

Programme Specification

Award and title: BA History and American Studies

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	History
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2020-21
<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>	N/A
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Certificate of Higher Education History and American Studies Diploma of Higher Education History and American Studies BA (Ord) History and American Studies
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	VT17
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	History (2014) Area Studies
<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

Introduction and special features

Joint Honours programmes give students the opportunity to combine two subjects from a range of areas in a structured way. The selected pairings are designed to complement one another and allow you to have a significant amount of choice and flexibility in relation to your learning experience. In addition, Joint Honours will engage you in a range of learning and teaching experiences and assessment opportunities.

History

The History programme is structured to enable you to study different types and periods of history while providing opportunities for more specialist independent study and research as you move from Levels 4 to 6.

- It begins in the first year with a range of modules which explore the skills and techniques necessary for the study of history at degree level. These modules will also familiarise you with different approaches to the study of the past and provide an introduction to the main historical periods and approaches which will feature in later stages of the degree programme.
- In the second year, modules concentrate on key periods or themes in British, European, American and world history, allowing you to develop your own interests and specialise if you wish in the history of particular periods or geographical regions. You will be given thorough guidance throughout your time here by your Academic Tutors in making your module choices.

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

- In the final year you will research a dissertation on a topic of your choice alongside a chosen selection of modules which offer in-depth study of a particular period or historical debate.

The modularised structure of the programme means that at all stages you have a choice of topics and periods of study, with freedom to construct a programme which combines a secure breadth of historical knowledge with your own interests and preferences.

The History programme at York St John University is distinguished for the following reasons:

- We offer a wide range of modules and specialisms which allows you to focus on the kinds of history which appeals to you.
- In the second year of the programme you will have the opportunity to undertake a project or placement 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. This will be in the module, *History, Community and Culture* (although if you do the study abroad programme in semester 1, you will have an equivalent experience as part of the *Making History* module).
- We have a team of dedicated staff, who have an exceptional record of providing support to students (reflected in consecutive high scores in the support categories of the NSS).
- There is an optional exchange, which involves students studying for one semester (usually in the first half of the second year) at a university elsewhere in Europe or North America.
- At all levels of the programme key skills are fully integrated into academic study and students are encouraged to reflect self-critically on their performance and to prepare themselves for their future careers or postgraduate study.
- You will be taught by academic staff who are active researchers. Our research informs our teaching. In your final year, you will work with members of staff on their specific research specialisms at the same time that they are developing exciting new directions in their particular field.
- Field trips are an enhanced feature of the programme with students invited to attend trips, for example to museums, monasteries or castles as well as explore the history on their doorstep in York. Some field trips may involve a cost to students.
- You will belong to a community of dedicated historians, with the opportunity for celebratory moments, and work closely with a personal academic tutor.

American Studies

American Studies reflects a whole range of critical approaches to explore the history and culture of the United States as well as an understanding of the American experience itself. It will, it is hoped, offer you an exciting programme which will encourage you to also reflect critically upon the predominance of the US over the last century or so in political, cultural, historical and literary terms and contexts, as well as on American Studies as a truly inter-disciplinary subject area. The taught modules have been carefully constructed to take you on a series of journeys, in order to offer multi-perspective interpretations of the United States. It is hoped that you will engage in an inter-connected sequence of debates which will lead you to a greater understanding of the complexity of the United States as a dynamic cultural construct as well as a geographical and political entity. It will also be appealing to those students who prefer greater diversity to the more narrow focus of a Single Honours degree. Captured under the QAA Subject Benchmarking for Area Studies, this approach enables you to 'acquire a unique depth and breadth of insight into the social, cultural and political dynamic of a particular region'.

Essential to American Studies (AS) is the approach of inter-disciplinarity: the study of the United States with the integration of related disciplines (History, Literature and Film Studies), and in particular the sharing of themes and methodologies of those other disciplines (particularly the approaches of cultural studies), which, when integrated, results in a broad-based and flexible programme. Although there are currently valuable pairings with History and Film Studies, many of the stand-alone modules contained within American Studies themselves reflect an inherent inter-disciplinarity. So, not only will American Studies be

attractive to those students who may have an interest in America, yet who do not wish to make a total commitment, it will also appeal to students primarily interested in a paired subject, for whom linkages with American Studies offers diversity in an interesting and challenging way. American Studies offers therefore a flexible as well as an integrated programme.

Certain broad themes will be addressed throughout each level, which can be summarised as follows: the exploration of the United States as an evolving cosmopolitan, democratic culture, shaped by immigration, ethnic diversity and racial tension; the emergence and evolution of the USA's global hegemony, and its impact upon the international community, especially Britain; and the nature and significance of contemporary US popular culture, especially film and TV, in a domestic and globalised context. Each of these themes will be developed with greater complexity as you progress through the programme.

American Studies also supports a broad constituency of learners and offers a curriculum that is attractive to home and international audiences. The inclusion of an exciting optional, one semester exchange with the USA (as well as the nature of the subject itself) embraces the internationalisation ambitions of the University.

Special features

- At all levels of the programme key skills are fully integrated into academic study and you are encouraged to reflect self-critically on your performance and to prepare yourselves for your future careers.
- Students will work with a range of staff throughout their time on the programme; they will support students and bring their own research to the programme.
- The School benefits from a regular programme of visiting speakers.
- A special feature of the programme is the optional international exchange, which involves students studying for one semester (in the first semester of the second year) at a university in the US.

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.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 [Accredited Prior \(Experiential\) Learning \(APL/APEL\)](#). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

Programme structure

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					compulsory or optional to take C or O	non-compensatable or compensatable NC or X
HIS4008M	4	1	Researching and Presenting the Past	20	C	X
AMS4004M	4	1	Introduction to American Studies	20	C	X
AMS4002M	4	2	Cinema and Society	20	C	X
AMS4005M	4	2	America: Empire of Liberty?	20	C	X
You must take either HIS4009M or HIS4010M						
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
Choose from the 20 credit modules from the following options below ensuring you have a minimum of 40 credits and a maximum of 80 credits in each subject overall						
HIS4011M*	4	2	The Visible Past	20	O	X
HIS4012M	4	2	People and Nature: An Environmental History	20	O	X
HIS4013M	4	2	Empires	20	O	X
HIS4014M	4	2	European Revolutions	20	O	X
HIS5001M	5	1	History, Community and Culture	20	C	x
HIS5002M	5	2	Making History	20	C/O ²	x
Choose 40 credits in semester 1 and 40 credits in semester 2, ensuring you have a minimum of 40 credits and a maximum of 80 credits in each subject overall.						
LIT5008M	5	1 or 2	Mapping America	20	O	x
AMS5003M	5	1 or 2	Nation Divided: The United States in the era of the Civil War	20	O	x
AMS5002M	5	1 or 2	Slavery to Freedom	20	O	x
LIT5011M	5	1 or 2	Harlem to Hip Hop: African American Literature and Culture	20	O	x
HIS5003M	5	1 or 2	Pageantry, Power and Patriotism: Late Medieval England, 1300-1450	20	O	x
HIS5004M	5	1 or 2	Watchers and the Watched: Society in Early Modern England, c. 1540-1670	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
HIS5007M	5	1 or 2	Victorian Grubs: Food, Science and Society	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
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
HIS5011M	5	1 or 2	The Roman Empire: Tiberius to Domitian (14-96)	20	O	x
HIS5012M	5	1 or 2	Historical Specialisms	20	O	x
You must choose either AMS6012M or HIS6001M						

² This module will be compulsory should you do Study Abroad in semester 1 as there can be a work-related learning element to the module in such circumstances.

