

Programme Specification

BA (Hons) International Relations and History

<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 and History Diploma of Higher Education International Relations and History Certificate of Higher Education International Relations and History
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	L230
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	N/A
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Politics and International Relations 2019 History 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 and History are fundamentally related disciplines that seek to understand the institutions, processes and events relating to states, international organisations and societies, past and present. Contemporary international politics and ideas cannot be fully understood without analysing their historical drivers; equally, historical events and processes can be examined with, and also inform, concepts and theories of international relations analysis. The BA (Hons) International Relations and History at York St John University will allow you to explore this relationship, whilst also pursuing subject-specific interests in each discipline.

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? How are health issues such as infectious and non-infectious diseases understood and managed and

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

national and international levels? These are just some of the questions you will have the opportunity to consider over the course of your studies.

History will focus on significant social and political developments predominantly over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries from across the world, allowing for the exploration of a range of national and international contexts and periods, and approaches to the study of history. These may include periods and features of American, European and Russian history, and historical processes such as revolution, conflict and the rise and fall of states in the international arena.

BA (Hons) International Relations and History is a focused programme, composed of carefully-selected modules that compliment and mutually reinforce learning across the subjects. The modular structure of the programme means that you have a choice of topics, issues and periods in International Relations and History, while providing opportunities for more specialist study and independent research as you move from Levels 4 to 6. 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 and History can be explored beyond the classroom:

- You will have the opportunity to take part in a range of 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 universities in Europe or 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 and History.
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 problem solving.

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 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of historical approaches to the past;
- 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 History and International Relations subject areas.

Level 5

- 5.1 Critically discuss issues and debates in International Relations and History from theoretical, empirical and methodological perspectives;
- 5.2 Apply knowledge and understanding of a range of historical and contemporary themes, regions and periods, within a global context;
- 5.3 Analyse the historiography of a topic in order to assess competing scholarly debates;
- 5.4 Effectively and critically analyse, synthesise and evaluate relevant academic literature and primary sources;
- 5.5 Construct a coherent, structured argument, drawing on a wide range of relevant literature and primary sources;
- 5.6 Effectively communicate information, ideas, arguments and interpretations in a manner appropriate to the task and audience;
- 5.7 Demonstrate the 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 and History;
- 6.2 Critically analyse and evaluate different interpretations of institutions, events, processes and behaviours in International Relations, informed by theoretical perspectives.
- 6.3 Demonstrate a critical understanding of the development of History as a discipline and the relevance of historiographical debate in a specialised context;
- 6.4 Analyse and construct complex arguments, drawing on an in-depth and sophisticated engagement with relevant academic literature and primary source material;
- 6.5 Employ transferable skills necessary for employment or further study, such as the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;
- 6.6 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 contexts, themes and approaches within the study of History and International Relations. These modules lay the foundations of knowledge, understanding and key academic skills that you will need to advance in your undergraduate studies. Semester 1 sets the broad context for international history, with modules examining key developments in world politics and conflict, and thematic approaches to understanding these. You are also introduced to historical method and key study skills for success at undergraduate level. You will explore how scholars examine primary sources, how they write and engage with secondary sources, and how they construct arguments, apply theories, think about and use concepts. Semester 2 shifts the focus more to critical issues in world politics, including international security, global inequality and development, and the rise of America as a nation and international power.

At Level 5 (2nd year of full-time study) you will take six 20-credit modules. There are four compulsory modules. 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. *History, Community and Culture* is a bespoke employability module that 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. In Semester 2 *Making History* develops your research skills in the use of historical documents as primary sources and to engage critically and reflectively with questions of method and interpretation. With its focus on independent research, the module not only prepares you for all Level Six modules but particularly the writing of your Dissertation. *Area Studies* will allow you to focus on the internal and international politics of a particular geographical region(s) based on research and teaching specialisms of academic staff. You will be able to choose from a range of option modules in International Relations and History 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.

You may have the opportunity to spend the first semester of level 5 studying abroad (in Europe or the US), for which you will negotiate your own programme with the Study Abroad Coordinator. Students who study abroad in semester 1 and therefore miss the work-related learning *History, Community and Culture* will incorporate work experience or an equivalent project into their learning in the semester 2 compulsory module, *Making History*.

At Level 6 (3rd year of full-time study) you will deepen your knowledge and critical understanding of particular issues in International Relations and History. You will engage in an extended piece of writing by undertaking a 40-credit Dissertation. This will be completed over the duration of your Level 6 studies, on a topic of your choice in either International Relations or History (developed in conjunction with a supervisor). Here you will apply your knowledge and experience of research design and methods developed at Levels 4 and 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. You will then select a further four 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 teams. These modules promote complexity and sophistication, with regard to knowledge, skills understanding, expected of a final year degree student in International Relations and History. There is increased emphasis on seminar-based learning and student independence.

You must take 60 credits of International Relations modules (module codes starting with IRL or POL) and 60 credits of History related modules (module codes starting with HIS or AMS) at each level.

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensatable (NC) or compensatable (X)
IRL4001M	4	1	Understanding World Politics	20	C	X
HIS4008M	4	1	Researching and Presenting the Past	20	C	X
HIS4010M	4	1	War and Society	20	C	X
IRL4003M	4	2	International Security	20	C	X
IRL4004M	4	2	Aid, Inequality and Development	20	C	X
AMS4007M	4	2	The United States: Empire of Liberty?	20	C	X
POL5010M	5	1	International Relations: Theory and Practice	20	C	X
HIS5001M	5	1	History, Community and Culture	20	C	X
IRL5001M	5	1	International Political Economy	20	O	X
IRL5002M	5	1	Contemporary Security Challenges	20	O	X
HIS5002M	5	2	Making History	20	C	X
IRL5003M	5	2	Area Studies	20	C	X
HIS5006M	5	1 or 2	Reds! The Rise and Fall of Soviet Communism	20	O	X
AMS5002M	5	1 or 2	Slavery to Freedom	20	O	X
HIS5013M	5	1 or 2	The Republic in Danger	20	O	X
AMS5003M	5	1 or 2	The Nation Divided: America in the Civil War era	20	O	X
HIS5010M	5	1 or 2	Mao's China: From Empire to Communism	20	O	X
HIS5009M	5	1 or 2	Great Society: America in the 1960s	20	O	X
HIS5012M	5	1 or 2	Historical Specialisms	20	O	X
¹You must choose to take one of the following modules: POL6011M or HIS6001M.						
POL6011M	6	1 & 2	Dissertation (40 credits)	40	O ¹	NC
HIS6001M	6	1 & 2	Dissertation (40 credits)	40	O ¹	NC
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
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
HIS6013M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in War Studies	20	O	X
HIS6007M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in European History, 1700-1900	20	O	X
HIS6009M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in the History of the Cold War	20	O	X
AMS6010M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in American History	20	O	X

HIS6010M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in the History of the Soviet Union	20	O	X
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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 and History are live disciplines: they are constantly evolving in light of real-world events unfolding around us and being driven by us, forcing us to reevaluate our understanding of past and present; 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.

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 *Researching and Presenting the Past* have been specially designed to help you adapt to the University environment and the requirements of the subject.

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, historical and contemporary primary source material, where relevant.

The International Relations and History degree is committed to authentic, real-world assessment. As such, the majority of your assessment is through coursework. 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, open and closed examinations, portfolios, presentations, video presentations, posters, policy briefs, book/article/source 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](#)

Date written / revised:

Programme originally approved: