstrates technical ability and an awareness of tone, structure, genre and audience.
- 3.5 apply in-depth understanding of their own work in relation to reading and practice, and be able to communicate this in a coherent and sustained manner.
- 3.6 critically evaluate issues of innovation, experimentation and the 'boundaries' of the discipline.

For Hons

- 3.7 deploy the methods and techniques that they have learned toward the development of substantial creative writing project.

NB: 3.7 is compulsory for award of BA (Hons) Creative Writing. Students taking a Joint Honours degree may choose to write their dissertation in their other subject.

Programme Structure

Level 4 (Certificate of Higher Education) – Learning Outcomes:

Level 4 modules introduce you to a range of genres and forms of writing, providing the opportunity to reflect critically upon them and explore them through your own practice. The initial engagement with models in various forms is key to this level. You will begin to reflect on your own creative process and develop effective strategies for generating new creative work. Level 4 enables you to attain new knowledge, communicate effectively in a team, analyse texts and manage your studies. You will meet a variety of visiting, professional writers and begin to contextualise creativity within

various cultural frameworks. This will prepare you for Level 5, where you will select 3 Core Craft modules in particular forms, and develop your employability skills.

Level 5 (Diploma of Higher Education) – Learning Outcomes:

Level 5 builds upon the foundation of Level 4, progressing your writing skills through more focussed and sustained engagement with particular forms. Critical Self-Commentaries will encourage you to develop your reflective abilities in the production of original creative work. ‘Core Craft’ modules allow for deeper exploration of Fiction, Poetry, Non-Fiction, and Scriptwriting, both in technical terms and through the consideration of formative contexts and reader expectations. The ability to evaluate the work of peers, published writing, and your own work in progress is developed more generally. At Level 5 you will also take an employability module, which not only develops your understanding of industry structures, but offers real professional experience in the form of various publishing and literary projects. The option to choose from among ‘Core Craft’ modules or other Literature modules makes Level 5 the stage where you begin to tailor the course to your developing interests. At the same time, all relevant learning outcomes are developed through the year’s compulsory aspects, in the requirement to take at least 3 Core Craft module, over the year, and the employability module.

Level 6 –Learning Outcomes:

Level 6 modules develop independent learning and encourage self-management, and offer the opportunity to produce a sustained portfolio of creative work. You will continue to develop an in-depth understanding of the wider contexts for creative writing, exploring the boundaries of the discipline through experimentation and critical reflection. You will also develop research skills appropriate to the forms of writing you have chosen, enabling you to situate yourself within a wider cultural and professional framework.

Modules for the Programme

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Status of Module
1EN600	4	1	Introduction to Literary Studies 1	20	C
1CW102	4	1	Introduction to Creative Writing	20	C
1CW101	4	1	Forms of Narrative	20	C
1CW100	4	2	Writing to Order	20	C
1EN602	4	2	Introduction to Literary Studies 2	20	C
1EN603	4	2	Theorising Literature: Power and Identity	20	O
1EN604	4	2	Canonicity	20	O
2CW100	5	1	Writing Fiction	20	O ¹
2CW101	5	1	Writing Reality: Creative Nonfiction	20	O ¹
2EN470	5	1	Adaptations	20	O ²
2EN601	5	1	Science Fiction for Survival	20	O ²
2EN450	5	1	Literary Theory	20	O
2EN602	5	1	Mapping America	20	O
2EN600	5	1	Civil War to Civil Society: British Literature, 1640-1740	20	O
2CW103	5	2	Writing Poetry	20	O ¹
2CW104	5	2	Scriptwriting	20	O ¹
2CW102	5	2	Publishing, Production, and Performance	20	C

2EN603	5	2	Revolution and Response: British Literature, 1740-1840	20	O
2EN511	5	2	Conflicting Words	20	O
2DD002	5	2	Politically engaged practice	20	O
In Level 6, you must study					
3CW200	6	1&2	Creative Writing Dissertation Project	60	CA
and choose at least 40 credits (and up to 60 credits) from:					
3CW201	6	1	Writing Genres	20	O
3CW202	6	1	Contemporary Writing 1: Innovation and Experimentation	20	O
3CW203	6	2	Contemporary Writing 2: Literary and Publishing Cultures Now	20	O
You can choose 20 credits from the following Literature modules if you only choose 40 credits from 3CW201, 3CW202 and 3CW203:					
3EN600	6	1	The Victorian Novel: Realism, Sensation, Naturalism	20	O
3EN602	6	1	Gothic Origins	20	O
3EN603	6	1 or 2	The Making of Modern Drama	20	O
3EN605	6	2	American Radicals: Outside the Canon	20	O
3EN270	6	2	Writing the Caribbean	20	O
3EN290	6	2	Gender and Sexualities	20	O

***C**: Compulsory, **CA**: Compulsory for award, **O**: option

¹ **Students must choose at least 60 credits from 2CW100, 2CW101, 2CW103 and 2CW104.**

² **Students must choose at least 20 credits from 2EN601 and 2EN470.**

³ **Students must choose at least 40 credits from 3CW201, 3CW202 and 3CW203. Alongside your dissertation, you must select 40 credits of modules in Semester 1 and 20 credits in semester 2.**

Creative Writing is also offered as a **Joint Honours** degree and can be paired with English Literature, English Language, or Media. Each pairing offers an interdisciplinary relationship between the two subjects which enriches learning in both areas.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Creative Writing at YSJU is a very practical and hands-on subject, and all of your learning will be structured around a dynamic engagement with texts, whether your own or others, as a writer and reader. Just as 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 and between reading and writing, listening and sharing, ideas and practice is one of the things that defines our programme. The structure is designed for you to draw upon the mutual benefits of different ways of thinking and doing. You'll notice these are all active verbs, partly because successful creative writing study depends upon you taking a very active role, and partly because our emphasis on 'process' over 'product' means everyone on the course will always be looking for ways to improve and move forward.

Skills

At each level of study, new, more advanced skills will be introduced and strengthened through continual practice. These fall into the three broad, but interlinked 'skillsets' of Creative, Critical, and Professional skills. The first involves all of the composition skills, techniques, and craft you might expect from a degree in writing, although our emphasis on variety within these means you're very likely to work in forms that are relatively new to you. **Creative skills** also include things like editing, creative problem solving, and the development of different creative projects. Again, these are balanced by the **Critical** strand, through which your ability to analyse texts within theoretical and historical contexts, conduct research, and reflect critically upon your creative process will all be strengthened. Finally, the **Professional** strand means learning to work to specific prompts and deadlines, developing oral and written communication, or moving between self-management and effective teamwork. By design, all three of these skillsets are nurtured in conjunction with one another and throughout the degree.

Learning Time and Learning Space

In practical terms, your learning will involve a combination of working in classrooms, individual study or extracurricular group work, and one-on-one meetings with tutors. Within that classroom-time, a typical week involves a range of settings and configurations. 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 simplest terms, we think of it as a place where work is done. Beyond that, our use of workshops on modules at every level of your degree is intended to be flexible enough to fit the tasks at hand. Any given workshop session will often be divided into time for general discussion, in order to introduce new topics or work more critically with something we've all read together beforehand, perhaps followed by some writing exercises to be done in the classroom, and time to give and receive feedback on writing done outside the classroom.

In all of this, you and your peers will be your own greatest resource for helping each other to improve your writing and explore new possibilities. Your development as a writer will be inseparable from your development as a critic and reader, since your ability to offer constructive feedback is as important as your ability to take it on-board. Whatever the focus of a particular session, the workshop setting works to establish and ultimately depends upon a sense of trust and collaboration. Because every module focuses on the writing process as much as (or more than) the final product, discussions and feedback sessions will delve into areas of that process that often remain hidden. Whether that means sharing unfinished drafts, talking about points of influence or inspiration, or working to demystify the path from inkling to publication, the workshop environment is both a safe, supportive space and a space to push you further.

Beyond the Classroom

Another distinguishing feature of our programme is the extent to which that workshop spirit and learning extends beyond the classroom. Across the degree, you will have the support of individual tutorials, with your module lecturers as well as a personal tutor, and plenty of opportunities for further collaboration with your community of peers. Rather than being an add-on, visiting speakers are brought in throughout the year with direct links to the teaching modules. Whether these are published authors or other literary professionals, these special events bridge between classroom experience and the working world, and widen the range of expertise and inspiration that might inform your work.

Assessment

The most important thing about our approach to assessment is that it happens all the time. The feedback you receive on weekly assignments or classroom exercises throughout a term is just as crucial as the marked submission at the end of it. This formative feedback, which is just as

likely to come from peers and group discussion as from your tutor, is the means by which you will refine your ideas and the work itself towards end-of-semester assignments. The nature of these summative, marked assignments reflects the emphasis on a longer, ongoing process behind your writing, and will generally incorporate work that has been developed over the course of a semester.

Across the degree, these assignments come in a range of forms, partly to encourage the development of different writerly skills. Although you will often be encouraged to keep a reflective, critical journal, some modules will require you submit this record of ideas and reflection, while others will require you submit proposals or presentations on ongoing work – again, with an emphasis on how you might take those projects further. Other modules will set more specific tasks, such as the preparation of a journal submission or adapt an existing text from one medium to another. The two most common modes of assessment, which are often linked, are the Portfolio and Critical Commentary.

The Portfolio

Several modules, especially the ‘Core Craft’ modules in Level 5, will require you to submit a portfolio of creative work for assessment. Unlike a traditional critical essay (which other modules will require), the writing for these portfolios will be compiled throughout the term, from weekly assignments within and outside the classroom. This will allow you to choose from among these drafts for those to be polished and perhaps expanded for inclusion in the portfolio. Although some portfolios might consist of a single, extended piece of writing, the portfolio form also allows and encourages you to submit different pieces and different kinds of work together.

The Critical Commentary

In terms of your development and progress from one module to the next, the critical commentary is just as important as the production of creative work for the portfolio. The commentary is your chance to define the aims of your portfolio work and to relate what you’ve written to the material covered by the module. This may mean discussion of sources of inspiration or research, or consideration of audience, genre, and other formal conventions. In every case, it means reflecting seriously and critically upon the creative process and the work you have done towards producing the portfolio.

Resources

Our core team is comprised of published, practising writers with both critical and creative backgrounds and teaching experience. The team is further supported by the literature team and staff teaching either part-time or across subject areas.

The Literature Series and link with the York Literature Festival, and the visiting writers, are an essential enhancement to your student experience. Visiting speakers run student workshops and take part in events and presentations. As a creative writing student, these exciting events are open to you, and visiting writers often run workshops which form part of your curriculum. Visiting speakers have included:

- Simon Armitage, poetry, non-fiction
- Will Self, novels
- Germaine Greer, essays, commentary
- Daljit Nagra, poetry
- Graham Rawle, graphic novels
- Jackie Kay, fiction, autobiography, poetry
- Joe Dunthorne, fiction and poetry
- Helen Mort, poetry
- Emily Berry, poetry
- Rebecca Goss, poetry
- Paul Myerscough, editor London Review of Books
- Nicholas Royle, novelist and editor.
- Alison Moore, novelist

- Kate Atkinson, novelist
 - Janelle Andrew, literary agent
 - Tom Chivers, editor, publisher, poetry and non-fiction writer
 - Luke Kennard, poetry, novels
 - Jon Stone, poetry and publisher
 - Kirsten Irving, poetry and publisher
 - Jack Mpange, autobiography, poetry
- The Creative Writing Beyond the Walls blog, hosted by Wordpress at YSJ, is an interactive forum for news, events and student opportunities. This has been very successful since being implemented in 2013. Students and staff contribute to its content. <http://blog.yorks.ac.uk/creativewriting/>

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.

Internal and External Reference Points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University Mission Statement](#) [see page two]
- [Strategic Plan 2015-20](#) [see page four]
- [QAA subject benchmark statement](#)
- [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#)
- [National Association of Writers in Education \(NAWE\)](#)

Further Information

Further information on the programme of study may be obtained from:

- Admissions entry profile (Admissions)
- Programme validation document (Registry – Academic Quality Support)
- Regulations (Registry – Academic Quality Support)
- Student programme handbook (school)
- Module handbooks (school)

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