

Programme Specification

BA (Hons) Politics

<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 Diploma of Higher Education Politics BA (Ord) Politics
<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
<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 at York St John University is about more than the sound and fury of the daily headlines. It examines the point where power, principle and policy intersect, and gets to grips with the practical implications of some of the most pressing questions of our time. How should the state respond to the challenge of planetary climate change? Are new communications technologies making historical patterns of political participation redundant, or more urgent? What are the new horizons for social justice? And how might we imagine the good society in an era of globalisation?

The Politics degree at York St John will cover a wide range of themes and approaches. 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, and what is possible in terms of explaining political behaviour. 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.

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, but also includes a comparative perspective. Going beyond local and national level analysis, you will

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

explore politics from an international, and increasingly global, perspective. 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? What, indeed, is globalisation? How do states respond to conflict and collective dilemmas, such as inequality, threats to national security and climate change? What other organisations and institutions play a critical role in contemporary global governance?

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 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 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 there will be the opportunity to attend a range of conferences, seminars, workshops and events within the School.

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 [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 political ideas, institutions and processes across the spectrum of political behaviour and activity – local, national, regional and global.
2. To introduce you to a range of approaches in the study of politics.
3. To allow you to develop a specialism within the broad field of subjects that politics encompasses, such as domestic and comparative politics, international politics and political philosophy.
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 supportive 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.
- 4.2 Define key concepts in politics, and understand how they apply to political phenomena.
- 4.3 Identify political institutions and processes in domestic and international contexts.
- 4.4 Describe key figures and their contributions to the development of politics and political 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 theoretical, empirical and methodological perspectives.
- 5.2 Apply political concepts, theories and ideas to historical and contemporary political contexts and events.
- 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.
- 5.5 Effectively communicate information, ideas, arguments and interpretations in a manner appropriate to the task and audience.
- 5.6 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.
- 6.2 Critically analyse and evaluate historical and contemporary political institutions, events, processes and behaviours, informed by theoretical perspectives.
- 6.3 Analyse and construct complex arguments, drawing on an in-depth and sophisticated engagement with relevant academic literature and primary source material.
- 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 area of politics.

Programme structure

The Politics programme is structured around 5 key themes: Political Analysis; Political Philosophy; Domestic Politics; Comparative Politics; and International Politics. The Political Analysis theme guides you through the study and research of politics as a discipline. There is an initial focus at Level 4 on exploring the complex and contested definitions of the political, and deepening this through interdisciplinary explorations. At Level 5 you learn more specifically about the research process, examining different philosophical, theoretical and methodological perspectives and approaches with the discipline of Politics. This knowledge is then applied at Level 6 through the undertaking and production of a research-oriented Dissertation.

The Political Philosophy theme draws upon historical and contemporary thinkers and ideas, exploring the trajectory of political thought through 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.

The Domestic Politics theme focuses on exploring aspects of UK government and politics, such as the fundamental institutions of cabinet government, the wider state apparatus, parliament, and political parties, as well as key issues of identity, accountability and democratic representation. The Comparative Politics theme allows you to develop an understanding of the institutions and processes of modern states from around the world, both democratic and non-democratic. Key to this is employment of the comparative method, facilitating accumulation of empirical data and testing of concepts and theories in the understanding and explanation of political systems. Indeed, Comparative Politics has been noted to be as much a methodological approach as embodying particular content. This facilitates a potentially broad and diverse scope for learning and engaging with political phenomenon.

The International Politics theme explores politics from an international, and increasingly global, perspective. Taking globalisation as a starting point at Level 4, both as phenomenon and in a conceptual perspective, the theme introduces and explores theories and perspectives within International Relations at Level 5, and how these can be applied in different contexts through Levels 5 and 6.

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 themes and approaches within the study of Politics: political analysis, political thought, British politics, comparative politics and international politics. This will involve teaching from staff across the School, utilising their wide-ranging expertise to enhance the learning experience.

At Level 5 (2nd 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; and *Local Politics: Government, Community and Policy*, a bespoke employability module which will allow you to undertake external work experience in a politically oriented environment, or engage in project work focused on a political issue. You will 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 of issues within these, as well as the opportunity to begin to specialise in particular areas of interest.

At Level 6 (3rd year of full-time study) you will deepen your knowledge and critical understanding of particular aspects of Politics. 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 understanding, expected of a final year degree student in Politics. You can continue to specialise in particular political themes building on your studies at Level 5, or opt to broaden your focus.

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					compulsory or optional to take C or O	non-compensatable or compensatable NC or X
POL4001M	4	1	Introducing Politics: Key Concepts and Skills	20	C	X
POL4005M	4	1	Comparative Politics	20	C	X
POL4006M	4	1	Political Philosophy: Themes and Thinkers	20	C	X
POL4002M	4	2	UK Politics: Tradition and Change	20	C	X
IRL4003M	4	2	International Security	20	C	X
IRL4004M	4	2	Aid, Inequality and Development	20	C	X
Choose three 20 credit modules from the options below:						
POL5001M	5	2	Political Analysis: Theory and Method	20	C	X
POL5012M	5	2	Practical Politics	20	C	X
Choose three 20 credit modules from the options below:						
POL5002M	5	1	Political Ideologies	20	O	X
POL5003M	5	1	Using Political Philosophy	20	O	X
POL5004M	5	1	British Government and the State	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
Choose one 20 credit module from the options below:						
POL5005M	5	2	Political Parties and Politicians in the UK	20	O	X
POL5008M	5	2	Participation and Engagement: Elections and Beyond	20	O	X
POL5011M	5	2	Foreign Policy	20	O	X
You must choose to take either module POL6011M or POL6012M						
POL6011M	6	1&2	Dissertation	40	O	NC
POL6012M	6	1 or 2	Short Dissertation	20	O	X
Choose two 20 credit modules from the options below:						
POL6001M	6	1	The Social Contract: Justifying the State	20	O	X
POL6002M	6	1	Contemporary Political Philosophy	20	O	X
POL6005M	6	1	Hived Out, Hived In: Delegation in the Modern British State	20	O	X
POL6007M	6	1	Authoritarianism	20	O	X
POL6008M	6	1	Global Governance	20	O	X
If you chose the 40 credit dissertation, choose an additional two 20 credit modules from the options below. If you chose the 20 credit short dissertation in semester 1, choose three 20 credit modules from the options below:						
POL6003M	6	2	The Morality of War	20	O	X
POL6004M	6	2	Global Justice	20	O	X
POL6006M	6	2	Revolutions	20	O	X
POL6009M	6	2	Politics of the Environment	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

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 is a live discipline: it is constantly evolving in light of real-world events unfolding around us and being driven by us; 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 Politics degree is committed to authentic, real-world assessment. As such, assessment is entirely through coursework, with no exams. 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, portfolios, individual and group presentations, video presentations, posters, group reports, book/article 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 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. You can choose to specialise in a certain aspect of political study, such as political thought, British, comparative or international politics.

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: