

Programme Specification

Award and title: BA (Hons) Creative Writing

<i>School:</i>	School of Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	Creative Writing
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2026-27
<i>in the month(s) of</i>	September
<i>Awarding institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Teaching institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Delivery location:</i>	York St John University
<i>Programme/s accredited by:</i>	N/A
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Certificate of Higher Education Creative Writing 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 Literature BA (Hons) Creative Writing and Media
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	QAA Creative Writing Subject Benchmark Statement 2024
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	Undergraduate periods of study ¹ for full time / part time
<i>Language of study:</i>	English
<i>Paired with Foundation Year</i>	Yes
<i>Study abroad opportunities:</i>	Yes
<i>Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:</i>	Yes
<i>Excluding a year-long placement/professional experience, are there placement/field trip/work experience(s) totalling 20 days or more?</i>	No

Introduction and special features

Creative Writing is a thriving subject area at York St John University (YSJU), with a growing undergraduate programme and a large postgraduate community. Exploration of a wide range of literary forms and genres and the production of original creative writing is at the heart of the BA (Hons) Creative Writing programme. YSJU takes a specific approach to Creative Writing which recognises it as a practice-based subject underpinned by a critical understanding of literature. The Creative Writing team at YSJU welcome students with a passion for reading and writing, as well as a desire to explore new ideas. As a Creative Writing student, you will benefit from the opportunity to create original works, experiment with a range of forms and genres, consider a range of different contexts for your writing, and develop your creative practice in a supportive and inspiring environment. At the same time, you will study literature in a range of contexts and

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

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 programme is further enhanced by a range of visiting writers and literary professionals, whose masterclasses and events offer you an opportunity to engage with the wider world of the professional writer. The degree programme 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 all 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 you will have the opportunity to take part in the Industry Day, where you can 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 University's Work Related Experiential Learning (WREL) framework, the module will enhance the 'commercially relevant engagement it currently offers by embedding an 'Industry Day'.

Special features:

- You will have the opportunity to obtain hands-on experience in editing, publishing, and promoting an anthology, collaborating with industry professionals.
- There is a wider programme of work-related and experiential learning embedded throughout your studies, to help prepare you for the graduate workplace.
- You will learn from award-winning writers and industry professionals, ensuring your education is guided by experts.
- The Creative Writing Industry Day allows you to pitch your work to publishers, agents, and editors.
- There is an option to study abroad, usually for one semester in Level 5.
- The School of Humanities benefits from a regular programme of visiting speakers, across a range of issues and subjects, and there will be the opportunity to attend a range of conferences, seminars and events within the School.

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

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 aim(s)

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

Level 5

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

Level 6

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

Programme structure

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensable (NC) or compensable (X)
CRW4006M	4	1	Forms of Narrative	20	C	X
CRW4007M	4	1	Being a Writer	20	C	X
CRW4008M	4	1	Reading for Writers	20	C	X
CRW4009M	4	2	Writing to Order	20	C	X
CRW4010M	4	2	Research for Writers	20	C	X
CRW4011M	4	2	The Writer's Workshop	20	C	X
In Level 5 you must study at least 60 credits (and up to 80 credits) from the Core Craft modules*						
Semester 1 – You must choose a total of 60 credits from the options below						
You must choose at least 20 credits (and up to 40 credits) from the Core Craft modules: Writing Fiction and Writing Reality						
CRW5006M	5	1	Writing Fiction	20	O	X
CRW5007M	5	1	Writing Reality: Creative Non-Fiction	20	O	X
You must choose at least 20 credits from LIT5002M and LIT5007M (and up to 40 credits if you only selected 20 credits of Core Craft modules)						
LIT5002M	5	1	Adaptations	20	O	X
LIT5007M	5	1	Science Fiction for Survival	20	O	X
Semester 2 – you must study CRW5008M and 40 credits from the optional modules						
CRW5008M	5	2	Working With Words: Publishing and Performance	20	C	X
You must choose at least 20 credits (and up to 40 credits) from the Core Craft modules: Writing Poetry and Scriptwriting						
CRW5009M	5	2	Writing Poetry	20	O	X
CRW5010M	5	2	Scriptwriting	20	O	X
You must choose 20 credits from the following Literature modules if you only selected 20 credits of Core Craft modules in semester 2						
LIT5015M	5	2	The Romantic Imagination: Affect, Excess and Revolution	20	O	X
LIT5005M	5	2	Conflicting Words	20	O	X
In Level 6 you must study CRW6006M (Dissertation) and 40 credits in semester 1 and 20 credits in semester 2						
CRW6006M	6	1&2	Creative Writing Dissertation Project	60	C	NC
You must choose at least 40 credits (and up to 60 credits) from:						
CRW6007M	6	1	Writing Genres	20	O	X
CRW6008M	6	1	Contemporary Writing: Innovation and Experimentation	20	O	X
CRW6009M	6	2	Literary and Publishing Cultures Now	20	O	X
You must choose 20 credits from the following Literature modules if you only chose 40 credits from the optional CRW above:						
LIT6011M	6	2	American Radicals: Outside the Canon	20	O	X
LIT6009M	6	1	The Making of Modern Drama	20	O	X

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

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 mostly be assessed through coursework. Across the degree, assignments come in a range of forms, to encourage the development of different writerly skills. The two most common modes of assessment, which are often linked, are the Creative Portfolio and Contextual Reflection. Many modules will require you to submit a portfolio of creative work for assessment. The writing for these portfolios will be compiled throughout the semester, from weekly assignments within and outside the classroom. This will allow you to choose from your drafts which pieces of writing you wish to develop and perhaps expand for inclusion in your portfolio. The Contextual Reflection is your chance to reflect on the aims and process of writing your portfolio work, and to relate what you have written to the material covered by the module as well as to other contexts that are important to you as a writer. This may mean discussion of sources of literary traditions and form, inspiration or research, or consideration of audience and genre. In every case, it means reflecting seriously and critically upon the creative process and the work you have done towards producing the portfolio.

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

Progression and graduation requirements

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

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

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

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

Date written / revised:

Programme originally approved: