

Programme Specification

BA (Hons) Politics, Philosophy and Ethics

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	Politics
<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>	Not applicable
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Certificate of Higher Education Politics, Philosophy and Ethics Diploma of Higher Education Politics, Philosophy and Ethics BA (Ord) Politics, Philosophy and Ethics
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	L2V5
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	Not applicable
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Politics and International Relations 2015 Philosophy 2015
<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

Politics, philosophy and ethics have always been closely related. Political and philosophical traditions play an important role in shaping the way that we approach questions such as: what does it mean to be human? What is our fundamental human nature, and how does this impact on/how is this impacted by our interaction with individuals, society, and the state? What is justice? Philosophers have played an influential role in the development of political and ethical thought throughout history, which in turn impacts on the practical laws and policies enacted and pursued by politicians and governments. Politics, Philosophy and Ethics will introduce you to some of the most important topics in these areas, and give you a full understanding of their interaction in historical and in contemporary contexts.

Drawing upon historical and contemporary thinkers, you will explore the trajectory of political thought, tackling questions such as: why should we obey the state? What is 'good government'? How do we understand freedom, equality, and what makes for a just society? In doing so, you will consider the social and historical context, impact and legacy of key thinkers and ideological movements. We also encourage you to explore topics that do not always appear in the textbooks; for example, how have philosophers understood a controversial idea like forgiveness, or a complex emotion like compassion? How might watching films be a way of exploring ethical problems? At York St John we see philosophy not just as an intriguing intellectual pursuit, but also as a way of engaging with the world around us, and the problems it presents us with. Within the award there are also unique opportunities to develop your understanding and

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

ideas through creative expression. We believe that learning is more than just understanding the ideas of others; we want you to be creative thinkers and makers beyond your life in university.

Overall, this programme will equip you to think in an attentive, empathetic, critical and rigorous manner; a characteristic which, as well as possessing its own intrinsic worth, will also prepare you well for working in a range of occupations. Through completing the programme you also develop and take away generic skills such as research competence; effective written and oral communication; self-motivation, time management; teamwork; effective use of IT.

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 politics 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.
- In the second year of the programme you will have the opportunity to undertake a project or work experience. This is designed to 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.
- 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 topics.

Admissions criteria

You must meet the University's general entry criteria for [undergraduate](#) study.

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 [Accredited Prior \(Experiential\) Learning \(APL/APEL\)](#). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

Programme aim(s)

1. To introduce you to a range of political and philosophical ideas, institutions and processes.
2. To introduce you to a range of approaches in the study of Politics and Philosophy.
3. To give you the opportunity to develop both breadth and depth of knowledge within the subject specialism of Politics and Philosophy.
4. To produce a learning environment that encourages open, rational and disciplined discourse and study, promoting qualities of respect, self-awareness, fairness and integrity.
5. To enable you to develop essential conceptual/cognitive skills including information gathering, analysis, application of concepts and theories, synthesis and evaluation.
6. To enable you to develop fundamental skills relevant to successful study and the contemporary workplace: written and oral communication, self-motivation, time management, teamwork and collaboration, and problem solving.
7. To provide progressive opportunities for you to develop as an independent and co-operative learner.
8. To provide a stimulating 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 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of differing perspectives on the nature and scope of Politics, Philosophy and Ethics.
- 4.2 Identify and explain key themes and debates in politics and philosophy.
- 4.3 Define key concepts in politics, and understand how they apply to political phenomena.
- 4.4 Identify and discuss key figures and their contributions to the development of political and philosophical ideas.
- 4.5 Find and evaluate relevant academic literature to inform understanding.
- 4.6 Construct convincing arguments and communicate information and ideas clearly.
- 4.7 Work both independently and collaboratively with fellow students.

Level 5

- 5.1 Critically discuss the relationship between individual, state and society, from philosophical, theoretical, empirical and methodological perspectives.
- 5.2 Analyse themes and debates in the study of Politics and Philosophy, utilising relevant key figures and texts.
- 5.3 Apply political, philosophical, and ethical concepts, theories and ideas to historical and contemporary political issues, debates, contexts and events.
- 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.
- 5.6 Effectively communicate information, ideas, arguments and interpretations in a manner appropriate to the task and audience.
- 5.7 Demonstrate transferable skills, including organisation, time-management, collaborative working and independent study.

Level 6

- 6.1 Demonstrate a systematic understanding of particular concepts, theories, issues and debates in Politics, Philosophy and Ethics.
- 6.2 Critical analyse selected figures and texts relevant to politics and philosophy.
- 6.3 Critically assess the interaction between political, philosophical and ethical enquiry and their social, political and global contexts.
- 6.4 A theoretically informed, critical understanding of historical and contemporary political institutions, events, processes and behaviours.
- 6.5 Analyse and construct complex arguments, drawing on an in-depth and sophisticated engagement with relevant academic literature and primary source material.
- 6.6 Demonstrate transferable skills that will prepare you for further study and be attractive to potential employers.
- 6.7 Design and undertake a piece of independent research that demonstrates an in-depth knowledge, understanding and analysis of a specific subject area.

Programme structure

At Level 4 (1st year of full-time study) you will take six 20-credit modules, introducing a range of fundamental themes and approaches within the study of politics and philosophy. All modules at this level incorporate key subject skills, as well as establishing foundations for optional paths which you can follow or construct at subsequent levels. For Politics, Philosophy and Ethics there are five compulsory modules. *Introducing Politics* explores different conceptions of what is understood by 'politics' and 'the political' and takes you through key academic skills. *Political Philosophy: Themes and Thinkers* takes a thematic look at key issues in political philosophy, locating the ideas of thinkers throughout the span of the history of political thought within these. Two modules will explore philosophy in general and ethics in particular, in relation to religion. *Politics and ...: An Interdisciplinary View* aims to broaden your analytical perspectives on social and political issues. This will involve teaching from staff across the School, utilising their wide-ranging expertise to enhance the learning experience. You will also have the option to choose from modules introducing you to UK or international politics.

At Level 5 (2nd year of full-time study) you will take six 20-credit modules. Two of these are compulsory skills and analysis-based modules. *Doing Politics: Theory and Method* exposes you to various schools of thought in the research of politics and the methodological implications of these, in particular exploring quantitative and qualitative methods and strategies. You will also choose one of two bespoke employability modules: *Local Politics: Government, Community and Policy* or *Work Related Learning (Religion, Philosophy and Ethics)*, which will allow you to undertake external work experience in a subject-relevant environment, or engage in project work focused on relevant subject matter. There are then a range of philosophically oriented modules that will advance the knowledge and understanding of concepts, ideas and debates introduced at Level 4, providing a more in-depth exploration of issues within these.

At Level 6 (3rd year of full-time study) you will deepen your knowledge and critical understanding of particular aspects of political, moral and ethical philosophy. You will engage in an extended piece of writing by undertaking a Dissertation. There are three Dissertation routes, with implications for your option modules. You can opt for a 40 credit Dissertation completed over the duration of your Level 6 studies, with a choice of four further 20-credit option modules. This is the most common route that undergraduate students take. There are two alternatives: there is the option of a 20-credit Short Dissertation in either Politics or Philosophy, and then five further 20-credit option modules; or undertaking two 20-credit Short Dissertations (one in Politics and one in Philosophy) and four further 20-credit option modules. For the latter option, short dissertations are not to be taken in the same semester. Level 6 modules provide an in-depth study of particular philosophical debates drawing on the cutting edge research of the teaching staff.

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					compulsory or optional to take C or O	non-compensatable or compensatable NC or X
You must take at least 40 credits of Politics modules (starting with the code POL or IRL) and 40 credits of Philosophy and Ethics related modules at each level , with an additional 40 credits from either subject area						
POL4001M	4	1	Introducing Politics: Key Concepts and Skills	20	C	X
POL4006M	4	1	Political Philosophy: Themes and Thinkers	20	C	X
REL4008M	4	1	Philosophy and Religion	20	C	X
POL4004M	4	2	Politics and an Interdisciplinary View	20	C	X
POL4002M	4	2	UK Politics: Tradition and Change	20	O	X
POL4003M	4	2	International or Global? Globalisation in Debate	20	O	X
REL4007M	4	2	Values and Virtues: Ethics and Religion	20	C	X
POL5002M	5	1	Political Ideologies	20	O	X
POL5003M	5	1	Using Political Philosophy	20	O	X
POL5007M	5	1	Democracies	20	O	X
REL5018M	5	1	Film, Ethics and Theology	20	O	X
REL5014M	5	1	From Descartes to Marx: Philosophers and Religion	20	C	X
POL5001M	5	2	Political Analysis: Theory and Method	20	C	X
REL5016M	5	2	Matters of Life and Death	20	C	X
<i>You must choose to take either module POL5006M or REL5020M</i>						
POL5012M	5	2	Practical Politics	20	O	X
REL5020M	5	2	Work Related Learning (Religion, Philosophy and Ethics)	20	O	X
<i>You must choose to take one of the following modules: POL6011M or REL6018M. Or you can choose to take one or both of the following modules: REL6017M and POL6012M.</i>						
POL6011M	6	1&2	Dissertation	40	O	NC
POL6012M	6	1 or 2	Short Dissertation	20	O	NC
REL6017M	6	1	Short Dissertation (Religion, Philosophy and Ethics)	20	O	NC
REL6018M	6	1&2	Dissertation (Religion, Philosophy and Ethics)	40	O	NC
POL6001M	6	1	The Social Contract: Justifying the State	20	O	X
POL6002M	6	1	Contemporary Political Philosophy	20	O	X
POL6007M	6	1	Authoritarianism	20	O	X
POL6008M	6	1	Global Governance	20	O	X
REL6010M	6	1	Feminist Ethics and Religion	20	O	X
REL6009M	6	1	Evolution, Theology and Ethics	20	O	X
POL6003M	6	2	The Morality of War	20	O	X
POL6004M	6	2	Global Justice	20	O	X
POL6010M	6	2	The Middle East	20	O	X
POL6013M	6	2	The Political Economy of Crises	20	O	X
IRL6001M	6	2	The Politics of Global Health	20	O	X
REL6008M	6	2	Forgiveness and Reconciliation	20	O	X
REL6022M	6	2	Religion in the Public Sphere	20	O	X

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

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. Politics, Philosophy and Ethics are live disciplines: they are constantly evolving in light of real-world events unfolding around us and being driven by us; new interpretations, analyses and debates shed light on contemporary issues; and philosophical developments can impact 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.

You will be introduced to a reflective approach to learning to help you develop your academic, personal and professional skills and you will be encouraged to reflect on your learning throughout your degree programme. You will learn to develop a reflective understanding of your work to equip with the necessary skills for your future personal development and the work-place environment. This will help you to cultivate skills such as perceptions and attitudes towards yourself and other people in relation to the subjects you are studying, identifying the need to learn new academic skills, working with other people, problem solving and communication.

We use a range of teaching styles and settings to help support you during your time at York St John. 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, 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 Politics, Philosophy and Ethics degree is committed to authentic, real-world assessment. As such, assessment is entirely through coursework, with no exams. 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, reflective writing, individual and group presentations, video presentations, posters, group reports, book/article reviews, and case study reports. This variety 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.

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 assessment. Formative assessment 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.

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 with whom you will meet 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 philosophical interests, and transition to becoming an effective independent learner.

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.

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 Statement](#) [see page two]
- [Strategic Plan 2015-20](#) [see page four]
- [QAA subject benchmark statement](#)
- [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#)

Date written / revised: 4.6.21

Programme originally approved: