

Programme Specification

BA (Hons) Politics and War Studies

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	Politics
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2022-23
<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 and War Studies Diploma of Higher Education Politics and War Studies BA (Ord) Politics and War Studies
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	L2L2
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	Not applicable
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Politics and International Relations 2015 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

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

Politics is a broad and varied subject matter, affecting our personal actions and relationships through to relations and conflicts between states. The link between these levels and scales of political behaviour is power. The Politics and War Studies degree at York St John will cover a wide range of themes and approaches to this concept. You will learn the skills of political analysis, exploring the complex and contested definitions of the political, and deepen this through interdisciplinary explorations. You will then build on this, learning about how we actually study and research politics. You will develop a fundamental understanding of the institutions and processes of modern states, both democratic and non-democratic. Going beyond national level analysis, you will explore politics from an international, and increasingly global, perspective, considering questions such as: How do states interact with each other, and how has this been theorised? What is the role of the state in the context of globalisation? How do states respond to conflict and collective dilemmas, such as threats to national security and climate change?

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.

The Politics and War Studies programme will appeal to the student interested in politics and history generally, military history and warfare, international relations and current affairs. Additionally, you will gain an insight into the processes involved in the development, shape, social consequences and resolution of armed conflict over time and as these elements affect contemporary events. Consequently, possession of a Politics and War Studies award, as conceived here, will be particularly valuable for you as a citizen, and you will find its associated competencies are readily transferable to many occupations and careers such as those in the armed forces, the intelligence services, the Diplomatic Service, the Civil Service, journalism, the media, commerce, banking, teaching, museum and heritage management, and many other occupations requiring analytical ability and a knowledge of international affairs and security-related issues. The critical, reflective and creative capacities fostered by the study of the subject will continue to be of value and relevance for you, both in further study and a range of employment you may undertake after you complete the War Studies programme. The value of War Studies as an academic discipline in this regard can be seen alike in your acquisition of certain essential skills (research, communication, the ability to analyse and interpret evidence) and in your development of a better understanding of the forces and factors that have shaped human societies and the contemporary world.

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 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
- 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, Religion and Philosophy 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 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.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 introduce you to a range of approaches to the study of politics and war.
2. To introduce you to a range of political ideas, institutions and processes across the spectrum of political behaviour and activity – local, national, regional and global – examining these in historical and contemporary context.
3. To provide opportunities for specialisation in the broad field of periods, subjects and approaches that Politics and War Studies have to offer, and for independent study and research.
4. To enable you to develop essential conceptual/cognitive skills including information gathering, analysis, application of concepts and theories, synthesis and evaluation.
5. 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.
6. To provide progressive opportunities for you to develop as an independent and co-operative learner.
7. 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 Identify and discuss of a range of disciplinary approaches to politics and war.
- 4.2 Define key concepts and ideas in politics, and understand how they apply to political phenomena, with an appreciation of key thinkers where applicable.
- 4.3 Identify political institutions and processes in domestic and international contexts.
- 4.4 Find and evaluate relevant academic literature to inform understanding, including primary and secondary sources, with tutor guidance.
- 4.5 Construct convincing arguments and communicate information and ideas clearly.
- 4.6 Work both independently and collaboratively with fellow students.

Level 5

- 5.1 Critically discuss the relationship between individual, state and society, from theoretical, empirical and methodological perspectives
- 5.2 Critically discuss particular themes relating to the nature and significance of warfare as a human activity over time
- 5.3 Apply concepts, theories and ideas to political phenomena, and the phenomenon of warfare
- 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, contexts and debates through the study of a range of specialised topics
- 6.2 Critically analyse and evaluate institutions, events, processes and behaviours in the fields of politics and warfare, informed by theoretical perspectives

- 6.3 Analyse and construct complex arguments, drawing on an in-depth and sophisticated engagement with academic literature and primary source material relevant to the study of Politics and War
- 6.4 Demonstrate transferable skills that will prepare you for further study and be attractive to potential employers
- 6.5 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 (first year of full-time study) you will take six 20-credit modules, presupposing no previous knowledge of Politics or War Studies. 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 And War Studies there are two compulsory skills and analysis-based modules: *Introducing Politics*, which explores different conceptions of what is understood by 'politics' and 'the political' and takes you through key academic skills; *Introduction to War Studies*, which focuses key concepts of the subject, the mechanics of study at undergraduate level and the different disciplines contributing to the programme at York St John. You will also take two further compulsory War Studies modules, *Why Wars Begin* and *War and Media*, and have the option to choose from modules introducing you to UK or international politics.

At Level 5 (second year of full-time study) you will take six 20-credit modules. Three of these are compulsory. *Political Analysis: 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. *The Face of Battle* looks at the experience and impact of war on both civilians and soldier by means of a series of case studies drawn from the practical 'laboratory' represented by York and its surrounding area. You will also take a bespoke employability module, *Local Politics: Government, Community and Policy*, which will allow you to undertake external work experience in a relevant subject-oriented environment, or engage in project work focused on relevant subject matter. You will then 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 issues within these, as well as the opportunity to begin to specialise in particular areas of interest.

There is also an option to follow a semester one academic exchange in Europe or the United States, where you take modules in the host institution approved by the Head of Programme; the module choice offers the opportunity for diversity, whilst still broadly mapping against the structure of the home programme, and generally enhancing your experience.

At Level 6 (third year of full-time study) you will deepen your knowledge and critical understanding of particular aspects of Politics and War Studies. You will engage in an extended piece of writing by undertaking a Dissertation. There are two 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. Alternatively, there is also the option of a 20-credit Short Dissertation in Politics, and then five 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 teams. These modules promote complexity and sophistication, with regard to knowledge, skills and inter-disciplinary understanding, expected of a final year degree student in Politics and American Studies. You can continue to specialise in particular political and interdisciplinary themes building on your studies at Level 5.

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 60 credits of Politics modules (containing the code POL or IRL) and 60 credits of War Studies related modules (containing the codes WAR, HIS or AMS) at each level.						
POL4001M	4	1	Introducing Politics: Key Concepts and Skills	20	C	X
WAR4004M	4	1	Introduction to War Studies	20	C	X
POL4005M	4	1	Comparative Politics	20	O	X
POL4006M	4	1	Political Philosophy: Themes and Thinkers	20	O	X
IRL4003M	4	2	International Security	20	C	X
WAR4006M	4	2	Why Wars Begin	20	C	X
WAR4005M	4	2	War and the Media	20	C	X
POL5002M	5	1	Political Ideologies	20	O	X
POL5007M	5	1	Democracies	20	O	X
POL5009M	5	1	The European Union	20	O	X
POL5010M	5	1	International Relations: Theory and Practice	20	O	X
WAR5004M	5	1	War in the West, 1940-45	20	O	X
POL5012M	5	2	Practical Politics	20	C	X
POL5001M	5	2	Political Analysis: Theory and Method	20	C	X
WAR5002M	5	1 or 2	The Face of Battle	20	C	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
You must choose to take one of the following modules: POL6011M, POL6012M, or WAR6004M						
POL6011M	6	1&2	Dissertation (<i>Politics</i>)	40	O	NC
POL6012M	6	1 or 2	Short Dissertation (<i>Politics</i>)	20	O	X
WAR6004M	6	1&2	War Studies Dissertation	40	O	NC
POL6007M	6	1	Authoritarianism	20	O	X
POL6008M	6	1	Global Governance	20	O	X
POL6003M	6	2	The Morality of War	20	O	X
POL6006M	6	2	Revolutions	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
WAR6007M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Modern International History	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
HIS6009M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in the History of the Cold War	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 particularly in the context of war. Politics and War Studies are live disciplines: they are constantly evolving in light of real-world events and conflicts unfolding around us and being driven by us; new interpretations and interdisciplinary analyses shed light on the past and current affairs; and political 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.

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, 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 programme exploits its multi-disciplinary origins by drawing its philosophy of learning, teaching and assessment from the best practice that is offered among its contributing disciplines.

The Politics and War Studies degree is committed to authentic, real-world assessment. As such, assessment is primarily through coursework. 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, examinations (this may apply to relevant modules drawn from the History programme), individual and group presentations, video presentations, posters, group reports, book/article reviews, and case study reports. 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.

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 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.

As an integral part of its teaching methodology, the Politics and War Studies programme employs a number of field trips, which exploit the rich vein of experiential opportunities offered by the City of York and its surrounding area. Some of these are integral elements of specific modules, such as those on the module

The Face of Battle, while some are free standing options, which you can use to add to the individualised personal portfolios of skills and experiences, which are such an important part of the contemporary higher education experience. These trips provide a first-hand practical dimension, beyond that available in class, to some of the elements introduced in the programme, which might otherwise remain obscure or abstract in your academic consciousness. The sites explored are highly evocative and are designed around specific objectives so that participants can easily make connections between the focus of the field trip and the concepts they are learning in their programme. Thus, a visit to the site of the Battle of Towton provides a practical illustration of the spatial characteristics of the medieval battlefield; a trip to the airfields at Pocklington and Elvington affords you a first-hand appreciation of the physical application of classical airpower theory during the Second World War; and a visit to the York Cold War Bunker invites you to 'think the unthinkable'. Experience suggests that such field trips also often serve as excellent stimuli for the development of dissertation ideas and even postgraduate projects following on from the present programme.

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: