

Programme Specification

BA (Hons) Politics and History

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	Politics
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2023-24
<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 History Diploma of Higher Education Politics and History BA (Ord) Politics and History
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	L200
<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

History and politics are fundamentally related disciplines that seek to understand the institutions, processes and events of states and societies, past and present. Contemporary states, 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 political analysis. The BA (Hons) Politics and History at York St John University will allow you to explore this relationship, whilst also pursuing subject-specific interests in each discipline.

Combining the study of history and politics allows you to gain an in-depth knowledge and understanding of events, institutions, policies, and their impact on people and society over time. History will focus on significant social and political developments primarily 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 British, American, European and Russian history. Within Politics you will develop a fundamental understanding of the institutions and processes of modern states, both democratic and non-democratic. This will include a focus on the domestic government and politics of the UK, also a comparative perspective, examining and theorising social and political institutions and processes. Going beyond national level analysis, you will have the opportunity to 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?

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

What is the role of the state in the context of globalisation? How do states respond to conflict and collective dilemmas? Fundamental to this will be understanding political institutions, processes and events in historical context.

Across the programme you will also gain knowledge and experience of the skills and techniques necessary for the study of politics and history. You will learn the skills of political and historical analysis, exploring the complex and contested definitions of the political, the different approaches to the study and research of the past and present, and deepen these through interdisciplinary explorations.

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, and then as you progress you will have the option to specialise in themes and subject areas that are of particular interest to you. Equally, you can maintain a broad perspective throughout your programme, capturing the full diversity that the subject and study of politics and history has to offer. By the end of your degree, you will be able to explain the historical drivers of social change, analyse the current political 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 politics 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.
- 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.

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 the past.
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 History 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 Demonstrate an understanding of a range of political, historical and interdisciplinary approaches to the past and present.
- 4.2 Identify key concepts and ideas in politics, and understand how they apply to political phenomena, with 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 relevant to the study of Politics and History, 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 Apply concepts, theories and ideas to historical and contemporary political contexts and events.
- 5.3 Critically discuss the history of particular themes, regions and periods, in a global context.
- 5.4 Discuss historiography and its application to historical debate.
- 5.5 Effectively and critically analyse, synthesise and evaluate relevant academic literature and primary sources.
- 5.6 Construct a coherent, structured argument, drawing on a wide range of literature relevant to the study of Politics and History.
- 5.7 Effectively communicate information, ideas, arguments and interpretations in a manner appropriate to the task and audience.
- 5.8 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 in Politics and History.
- 6.2 Critically analyse and evaluate historical and contemporary institutions, events, processes and behaviours.
- 6.3 Critically analyse and evaluate 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 academic literature and primary source material relevant to the study of Politics and History.
- 6.5 Demonstrate transferable skills that will prepare you for further study and be attractive to potential employers.
- 6.6 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, introducing a range of fundamental themes and approaches within the study of politics and history. 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. There are two compulsory skills-based modules: *Introducing Politics*, which

explores different conceptions of what is understood by 'politics' and 'the political' and takes you through key academic skills; *Researching and Presenting the Past* provides with practical grounding in historical skills and introduced to different varieties of history and the ways in which academic history interacts with the wider social and cultural community. You will also have the option to choose from a range of modules covering British and international politics and history in the modern period.

At Level 5 (second year of full-time study) you will take six 20-credit modules. Two 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. You will also choose one of two bespoke employability modules, *Local Politics: Government, Community and Policy*, or *History, Community and Culture*, which will allow you to undertake external work experience in a politically or historically 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 that can be continued in further depth at Level 6.

You may spend the first semester of level 5 on an international academic exchange (in Europe or the US), for which they will negotiate their own programme of study abroad with the Subject Director. You must complete the level in accordance with University requirements to proceed to Level 6.

At Level 6 (third year of full-time study) you will deepen your knowledge and critical understanding of particular aspects of politics and history. 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/Special Study, and then five further 20-credit option modules; or undertaking two 20-credit Short Dissertations (one in Politics and one in History) 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 concepts, institutions, processes, periods and controversies of a political nature, drawing on the cutting edge research of the teaching staff. The level 6 optional modules embody progression from level 5 in a number of respects, involving more complex and specialist political and historical controversies and contexts, and in particular requiring you to study these more fully through primary source material. You can continue to specialise in particular political and historical 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 related modules (containing the code POL or IRL) and 60 credits of History (containing the code HIS, WAR or AMS) related modules at each level						
POL4001M	4	1	Introducing Politics: Key Concepts and Skills	20	C	X
HIS4008M	4	1	Researching and Presenting the Past	20	C	X
HIS4009M	4	1	Global York: A Social and Cultural History of the City	20	O	X
HIS4010M	4	1	War and Society	20	O	X
IRL4004M	4	2	Aid, Inequality and Development	20	O	X
POL4002M	4	2	UK Politics: Tradition and Change	20	O	X
IRL4003M	4	2	International Security	20	O	X
HIS4014M	4	2	European Revolutions	20	O	X
AMS4007M	4	2	The United States: Empire of Liberty?	20	O	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
¹ You must choose to take either module POL5012M or HIS5001M						
POL5012M	5	2	Practical Politics	20	C ¹	X
HIS5001M	5	1	History, Community and Culture	20	C ¹	X
POL5001M	5	2	Political Analysis: Theory and Method	20	C	X
POL5005M	5	2	Political Parties and Politicians in the UK	20	O	X
POL5011M	5	2	Foreign Policy	20	O	X
HIS5002M	5	2	Making History	20	O	X
HIS5005M	5	1 or 2	Tudor Women: Agency and Authority	20	O	X
HIS5006M	5	1 or 2	Reds! The Rise and Fall of Soviet Communism	20	O	X
AMS5002M	5	1 or 2	From Slavery to Freedom	20	O	X
HIS5013M	5	1 or 2	The Republic in Danger	20	O	X
HIS5008M	5	1 or 2	A United Kingdom? Britain, 1707-1837	20	O	X
AMS5003M	5	1 or 2	The Nation Divided: America in the era of the Civil War	20	O	X
AMS5006M	5	1 or 2	The United States since 9/11	20	O	X
HIS5009M	5	1 or 2	The Great Society: America in the 1960s	20	O	X
HIS5010M	5	1 or 2	Mao's China: From Empire to Communism	20	O	X
HIS5012M	5	1 or 2	Historical Specialisms	20	O	X

You must choose to take one of the following modules: POL6011M or HIS6001M. Or you can choose to take POL6012M.						
POL6011M	6	1&2	Dissertation (<i>Politics</i>)	40	O	NC
HIS6001M	6	1 & 2	Dissertation in History	40	O	NC
POL6012M	6	1 or 2	Short Dissertation (<i>Politics</i>)	20	O	X
POL6007M	6	1	Authoritarianism	20	O	X
POL6008M	6	1	Global Governance	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
HIS6013M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in War Studies	20	O	X
WAR6007M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Modern International History	20	O	X
HIS6005M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Early Modern British History	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
HIS6012M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Modern British History	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, past and present. Politics and History are live disciplines: they are constantly evolving in light of contemporary events unfolding around us and being driven by us; new interpretations and analyses of the past shed light on the events of today; 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, archives and primary sources, and official reports, where relevant. For all modules, individual tutorial contact between tutor and student is an integral part of the timetabled learning experience and is a crucial vehicle for providing formative feedback on your work, addressing individual study needs and fostering your personal academic development.

At York St John we are committed to authentic, real-world assessment. As such, Politics modules will be assessed 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, individual and group presentations, video presentations, posters, group reports,

book/article reviews, and case study reports. The assessment for most History modules includes a combination of course work and timed assessment. The course work in most cases would include an essay component but other types of written assignment are also used, such as reviews, documentary exercises, site reports, photo-essays, and case studies). This varied approach to assessment 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* and *Researching and Presenting the Past* 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. You can choose to specialise in a certain aspects or periods of political and historical study, such as British, comparative/European or international politics and history.

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 and values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statements](#)
- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)

Date written / revised: 4.6.21

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