

Programme Specification

Award and title: BA (Hons) Politics

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	Politics and International Relations
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2026-27
<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>	
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	BA (Hons) History and Politics
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Politics and International Relations 2023
<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>Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:</i>	Yes
<i>Excluding a year-long placement/professional experience, are there placement/field trip/work experience(s) totalling 20 days or more?</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: what is the condition and trajectory of contemporary democracy? How are political parties adapting and evolving to domestic and international challenges? How do we understand the continuing position and role of non-democratic and quasi-democratic regimes in domestic, regional and global politics? What security threats do states, and their citizens, face? What values and principles are driving government and society, and how do these conflict within and across borders?

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. You will then build

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

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 explore politics from an international, and increasingly global, perspective. How do states interact with each other, and how has this been theorised? How do states respond to conflict and collective dilemmas, such as inequality, threats to national security and global pandemics? 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, 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 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.
- There will be a wider programme of work-related and experiential learning embedded throughout your studies, to help prepare you for the graduate workplace.
- There is an option to study abroad usually for one semester in Level 5 at a university in North America.
- The School of Humanities benefits from a regular programme of visiting speakers, across a range of issues, and there will be the opportunity to attend a range of conferences, seminars and events within the School.

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.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)

1. To develop you as a critical thinker, able to make considerate and ethical decisions based on your knowledge and understanding of a range of political ideas, institutions and processes.
2. To develop you as a resilient, independent learner, able to identify opportunities and resources for growth in your own learning.
3. To develop the professional skills and awareness to succeed in the graduate environment.

Programme learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the programme students will be able to:

Level 4

- 4.1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of key concepts in politics and how they apply to political phenomena.
- 4.2 Identify and analyse political institutions, actors and processes in domestic and international contexts.
- 4.3 Explain the contributions of key figures to the development of politics and political ideas.
- 4.4 Find and evaluate relevant academic literature to inform understanding.
- 4.5 Accurately cite and reference academic sources.
- 4.6 Construct convincing arguments and communicate information and ideas clearly.

Level 5

- 5.1 Critically discuss political phenomena from theoretical, empirical and methodological perspectives.
- 5.2 Apply political concepts, theories and ideas to historical and contemporary political contexts and events.
- 5.3 Critically analyse, synthesise and evaluate relevant academic literature and primary sources.
- 5.4 Construct a coherent, structured argument, drawing on a wide range of accurately cited and referenced 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 and independent working.

Level 6

- 6.1 Demonstrate a systematic understanding of 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

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensatable (NC) or compensatable (X)
POL4007M	4	1	Foundations of Politics and International Relations	20	C	X
POL4008M	4	1	Understanding World Politics	20	C	X
POL4009M	4	1	Political Philosophy: Themes and Thinkers	20	C	X
POL4010M	4	2	British Politics: Continuity and Change	20	C	X
POL4011M	4	2	International Security	20	C	X
POL4012M	4	2	Sustainable Development and the Global South	20	C	X
POL5018M	5	2	Political Analysis: Theory and Method	20	C	X
POL5019M	5	2	Practical Politics	20	C	X
Choose 60 credits for Semester 1 and 20 credits for Semester 2 from the options below:						
POL5013M	5	1 or 2	Political Ideologies	20	O	X
POL5014M	5	1	International Relations: Theory and Practice	20	O	X
POL5015M	5	1 or 2	Democracies	20	O	X
POL5016M	5	1 or 2	The European Union in Crisis	20	O	X
POL5017M	5	1 or 2	Elections and Voters in British Politics	20	O	X
POL5020M	5	1 or 2	The Conservative Party	20	O	X
POL6014M	6	1 & 2	Dissertation	40	C	NC
Choose 40 credits for semester 1 and 40 credits for semester 2 from the options below:						
POL6015M	6	1 or 2	Authoritarianism	20	O	X
POL6016M	6	1 or 2	Global Governance in a Changing World Order	20	O	X
POL6017M	6	1 or 2	The Labour Party	20	O	X
POL6018M	6	1 or 2	Governance and Power in the British State	20	O	X
POL6019M	6	1 or 2	Global Justice	20	O	X
POL6020M	6	1 or 2	Politics and Religion of the Middle East	20	O	X
POL6021M	6	1 or 2	Britain in Crisis	20	O	X
POL6022M	6	1 or 2	The Politics of Global Health	20	O	X
POL6023M	6	1 or 2	Theorising Culture War: Media, Hegemony, Ideology	20	O	X

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

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. 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.

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. You will 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 Cabinet Office role plays, United Nations Security Council simulations or mock industrial action negotiations. 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.

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, policy briefs, portfolios, 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 *Foundations of Politics and International Relations* 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.

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:

Programme originally approved: