

Programme Specification

BA (Hons) International Relations and War Studies

<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 War Studies Diploma of Higher Education International Relations and War Studies Certificate of Higher Education International Relations and War Studies
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	L240
<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

How do we understand power and relations between states on the international stage? What are the political institutions and influential ideas that maintain social order but also declare war? What is war, how do wars start, and how do they end? BA (Hons) International Relations and War Studies draws on a unique combination of disciplines including International Relations, History and American Studies to offer you an insight into the processes involved in the development of state relations and the shape, social consequences and resolution of armed conflict over time.

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.

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

War Studies explores the relentless consistency of war as a phenomenon. There is more to War Studies than just military history or peace studies. War Studies asks fundamental questions such as: What is war, how do wars start, and how do they end? What are the laws of war, what are the morals and ethics of war – if indeed there are any - and is there such a thing as a 'just' war? How has war changed over time and how can wars be prevented? As Trotsky said, 'War is the locomotive of history' and so War Studies is also concerned with the accelerated social transformations that war brings in its wake.

BA (Hons) International Relations and War Studies 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 War Studies, 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 and conflict, 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 War Studies 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 a university in Europe or North America.
- The School of Humanities benefits from a regular programme of visiting speakers, across a range of interdisciplinary issues, and access to a series of lectures given locally, such as the York Historical War Analysis Group.
- The programme also makes use of local expertise and resources from the heritage industry such as the Yorkshire Air Museum (see 'Elvington' above); the York Cold War Bunker; the Kohima Museum at Imphal Barracks, York; and the York Army Museum; the Yorkshire Film Archive; and war veterans living in the local area.

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)

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 War Studies

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 approaches to the study of war;
- 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 Show a basic proficiency in study skills relevant to the study of International Relations and warfare.

Level 5

- 5.1 Critically discuss international relations and warfare from theoretical, empirical and methodological perspectives;
- 5.2 Apply a range of concepts, theories and ideas to relevant contexts and events in analysis of International Relations and warfare;
- 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 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 issues and debates in International Relations and relating to the nature and significance of warfare as a human activity over time;
- 6.2 Critically analyse and evaluate different interpretations of institutions, events, processes and behaviours in International Relations, informed by theoretical perspectives.
- 6.3 Show a critical understanding of the development of war studies as a discipline and the relevance of scholarly 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 theme related to the phenomenon of warfare.

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 International Relations and warfare. 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 and conflict, with modules examining key developments in world politics and conflict, and thematic approaches to understanding these. Semester 2 shifts the focus more to critical issues in world politics, including international security, global inequality and development, and the role of the media in the reportage of war and its bearing on policy and conduct in war.

At Level 5 (2nd year of full-time study) you will take six 20-credit modules. There are three 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. In Semester 2, *Political Analysis: Theory and Method* develops your understanding of 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 option modules in International Relations and War Studies 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.

At Level 6 (3rd year of full-time study) you will deepen your knowledge and critical understanding of particular issues in International Relations and War Studies. 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 War Studies (developed in conjunction with a supervisor). 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. 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 War Studies. There is increased emphasis on seminar-based learning and student independence.

You must take at least 60 credits of International Relations modules (module codes starting with IRL or POL) and 40 credits of War Studies modules (module codes starting WAR or HIS) at each level, with an additional 20 credits from either subject area at Levels 5 and 6.

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
WAR4004M	4	1	Introduction to War Studies	20	C	X
IRL4002M	4	1	Finding a Role: The UK in the World	20	C	X
IRL4003M	4	2	International Security	20	C	X
WAR4005M	4	2	War and the Media	20	C	X
WAR4006M	4	2	Why Wars Begin	20	C	X
POL5010M	5	1	International Relations: Theory and Practice	20	C	X
IRL5002M	5	1	Contemporary Security Challenges	20	O	X
WAR5004M	5	1	War in the West, 1940-45	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	O	X
WAR5002M	5	1 or 2	The Face of Battle	20	O	X
WAR5001M	5	1 or 2	Peace Organisations	20	O	X
AMS5003M	5	1 or 2	The Nation Divided: America in the Civil War era	20	O	X
HIS5013M	5	1 or 2	The Republic in Danger	20	O	X
HIS5010M	5	1 or 2	Mao's China: From Empire to Communism	20	O	X
¹You must choose to take one of the following modules: POL6011M or HIS6001M.						
POL6011M	6	1 & 2	Dissertation	40	O ¹	NC
WAR6004M	6	1 & 2	War Studies Dissertation	40	O ¹	NC
POL6008M	6	1	Global Governance	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
IRL6006M	6	1 or 2	International Ethics and Global Citizenship	20	O	X
WAR6002M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in War Studies	20	O	X
WAR6001M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Military History	20	O	X
WAR6003M	6	1 or 2	The American Way of War	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 and War Studies 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 states. 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 *Introduction to War Studies* 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 War Studies 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](#)
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Date written / revised: 4.6.21

Programme originally approved: