

Programme Specification

BA (Hons) International Relations

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2021-22
<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>	BA (Ord) International Relations Diploma of Higher Education International Relations Certificate of Higher Education International Relations
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	L210
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	N/A
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Politics and International Relations 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>Placement Year opportunity:</i>	Yes

Introduction and special features

International Relations is the study of the relations between states in a complex and dynamic international system. It involves issues of international security and conflict, the interplay between politics and economics, evolving structures and mechanisms of governing on a global scale, and much more. International Relations at York St John places you at the cutting edge of the discipline. How do states secure their borders, both physical and virtual, in the face of evolving human and financial global flows and technological developments? What is the role of the United Nations in the post-Cold War 21st Century? What are our responsibilities as citizens in an increasingly interconnected world? These are just some of the questions you will have the opportunity to consider over the course of your studies.

The International Relations programme guides you through a range of themes and approaches that advance over the course of your studies. Fundamentally you will develop an understanding of the historical and contemporary contexts, actors, events and processes of world politics, and importantly be able to analyse these using a range of theories at the heart of International Relations. Drawing on the latest research you will be able to explore the diverse field of international security, including: peacekeeping and the responsibility to protect, gender and conflict, the politics of global health, asylum and the politics of borders. You will develop a strong understanding of international organisation, through a focus on the

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

contemporary role of the European Union, the United Nations and the future of global cooperation. You will be introduced to international political economy and explore the politics of international aid, development and trade. Finally, there will be the opportunity to draw on these themes in the context of particular geographical areas.

These themes and approaches will be examined with increasing depth as you progress through the programme. You will be exposed to all of these themes at the start of the programme, developing a foundational level of knowledge and understanding. As you continue through the programme you will specialise in contemporary issues critical to us as global citizens in the 21st Century, drawing on scholarship at the forefront of International Relations research. By the end of your degree, you will be able to explain the historical drivers of developments in international relations, analyse the current international political and economic landscape and identify the challenges that will shape our shared future.

A subject comes to life when it can be experienced and situated in a real-world context, and so there are a number of ways in which international relations can be explored beyond the classroom:

- You will have the opportunity to take part in a range of optional local, national and international field trips throughout your programme (wholly or in part at cost to yourself).
- In the second year of the programme you will have the opportunity to undertake a project or work experience which will give you practical experience of working in the wider community and exploring the relevance of your studies in a variety of personal, cultural and career contexts, as well as the opportunity to engage in exciting projects.
- There is an optional international exchange, which involves studying for one semester (usually in the first half of the second year) at a university in North America.
- The School of Humanities benefits from a regular programme of visiting speakers, across a range of interdisciplinary issues, and there will be the opportunity to attend a range of conferences, seminars, workshops and events within the School.

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.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)

The programme aims are:

1. To allow you to develop a comprehensive understanding of a range of concepts and theories, institutions and processes across the spectrum of International Relations.
2. To support you in the development of essential subject-specific and more general cognitive skills, such as: problem-solving in relation to complex and emerging global social, political and economic issues; working with primary sources as well as academic literature in the development of arguments; developing policy advice for key stakeholders and audiences, information gathering, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.
3. To enable you to develop fundamental skills relevant to successful study and the contemporary workplace: written and oral communication, self-management, teamwork and collaboration, and

Programme learning outcomes

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

Level 4

- 4.1 Define underlying concepts in International Relations, and apply them to key institutions, actors and processes in international contexts;
- 4.2 Evaluate different perspectives on the nature, scope and study of world politics and International Relations;
- 4.3 Find and evaluate relevant academic literature and primary sources to inform understanding;
- 4.4 Construct convincing arguments and communicate information and ideas clearly;
- 4.5 Demonstrate a basic proficiency in a range of study skills relevant to the International Relations subject area.

Level 5

- 5.1 Critically discuss themes, issues, and debates in International Relations from theoretical, empirical and methodological perspectives;
- 5.2 Apply International Relations concepts, theories and ideas to relevant contexts and events;
- 5.3 Effectively and critically analyse, synthesise and evaluate relevant academic literature and primary sources;
- 5.4 Construct a coherent, structured argument, drawing on a wide range of relevant literature and primary sources;
- 5.5 Effectively communicate information, ideas, arguments and interpretations in a manner appropriate to the task and audience;
- 5.6 Demonstrate transferable skills necessary for employment, such as the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.

Level 6

- 6.1 Demonstrate a systematic understanding of particular concepts, theories, issues and debates in International Relations;
- 6.2 Critically analyse and evaluate different interpretations of institutions, events, processes and behaviours in International Relations, informed by theoretical perspectives.
- 6.3 Analyse and construct complex arguments, drawing on an in-depth and sophisticated engagement with relevant academic literature and primary source material;
- 6.4 Employ transferable skills necessary for employment or further study, such as the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;
- 6.5 Design and undertake a piece of independent research that demonstrates an in-depth knowledge, understanding and analysis of a specific area of International Relations.

Programme structure

At Level 4 (1st year of full-time study) you will take six compulsory 20-credit modules, three in each semester, introducing a range of fundamental themes and approaches within the study of International Relations. Semester 1 sets the *context* for International Relations, with modules examining world politics, the UK in international context, and an introduction to the fundamentals of political analysis. You will learn to engage with and utilise relevant academic literature and primary sources. Furthermore, you will be exposed to broad intellectual and methodological approaches that scholars draw on in the research and analysis of the political world. Semester 2 shifts focus to particular *issues* in International Relations, with modules covering globalisation, international security, international development and aid.

At Level 5 (2nd year of full-time study) you will take six 20-credit modules. Three of these are compulsory. In Semester 1 *International Relations: Theory and Practice* introduces you to a broad range of traditional and critical theoretical approaches to analysing state relations, and situates these in real-world context. In Semester 2, *Political Analysis: Theory and Method* develops your understanding from Level 4 of various schools of thought and approaches in the research of Politics and International Relations, and in particular focuses on the methodological implications of these. You will develop an understanding of research philosophy and design and gain hands-on experience with research methods and analysis. This may include qualitative approaches such as the use and analysis of elite interviews, quantitative methods such as the analysis and manipulation of datasets, designing and conducting case studies, and more theoretically-driven methods. You will also take *Practical Politics*, a bespoke employability module which will allow you to undertake external work experience in a career-oriented environment, or engage in project work focused on a relevant course- or career-related issue. You will be able to choose from a range of modules that will advance the knowledge and understanding of concepts, institutions and processes introduced at Level 4, maintaining the broad themes and approaches but providing a more in-depth exploration of issues within these, as well as the opportunity to begin to specialise in particular areas of interest.

At Level 6 (3rd year of full-time study) you will deepen your knowledge and critical understanding of particular issues in International Relations. You will engage in an extended piece of writing by undertaking a 40-credit Dissertation completed over the duration of your Level 6 studies. Here you will apply your knowledge and experience of research design and methods developed at Level 5 in the construction and conduct of your own research project. This will involve developing clear research questions, designing an appropriate methodology, and carrying out and analysing the research. This will be done with continued support from academic staff through group and one-to-one tutorials. There will be a choice of four further 20-credit option modules. Level 6 offers you advanced level modules, with specific focus, reflecting the cutting-edge research and teaching expertise of the programme team. These modules promote complexity and sophistication, with regard to knowledge, skills understanding, expected of a final year degree student in International Relations. You can continue to specialise in particular political themes building on your studies at Level 5, or opt to broaden your focus.

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensatable (NC) or compensatable (X)
POL4001M	4	1	Introducing Politics: Key Concepts and Skills	20	C	X
IRL4001M	4	1	Understanding World Politics	20	C	X
IRL4002M	4	1	Finding a Role: The UK in the World	20	C	X
POL4003M	4	2	International or Global? Globalisation in Debate	20	C	X
IRL4003M	4	2	International Security	20	C	X
IRL4004M	4	2	Aid, Inequality and Development	20	C	X
POL5010M	5	1	International Relations: Theory and Practice	20	C	X
POL5009M	5	1	The European Union	20	O	X
IRL5001M	5	1	International Political Economy	20	O	X
IRL5002M	5	1	Contemporary Security Challenges	20	O	X
POL5001M	5	2	Political Analysis: Theory and Method	20	C	X
POL5012M	5	2	Practical Politics	20	C	X
IRL5003M	5	2	Area Studies	20	C	X
POL6011M	6	1&2	Dissertation (40 credits)	40	C	NC
POL6007M	6	1	Authoritarianism	20	O	X
POL6008M	6	1	Global Governance	20	O	X
POL6004M	6	2	Global Justice	20	O	X
POL6010M	6	2	The Middle East	20	O	X
IRL6001M	6	2	The Politics of Global Health	20	O	X
IRL6002M	6	1 or 2	Intervention, Peacekeeping and The Responsibility to Protect	20	O	X
IRL6003M	6	1 or 2	Immigration, Asylum and the Politics of Borders	20	O	X
IRL6004M	6	1 or 2	Gender, Security and Conflict	20	O	X
IRL6005M	6	1 or 2	Technology and Visual International Politics	20	O	X
IRL6006M	6	1 or 2	International Ethics and Global Citizenship	20	O	X

Please note that not all options may be available every year as they depend on student demand and staff availability.

Where no specific semester has been identified this will be determined each year before module choices are released. This may affect module availability in any given year.

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 aim of our teaching is to help you to think critically, to challenge you to consider new ideas and concepts, and to support you in understanding the complex connections between the individual, the state and society. International Relations is a live discipline: it is constantly evolving in light of real-world events unfolding around us and being driven by us; scholarly concepts and research also have direct impacts on the ideas and policies of governments. As such, we do not want you to be a passive learner, but instead expect you to be actively engaged and involved with your degree subject, working with scholars in the co-creation of knowledge.

Your first year with us is about supporting you in making the transition to university-level study. You will be assigned your own Academic Tutor, a member of staff who you will meet with regularly during your first year at YSJU. Modules such as *Introducing Politics: Key Concepts and Skills* 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.

In your final year, you will be ready to take on a bigger role in the management of your learning. There will be an increased emphasis on seminar learning and independence in your studies. You will write a dissertation on the subject of your choice, with the support of an academic supervisor. This can be seen as the intellectual culmination of your degree, as you become an independent researcher and are required to manage your own academic project. You will be putting into practice the skills you have gained and developed during your time at York St John University, giving you plenty of scope to demonstrate your knowledge, abilities and creativity.

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. In the classroom you may find yourself leading a class discussion, engaging in role play or doing a non-assessed presentation. To gain maximum benefit from class contact time, you will need to engage fully with academic literature, notably academic books, academic journal articles, original texts and official reports, where relevant.

The International Relations degree is committed to authentic, real-world assessment. As such, assessment is entirely through coursework, with no unseen exams. This is to ensure that the kinds of work you are doing through the degree reflect the kinds of work graduates undertake, in professional employment or further study. You will experience a wide range of assessment modes designed to help you develop new skills and prepare for graduate employment, which may include essays, portfolios, presentations, video presentations, posters, policy briefs, book/article reviews, and case study reports. Feedback is essential in identifying what you have done well and how you can improve. Not only will you receive detailed feedback on the summative (credit-bearing) assessments on each module, but you will also have the opportunity to check your understanding and develop assessment skills through formative feedback. Formative work moves the focus away from end-result grades towards your learning process and positive, qualitative feedback. This can take the form of written and oral work, concept checking and mapping exercises, submitted and class-based activities. Ultimately, this will positively impact on your academic performance.

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](#)
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Date written / revised:

Programme originally approved: