

Programme Specification

Award and Title: MA English Literature

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	English Literature
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2025-26
<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>	Postgraduate Certificate English Literature Postgraduate Diploma English Literature
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	Not applicable
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	Not applicable
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Not applicable
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	Postgraduate periods of study ¹ for full time / part time
<i>Language of study:</i>	English
<i>Paired with Foundation Year</i>	No
<i>Study abroad opportunities:</i>	No
<i>Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:</i>	No
<i>Excluding a year-long placement/professional experience, are there placement/field trip/work experience(s) totalling 20 days or more?</i>	No

Introduction and special features

Our MA in English Literature offers a critically informed, transhistorical exploration of English Literature which draws directly on the academic expertise of the English Literature team here at York St John University. This MA will allow you to build on your skills and interests from your undergraduate studies with the support of a dynamic, engaged, and internationally recognised academics. This degree will enable you to develop your existing expertise as a sophisticated reader and critic of a range of literary materials, whilst also supporting you in the development of a growing portfolio of professional skills which will aid you in the wider postgraduate job market. As a postgraduate student, you will engage in a highly stimulating learning environment with a focus on small group discussion and one-to-one tutorials with staff. Our approach is student-centred and the whole programme is designed to support and inspire you on your postgraduate journey.

This programme is particularly focused on: establishing an up-to-date understanding of the state of English Literature as a discipline; exploring questions of intertextuality, adaptation, appropriation, tradition, innovation and the function of literary inheritance; mapping, critiquing and understanding the relationships between texts in terms of narrative, genre, mode and form; interrogating competing and complimentary models of reading and literary engagement (for example, "reading" in the academy vs "reading" in the marketplace); understanding literature's relationship to space and place in an increasing globalized context; examining the processes through which literary value is determined and disputed.

We explore all these ideas across a suite of modules which have been designed to capitalise on the research expertise of the Literature team, but which have also been designed in consultation with industry experts: 'Literary Studies Now', 'Influence and Intertexts', 'World, Globe, Literature', 'Readers, Markets and Literary Value' and the Dissertation module.

You will be joining a subject area with an established record of high levels of student satisfaction and a reputation for being student-focused. We also provide a supportive learning environment which meets the needs of a diverse set of learners, where you will be invited to contribute to a vibrant postgraduate community. As a student on our MA programme, you will also be joining a vibrant and ever-growing research culture, with the MA sitting at the heart of several active and welcoming Research Groups including: The Hauntology and Spectrality Research Group, the Interdisciplinary Witches Research Group, the Music, Memory and Memoir Research Group, the York Research Unit for the Study of Satire and the York Centre for Writing. YSJU is also closely associated with the York Literature Festival which, in addition to frequently collaborating with academics from the English Literature team, attracts a vast array of authors and literary figures to the city. At other times in the year, York is also home to the York International Shakespeare Festival, the Festival of Ideas and the York Georgian Festival, all of which frequently welcome contributions from YSJU English Literature staff and students.

Special Features

The English Literature MA at YSJU is distinguished by:

- Its emphasis on drawing and understanding transhistorical connections and relationships between literary texts
- Its blending of text-led and criticism-led approaches to foreground disciplinary questions about what it means to participate in the critical field of literary studies
- Its positioning at the heart of a wide array of Research Centres populated by academics and PhD students from within and beyond YSJU
- A wide range of assessment techniques, developed by literary experts and industry specialists, with reflective components designed to foreground the applicability of the skills you will be rehearsing to specific professional contexts
- Access to local archives and repositories containing rare primary sources from the eighteenth century and earlier, such as York Minster Library and Archive and the Bar Convent Archive.
- Access to a wide range of visiting speakers and events, hosted by YSJU or local literary events such as the York Literature Festival, The York Festival of Ideas and the York Georgian Festival.
- A flexible part-time route that allows for returning learners as well as those wishing to take an MA as a route to further postgraduate study

Admissions criteria

You must meet the minimum entry requirements which are published on the programme specific webpage. In addition, you must have:

- A lower second-class honours degree (or equivalent). This would normally be in English Literature but might also be in a cognate subject (for example, Creative Writing, Film Studies or History).

If you have any questions about your eligibility for the MA programme, it is advised that you contact the MA Coordinator or Associate Head with responsibility for English Literature for an informal discussion.

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.

Applications will be reviewed by the Literature Team.

Programme aim(s)

1. To develop an up-to-date understanding of the state of English Literature as a discipline
2. To explore questions of intertextuality, adaptation, appropriation, tradition, innovation and the function of literary inheritance
3. To map, critique and understand the relationships between texts in terms of narrative, genre, mode and form
4. To interrogate competing and complimentary models of reading and literary engagement (for example, "reading" in the academy vs "reading" in the marketplace)
5. To understand literature's relationship to space and place in an increasingly globalized context
6. To examine the processes through which literary value is determined and disputed

Programme learning outcomes

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

Level 7

- 7.1 Evaluate current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline of Literary Studies
- 7.2 Demonstrate advanced knowledge of literary histories and their role in the discipline.
- 7.3 Find and interpret a range of theoretical frameworks and critical analyses and where appropriate, propose new syntheses.
- 7.4 Engage in detailed and sustained technical analysis of a range of literary texts.
- 7.5 Communicate complex ideas and critical arguments clearly to specialist, scholarly and non-specialist audiences
- 7.6 Independently plan and produce critical work at a professional or equivalent level.
- 7.7 Independently design and carry out an extended piece of research that demonstrates an advanced knowledge of a specific area of literary studies.

Programme structure

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensable (NC) or compensable (X)
LIT7010M	7	1	Literary Studies Now	30	C	X
LIT7011M	7	1	Influence and Intertext	30	C	X
LIT7012M	7	2	World, Globe, Literature	30	C	X
LIT7013M	7	2	Readers, Markets and Literary Value	30	C	X
LIT7014M	7	3	Dissertation	60	C	NC

Learning, teaching and assessment

The aim of all our teaching is to help you to continue to become a better writer and literary critic, to challenge you to consider new ideas and concepts, and to support you in understanding the complex connections between literature and contemporary society. Literature is a dialogic discipline and informed discussions and debates are a crucial part of the learning process. Throughout the entire process of designing and developing this MA, we have consulted with industry insiders who have offered feedback on the applicability of the skills and knowledge we will be delivering as part of the MA. This helps us to ensure that we understand and can in turn help you to understand and later articulate how everything you learn during this MA will be of use to you during your life after study. For this, we have sought guidance from people working in the following Industries: Publishing, Journalism, Marketing, Advertising, Teaching, Libraries and Archives, Heritage Tourism and Events. This process of consultation informs everything on the MA, from our curriculum design to our assessment structure.

The English Literature MA demands wide, critical reading and intelligent synthesis of ideas and information. You will be analysing and engaging with complex ideas in written form. Formative support and feedback will be provided throughout the programme's delivery, which will produce a dialogue between you and your tutors, in order to help shape the development of your ideas.

You will study two modules in each of the first two semesters. The third semester will be dedicated to researching and writing your dissertation. Your first semester with us is about supporting you in making the transition to postgraduate-level study. You will be assigned your own Academic Tutor – this is usually the MA Coordinator – who will help you to adjust to postgraduate life.

Modules will be team-taught and, on each module, you will study clusters of texts, foregrounding the programme's central questions about the different types of connections between various literary texts, the relationship between texts and criticism and the production of perceptions relating to literary value.

The first of these modules is 'Literary Studies Now', which is an introductory module that will equip you with the skills and knowledge you need to engage in literary study at postgraduate level in the context of current disciplinary debates. The module is particularly interested in the history of literary criticism and its place at the heart of literary studies as an endeavour more broadly.

'Influence and Intertext' is a module which places works of literature in a longer view, exploring and foregrounding questions of intertextuality, adaptation, appropriation, tradition, innovation and the function of literary inheritance. The module will consider the relationships between clusters of texts from three perspectives: narrative, genre and form.

On the module 'World, Globe, Literature', you'll consider literature produced by a diverse array of cultures from around the world, foregrounding questions of translation, colonialism and the implications of an increasingly networked world on literary production, consumption and reception. It also considers the status of the 'global', as a concept, across a range of historical literary contexts.

'Readers, Markets and Literary Value' allows you to explore the ways in which 'literary value' has been constructed and conferred upon a range of texts throughout the history of English Literature; foregrounding, historicising and complicating assumptions about 'highbrow' vs 'low brow', 'elite' vs 'popular', 'artistic' vs 'commercial.' It will, in particular, examine the relationship between artistic endeavours and commercial imperatives, and interrogate what it is that we mean when we refer to 'the literary text.'

Finally, on the dissertation module, you will write a 12000-word dissertation on the literary topic of your choice, and, for this, you will have free rein to work on texts from any literary period. You will be assigned a supervisor from our team, whose research expertise span a wide range of specialisms.

Across the MA you will also encounter a diverse range of assessment types, for which you will be fully supported. Again, these have been designed in consultation with external collaborators with a wide range of industry perspectives. These include, but are not limited to: Annotated bibliography, Presentation, Essay, Abstract, Critical Reflection, Curation, End-User Briefing Document and Roundtable discussion. Each module is designed to include formative opportunities – this might be more formal submissions, for example research proposals or written sections or through more informal processes such as group discussions, critical analysis/close reading activities in seminars.

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's [regulations](#) for taught postgraduate awards apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section as non-compensable.

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University Mission, Culture and Values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statements](#)

- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)

Date written / revised: March 2025

Programme originally approved: 21 May 2025