

Programme Specification

BA (Hons) English Literature

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	English Literature
<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>	N/A
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Certificate of Higher Education English Literature Diploma of Higher Education English Literature BA (Ord) English Literature
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	Q300
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	BA (Hons) Creative Writing and English Literature BA (Hons) English Literature and Film Studies BA (Hons) English Literature and History BA (Hons) English Literature and Religion BA (Hons) Media and English Literature
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	English 2019
<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

Introduction and special features

English Literature is a rich and vibrant area of study. At York St John University (YSJU), we are a dynamic, engaged, and research active team who are committed to providing our students with a cutting-edge education. By studying English Literature, you will have the opportunity to learn about a range of different genres, historical periods, and literary forms. Our philosophy is simple: words matter. Words shape the world we live in (writing and narrative can and have changed the world) and the connections between the written page and the concerns of the 'real' world are a crucial part of the programme. Overall, the degree will enable you to develop your expertise as a reader and critic of a range of literary materials, whilst also supporting you in the development of a portfolio of transferable professional skills which will aid you in the wider job market. As you become adept at independent learning, you will become a more sophisticated reader of texts, and you will find that your confidence as a writer and as a critic will increase as your degree

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

progresses. You will also be part of a wider culture of learning and be able to think about what your studies will enable you to accomplish personally, professionally and as an engaged citizen within society.

Through the course of a wide-ranging suite of modules, you will develop an extensive knowledge of both classic and contemporary texts, and will have access to a range of employability opportunities and skills development throughout your time on the programme. The choice of modules on offer will help you to develop your own interests and allow you to shape your degree accordingly. For example, students can choose to follow an historical pathway that might include modules such as 'The Romantic Imagination: Affect, Excess and Revolution' which examines writing from the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, or 'Hunger, Rebellion, and Rage: The Victorians', which focuses on nineteenth-century fiction. In addition, students can focus on other specialised areas represented by modules including Mapping America, Sick Stories: Narratives of Illness, Disease, and Infection, Science Fiction for Survival, and What Now? What Next? Twenty-First Century Literature. We pride ourselves on a diverse and stimulating syllabus, and you might find yourself studying Native American writing, prison narratives, radical poetry, avant-garde writing, political polemics, Civil Rights literature, speculative fiction, satire, LGBTQ+ rights literature, experimental writing, and literature of the Caribbean, as well as canonical writers such as Shakespeare, Dickens, and Austen, all as part of your English Literature degree.

A team of research-active academics who are all recognised in their respective specialisms will facilitate and guide your learning. We use a variety of assessment methods to help you develop your learning through a broad range of skills and approaches. You will not sit any traditional exams as part of your degree in English Literature, and instead you will be encouraged to try new forms of writing. In addition to more traditional assessments such as the essay, you might be asked to write a blog post, to compile a research portfolio, or even to curate an online exhibition. Field trips are an integral part of the programme, and students in recent years have had the opportunity to visit London, Stratford-upon-Avon, and Whitby, as well as local sites including Car Convent, York Explore Archive, York Castle Museum and York Theatre Royal.

During your degree, you will develop a range of subject-specific and transferable skills. As well as having the opportunity to become an adept reader, critic, writer, and researcher, you will also become highly skilled in critical thinking, problem solving, constructing and developing an argument, time-management, public speaking, and project management. These skills are all valued highly by employers, and you have the chance to develop more professional skills on our bespoke employability module 'Literature at Work'. On this module, you will be able to experience an external work placement, or choose to work on a team project (such as designing a publication or curating a small exhibition). Students regularly contribute to our popular Literature blog, **Words Matter**, which is an excellent way to gain relevant professional experience and exposure for your critical and creative perspectives.

York is a fantastic place to be if you love books and reading. There is a rich literary history in the city, and you will have the chance to explore and learn more during your degree. W.H. Auden was born in York, as was contemporary novelist Kate Atkinson. Dickens and the Brontë sisters all knew York well, and Laurence Sterne's classic *Tristram Shady* was published in York in 1760. Each year, the city celebrates its literary heritage with the York Literature Festival, for which our department organises several events. In recent years, our students have had the chance to attend talks and readings by Jeffrey Boakye, Jason Williamson, Pat Barker and Kate Atkinson. As part of the YJSU Literature department, you will have the chance to get involved in a wide range of similar activities, as well as the opportunity to attend free workshops, writing sessions, and readings as part of your degree experience.

A degree in English Literature will open diverse and exciting opportunities when you enter the job market, and a degree in Literature is one of the most valued degree subjects by employers. This is because Literature graduates are able to think independently, write and present their ideas fluently and persuasively, and are skilled researchers and critical thinkers.

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)

1. To encourage students to develop an informed and critical understanding of key themes and debates within English Literature
2. To enhance students' development as independent learners and literary critics
3. To support students in developing a range of transferable skills to equip them for employment and lifelong learning
4. To develop in students an ability to reflect critically on the process of researching, writing, analysing, and forming an academic argument
5. To provide a supportive learning environment that meets the needs of a diverse set of learners

Programme learning outcomes

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

Level 4

- 4.1 Apply key concepts including historical and theoretical perspectives appropriate to literary studies.
- 4.2 Show an engagement with formal and generic conventions.
- 4.3 Demonstrate competence in the analysis of a variety of texts.
- 4.4 Communicate effectively for the audience and purpose using a range of foundational skills.
- 4.5 Identify and practice foundational key transferable skills (including those for lifelong learning) appropriate for further study and future employment.
- 4.6 Demonstrate competence in applying critical and theoretical approaches to literary texts.
- 4.7 Evaluate and reflect on the research, analysis, and writing process.

Level 5

- 5.1 Utilise a critical understanding and knowledge of the discipline of English Literature, including an enhanced appreciation of historical and theoretical perspectives.
- 5.2 Show critical awareness of research strategies particular to literary studies.
- 5.3 Apply theoretical perspectives and concepts to a range of different texts.
- 5.4 Effectively communicate information, ideas, arguments, and interpretations in a manner appropriate to the audience and purpose.
- 5.5 Apply knowledge and skills effectively in decision making in the context of growing maturity as an independent learner.
- 5.6 Demonstrate transferable skills including organisation, time-management and the ability to construct a coherent argument.

Level 6

- 6.1 Demonstrate a systemic understanding of the discipline of English Literature, underpinned by a detailed awareness of historical and theoretical perspectives.
- 6.2 Synthesise and apply relevant critical and theoretical perspectives to their own research practice.
- 6.3 Deploy an advanced conceptual understanding of the application of research skills and theoretical approach to literary studies.
- 6.4 Critically reflect on individual learning as an advanced independent learner.

6.5 Demonstrate transferable skills to an advanced level that prepares for employment or further study.

6.6 Design and undertake a piece of extended independent research that demonstrates an in-depth knowledge of a specific area of English Literature.

N.B: 6.6 is compulsory for the award of BA (Hons) English Literature.

Programme structure

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensatable (NC) or compensatable (X)
LIT4001M	4	1	Forms of Narrative	20	C	X
LIT4002M	4	1	Introduction to Literary Studies 1	20	C	X
LIT4003M	4	1	Writing, Research, and Literature	20	C	X
LIT4004M	4	2	Introduction to Literary Studies 2	20	C	X
LIT4005M	4	2	Theorizing Literature: Power and Identity	20	C	X
LIT4006M	4	2	Canonicity	20	C	X
LIT5004M	5	2	Literature at Work	20	C	X
At Level 5, you should choose three modules to study in Semester 1 and two modules to study in Semester 2						
LIT5001M	5	1 or 2	Literary Theory	20	O	X
LIT5013M	5	1 or 2	Dawn of Print	20	O	X
LIT5002M	5	1	Adaptations	20	O	X
LIT5007M	5	1 or 2	Science Fiction for Survival	20	O	X
LIT5008M	5	1	Mapping America	20	O	X
LIT5005M	5	2	Conflicting Words	20	O	X
LIT5015M	5	1 or 2	The Romantic Imagination: Affect, Excess and Revolution	20	O	X
LIT5016M	5	1 or 2	Sick Stories: Narratives of Illness, Disease, and Infection	20	O	X
LIT5012M	5	1 or 2	Shakespeare: Perspectives	20	O	X
² One of these modules can be from a programme outside of Literature. You may choose only ONE module from the following: MED5001M, CRW5002M, CRW5003M, FIL5001M, CRW5004M, CRW5005M,						
MED5001M	5	1	Culture, Controversy and Media	20	O ²	X
CRW5002M	5	1	Writing Fiction	20	O ²	X
CRW5003M	5	1	Writing Reality: Creative Non-Fiction	20	O ²	X
FIL5001M	5	2	Independent Cinema	20	O ²	X
CRW5004M	5	2	Writing Poetry	20	O ²	X
CRW5005M	5	2	Scriptwriting	20	O ²	X

At Level 6, if you have studied 20 CRW credits at Level 5 or 6 you may choose between LIT6001M and CRW6001M If you haven't studied the required CRW credits, you must choose LIT6001M						
LIT6001M	6	1&2	English Literature Research Project	40	O	NC
CRW6005M	6	1&2	Creative Writing Dissertation Project	40	O	NC
At level 6, you should choose two modules to study in Semester 1 and two modules to study in Semester 2...						
LIT6016M	6	1 or 2	Hunger, Rebellion, and Rage: The Victorians	20	O	X
LIT6017M	6	1 or 2	Experiments & Upheavals: Twentieth-Century Cultural Change	20	O	X
LIT6018M	6	1 or 2	Literary Legacies	20	O	X
LIT6009M	6	1 or 2	The Making of Modern Drama	20	O	X
LIT6014M	6	1	Research Now 1	20	O	X
LIT6011M	6	1 or 2	American Radicals: Outside the Canon	20	O	X
LIT6003M	6	1 or 2	Writing the Caribbean	20	O	X
LIT6019M	6	1 or 2	What Now? What Next? Twenty-First Century Literature	20	O	X
LIT6004M	6	2	Gender and Sexualities	20	O	X
LIT6015M	6	2	Research Now 2	20	O	X
One of these modules can be from a programme outside of Literature. You may choose only ONE module from the following: CRW6002M, CRW6003M, AMS6011M						
CRW6002M	6	1	Writing Genres	20	O	X
CRW6003M	6	1	Contemporary Writing 1: Innovation and Experimentation	20	O	X
AMS6011M	6	2	Special Subject in American Culture	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-compensatable. A non-compensatable module is one that must be passed at the relevant level (with a mark of 40 in order to progress).

Learning, teaching and assessment

The aims of all our teaching are to help you to become a better writer and literary critic, to challenge you to consider new ideas and concepts, and to support you in understanding the complex connections between literature and contemporary society. Literature is a dialogic discipline: that is, informed discussions and debates are a crucial part of the learning process. We do not want students to be passive learners, but instead expect you all 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, and 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. Please note that optional trips do sometimes incur additional costs.

Your first year with us is about supporting you in making the transition to university-level study and

building confidence in using a set of foundational skills. You will be assigned your own Academic Tutor, a member of staff who will meet with you and other students regularly during your first semester at YSJU. Modules such as 'Writing, Research and Literature' 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. You can choose to specialise in a certain genre, historical period, or literary form. We have a diverse range of modules for you to choose from, and you will have lots of opportunities to study types of literature that you might not have experienced previously (such as, for example, Caribbean literature, utopian writing, and creative non-fiction). We offer an interdisciplinary approach to the study of literature, and you might find yourself studying a film or media adaptation of a text, or considering a specific performance of a play, as well as reading the original source material. As a single honours Literature student, you will also have the opportunity to take up to one module in your second and third years in a related subject, such as Media, Film Studies, American Studies or Creative Writing.

There are no exams, and your English Literature degree will be assessed through coursework. As well as writing essays, there are other assessment opportunities designed to help you develop new skills and prepare for graduate employment. You will encounter a wide range of assessment, including portfolios, close-reading exercises, and opportunities for reflective writing. Some modules are assessed by one piece of coursework (usually a portfolio) and you will have the chance to work on this throughout the semester. The feedback you will receive focuses on how you can improve your work for future assessment, and we encourage all students to keep a feedback folder to help keep track of their academic development. Feedback is provided through a range of methods, in addition to written feedback on your work, we also work with more dialogic methods and provide a range of opportunities for informal and formative feedback throughout the programme.

In your final year, you will be ready to take on a bigger role in the management of your learning. You might find yourself leading a class discussion, or doing a non-assessed presentation in a seminar. You will write a dissertation (an extended project that runs for the whole academic year) on the subject of your choice, and with the support of an academic supervisor. In many ways, this is in the intellectual culmination of your degree, as you become an independent researcher and are required to manage your own academic project. Many of our students note that this is one of the most enjoyable sections of their degree, as they are specializing in a literary topic that they are passionate about, and are putting into practice the skills they have accrued during their time at York St John University.

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 and values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statements](#)
- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)

Date written / revised:

Programme originally approved: