

Programme Specification

BA (Hons) Creative Writing

<i>School:</i>	School of Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	Creative Writing
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2025-26
<i>in the month(s) of:</i>	September
<i>Awarding institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Teaching institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Delivery location:</i>	York St John University
<i>Programme/s accredited by:</i>	Not applicable
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Certificate of Higher Education Creative Writing Diploma of Higher Education Creative Writing BA (Ord) Creative Writing
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	W800
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	BA (Hons) Creative Writing and English Language BA (Hons) Creative Writing and English Literature BA (Hons) Creative Writing and Media
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	QAA Creative Writing Subject Benchmark Statement 2016
<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>Placement year opportunity:</i>	Yes

Introduction and special features

Creative Writing is a thriving subject area at 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 the BA (Hons) Creative Writing programme. 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 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 employability. 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 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 degree programme

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

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 range of events and extra-curricular activities each year. As part of our second-year employability module, *Working with Words: Publishing and Performance*, you will be involved in projects offering real professional experience, including literary event organisation, and the production, editing, marketing, and launch of our annual *Beyond the Walls* student anthology. At York St John University, you will be part of vibrant community in which you can fulfil your own creative, academic and professional ambitions.

The Creative Writing programme at York St John is committed to supporting its students to identify, clarify and articulate the social values that are most important to them. The literary texts we introduce grapple with a wide number of socially pressing themes, including climate change, racial injustice, LGBTQI+ rights and gender inequality, to name a few. In order to support you to transmit the values you care about passionately through a rewarding career related to Creative Writing, we foreground work-related learning throughout the degree. Students' passion for making positive changes for a fairer, better world as well as their interest in the discipline form the basis of all work-related learning across the three years of study.

Each level of Creative Writing prepares you for a graduate career that will allow you to draw on the skills developed on your programme. Level 4 introduces you to a range of different modes of writing that might be used in a workplace context. It provides you with time to discuss what kinds of writers you believe you are as you begin, and what particular modes of writing you would like to experiment with as you develop. Additionally, it introduces you to the University's Graduate Attributes and to its Mission Statement, in order to help you articulate the social values that are most important to you from Year One. At Level 5, you have the opportunity to take the module *Working with Words* in the second semester, where you work with an independent local publisher to plan, design, edit, and market an anthology of literary work entitled *Beyond the Walls*. Students on this module create materials for podcasts, Instagram and Tik Tok to advertise the anthology, and they launch an event in the York Literature Festival to promote the new edition each year. In Level 6 alongside your Dissertation in Semester 2 you will engage with the 'Regional Industries Cauldron' from within the module *Contemporary Writing 2*. At this day-long event you will pitch your creative ideas to agents and publishers and gain feedback, and you will have a chance to meet and ask questions of a range of publishers from the region. Assessment on Levels 4, 5 and 6 directly engages with students' social values, employment-related skills and opportunities offered through the wider Creative Industries and relevant professional environments. In terms of the Work Related Experiential Learning (WREL) framework, the module will enhance the 'commercially relevant' engagement it currently offers by embedding the **Regional Industries Cauldron**.

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.

Admissions criteria

You must meet 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 (see <https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/>).

If you do not have traditional qualifications, you may be eligible for entry on the basis of [Recognition of prior learning \(RPL\)](#). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

Programme aim(s)

- To help you to become a better writer and a more informed reader

- To support you in understanding and analysing the connections between your own work and its literary and cultural contexts
- To provide you with an introduction to the creative industries and provide opportunities for the development of your professional skills
- To provide a supportive learning environment that meets the needs of a diverse set of learners
- To 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 competence in the production of original creative writing
- 4.2 Create and use constructive feedback, as part of a process of editing and revision
- 4.3 Show an understanding of literary form and historical tradition
- 4.4 Differentiate the most important contexts for your own creative practice
- 4.5 Plan and create writing to a brief in professional or other contexts
- 4.6 Use research to develop your creative work and to inform your 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 effective language, showing technical proficiency in writing
- 5.4 Reflect critically on form, genre, language and other key contexts for your creative work
- 5.5 Demonstrate a critical awareness of the historical precedents and the contemporary dimensions of particular literary forms and genres
- 5.6 Operate effectively as a member of a team to collaborate in the production of creative work and/or professionally-oriented projects

Level 6

- 6.1 Create written work that shows sophistication in thought and expression
- 6.2 Analyse your creative practice in relation to contemporary creative and academic contexts
- 6.3 Appraise genre traditions in relation to your 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 your own work.

For Honours

- 6.6 Conduct independent research to devise an original piece of creative writing that shows an in-depth understanding of particular literary form(s) and genre(s)

Programme structure

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					compulsory or optional to take C or O	non-compensatable or compensatable NC or X
CRW4001M	4	1	Forms of Narrative	20	C	X
CRW4002M	4	1	Introduction to Creative Writing	20	C	X
LIT4002M	4	1	Introduction to Literary Studies 1	20	C	X
CRW4003M	4	2	Writing to Order	20	C	X
CRW4004M	4	2	Creative Research for Creative Writing	20	C	X
LIT4004M	4	2	Introduction to Literary Studies 2	20	C	X
In Level 5, you must study						
CRW5001M	5	2	Working with Words: Publishing and Performance	20	C	X
and choose at least 60 credits (and up to 80 credits) from our Core Craft modules (you must choose at least 60 credits from CRW5002M, CRW5004M and CRW5005M):						
CRW5002M	5	1 or 2	Writing Fiction	20	O	X
CRW5003M	5	1 or 2	Writing Reality: Creative Non-Fiction	20	O	X
CRW5004M	5	1 or 2	Writing Poetry	20	O	X
CRW5005M	5	1 or 2	Scriptwriting	20	O	X
and must choose 20 credits from:						
LIT5002M	5	1	Adaptations	20	O	X
LIT5007M	5	1	Science Fiction for Survival	20	O	X
You can choose 20 credits from the following Literature modules if you only select 60 credits of Core Craft modules:						
LIT5001M	5	1	Literary Theory	20	O	X
LIT5008M	5	1	Mapping America	20	O	X
LIT5013M	5	1 or 2	Dawn of Print	20	O	X
LIT5015M	5	2	The Romantic Imagination: Affect, Excess and Revolution	20	O	X
LIT5005M	5	2	Conflicting Words	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
PER5002M	5	2	Politically Engaged Practice 2	20	O	X

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In Level 6, you must study						
CRW6001M	6	1&2	Creative Writing Dissertation Project	60	C	NC
Alongside your dissertation, you must select 40 credits of modules in semester 1 and 20 credits in semester 2:						
and choose at least 40 credits (and up to 60 credits) from:						
CRW6002M	6	1	Writing Genres	20	O	X
CRW6003M	6	1	Contemporary Writing 1: Innovation and Experimentation	20	O	X
CRW6004M	6	2	Contemporary Writing 2: Literary and Publishing Cultures Now	20	O	X
You can choose 20 credits from the following Literature modules if you only choose 40 credits from 3CW201, 3CW202 and 3CW203:						
LIT6016M	6	1	Hunger, Rebellion, and Rage: The Victorians	20	O	X
LIT6018M	6	1	Literary Legacies	20	O	X
LIT6009M	6	1 or 2	The Making of Modern Drama	20	O	X
LIT6011M	6	2	American Radicals: Outside the Canon	20	O	X
LIT6003M	6	2	Writing the Caribbean	20	O	X
LIT6004M	6	2	Gender and Sexualities	20	O	X

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 expanded 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 other to 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 Valley Press, the York Literature Festival, and other community partners. Visitors include successful writers (like Simon Armitage, Jackie Kay and Fiona Mozley) as well as industry specialists: publishers, editors, agents, publicity experts and literary organisers and activists. As well as learning from guest speakers, you'll have the opportunity to attend a number of trips, including a third-year writing retreat to help with your dissertation project, and a trip to the National Creative Writing Graduate Fair (these trips are subsidised by the University, but you may be required to pay a small deposit). 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.

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's [general regulations](#) for undergraduate awards apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section as non-compensatable.

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University Mission Statement](#) [see page two]
- [Strategic Plan 2015-20](#) [see page four]
- [QAA subject benchmark statement](#)
- [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#)

Date written / revised: 31/03/14

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