AMS6012M	6	1 & 2	Dissertation in American Studies	40	O	NC
HIS6001M	6	1 & 2	Dissertation in History	40	O	NC
You must select FOUR option modules ensuring you have a minimum of 40 credits and a maximum of 80 credits in each subject overall.						
AMS6011M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in American Culture	20	O	x
AMS6010M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in American History	20	O	x
LIT6004M	6	2	Gender and Sexualities	20	O	x
LIT6011M	6	1 or 2	American Radicals: Outside the Canon	20	O	x
WAR6003M	6	1 or 2	The American Way of War	20	O	x
HIS6002M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Modern International History	20	O	x
HIS6003M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Ancient History	20	O	x
HIS6004M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Late Medieval England	20	O	x
WAR6002M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in War Studies	20	O	x
HIS6005M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Early Modern British History	20	O	x
HIS6006M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in European Early Modern Social and Cultural History	20	O	x
HIS6007M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in European History, 1700-1900	20	O	x
HIS6008M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in Social and Cultural History, 1750-1900	20	O	x
HIS6009M	6	1 or 2	Special Subject in the History of the Cold War	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

* HIS4011M was not available in 2020-21

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).

History

Programme aim(s)

The specific aims of the History programme are:

- To foster a lasting interest in, and enjoyment of, the study of History.
- To introduce you to a range of approaches to the study of the past, offering opportunities to explore different periods and types of history, as well as for specialisation and independent study and research.
- To encourage you to explore the implications and applications of their academic study in the wider society to which they belong.
- To enable you to compete successfully in a diverse employment market, by being able to demonstrate an ability to solve complex problems through independent critical thinking, utilising a range of information, and presenting solutions in oral and written form.

Programme learning outcomes

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

Level 4

On successful completion of Level 4, you will be able to:

- 4.1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of historical approaches to the past.
- 4.2 Interpret a range of sources, secondary and primary, with guidance from your tutor, to form a scholarly argument.
- 4.3 Identify the value and limitations of competing sources of historical information.
- 4.4 Demonstrate a basic proficiency in study skills relevant to the History Subject area.

Level 5

On successful completion of Level 5, you will be able to:

- 5.1 Apply knowledge and understanding of a range of historical themes, regions and periods, within a global context.
- 5.2 Compose a coherent and critically structured argument, using an expanded range of primary and secondary material.
- 5.3 Analyse the historiography of a topic in order to assess competing scholarly debates.
- 5.4 Employ skills in communication, research and independent study.
- 5.5 Apply subject expertise in a practical context related to the community and the world of work.

Level 6

On successful completion of Level 6, you will be able to:

- 6.1 Show a systematic understanding of specific historical issues, theories and contexts through a range of special subjects.
- 6.2 Evaluate a critical understanding of the development of history as a discipline and the relevance of historiographical debate in a specialised context.
- 6.3 Exemplify confidence and sophistication in the handling of specialist secondary sources and a range of primary source material.
- 6.4 Construct and critically analyse complex arguments.
- 6.5 Design and undertake a piece of extended independent research that demonstrates an in-depth knowledge, understanding and analysis of a specifically historical topic or theme.
- 6.6 Make use of necessary skills for employment or future study, such as taking the initiative and asserting personal responsibility.

Learning, teaching and assessment

Each module has a programme of structured learning which will include, in various combinations, formal structured class contact (e.g. lectures, seminars, workshops), independent study (reading, research, preparation of assignments) and, in some modules, field trips and work-related activity. You are encouraged to use the widest possible range of resources for your studies, including books, journals, visual material, archives, e-learning sources, and the resources of the local community and region such as museums, galleries and historic buildings. For all modules, individual tutorial contact between you and your tutor(s) is an integral part of the learning experience and is a crucial vehicle for providing formative feedback on student work, addressing individual study needs and fostering students' personal academic development.

The aim of the programme is to develop the progressive skills of students as autonomous independent thinkers and learners, but within a collaborative learning environment. Modules have a variety of assessment types, such as: essays, primary source exercises, reviews, site reports, open and closed examination, and reflective pieces. You are assessed through different aspects of writing skills in line with the History benchmarking recommendations. *History, Community and Culture* is structured around a work-related or practically based learning experience and is assessed by means of a learning journal and a work-related report. The dissertation at level 6 meets the requirement for an extended piece of written work based on research and primary source material and is assessed on the basis of 10,000 words for 40 credits.

American Studies

Programme aim(s)

- To achieve a growing sophisticated knowledge of the history, society and culture of the USA.
- To understand the significance of the US within a global context.
- To develop interdisciplinary study skills and approaches in relation to the study of the USA.
- To demonstrate transferable employment-relevant or research key skills

Programme learning outcomes

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

Level 4

- 4.1 An understanding and content knowledge of the history and culture of the USA, and its significance within a global context.
- 4.2 A knowledge of the theoretical perspective of inter-disciplinarity for an understanding of the USA and the concept of American Studies.
- 4.3 Academic skills relevant to American Studies, including an ability to evaluate, interpret and present in writing, as well as develop basic transferable skills.

Level 5

- 5.1 Critical understanding and content knowledge of the history and culture of the USA, including an enhanced appreciation of historiographical and theoretical perspectives.
- 5.2 An ability to apply underlying concepts, inter-disciplinary skills and approaches to American Studies.
- 5.3 Academic skills development, including awareness of independent research strategies, and enhanced facility for written and oral analysis, argument, and expression; as well as enhanced transferable skills, within a career relevant context.

Level 6

- 6.1 A systematic understanding of the history and culture of the United States, underpinned by a detailed awareness of historiographical and theoretical contexts.

6.2 Deploy an advanced conceptual understanding to the application of inter-disciplinary skills and approaches to American Studies.

6.3 An ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within the discipline.

And for Honours Degree

6.4 Synthesise and apply complex theoretical perspectives and concepts to an extended piece of written work.

Learning, teaching and assessment

Level 4 will be offered at foundation level, presupposing no previous knowledge of American Studies, nor requiring it as an admission criterion. Modules will focus on introducing you to the concept of American Studies, and provide you with a basic knowledge of the USA's history and culture, within a global context. There is a dedicated foundation module *American Foundations*, defining key American themes; mission, immigration, race, westward expansion, the American Dream, politics, freedom and the constitution. You will follow modules that explore America's impact upon, and standing within, the modern world; and the value of cultural evidence, in the form of cinema, as a tool for understanding the social history and key ideologies of the United States. Embedded within all the modules, and, especially in the foundation module, will be fundamental academic and transferable skills (essay writing and referencing); and they will also provide grounding in the inter-disciplinarity central to American Studies.

American Studies level 4 modules are adapted to the Supported Open Learning format, providing 36 hours class contact time per 20 credit module, together with appropriate tutorial support; supported open learning strategies range from Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) support to independent group work.

Level 5 will build upon the foundations of Level 4, with regard to content and skills, with modules exploring, in an inter-disciplinary context, critical aspects of American history and culture: the impact of depression, war and nuclear diplomacy; industrialisation and urban culture; slavery and race relations; popular culture and cinema, to name but a few. A work-based learning module will fulfil the University's commitment to the promotion of transferable skills, graduate-ness and career relevance. There is also an option to follow a one-semester exchange in 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.

Level 5 modules build on the foundation established at Level 4 by enabling you to further apply ideas and concepts. Modules will also deepen your knowledge and understand of the context of American Studies. Assessment continues to be based on a combination of coursework essays, reviews and essays/exams to allow you to build upon those skills established at level 4. You will engage in a greater level of analytical thinking and will be encouraged to embark upon, plan and execute work more autonomously and to take increasing responsibility for the process of your own learning.

Level 6 will offer you advanced level modules, with specific focus, reflecting the research and teaching expertise of the existing programme team; and which will promote the complexity and sophistication, with regard to knowledge, skills and inter-disciplinary understanding, expected of a final year degree student in American Studies. A key aspect will be the Special Study, a supervised independent research project on a topic relevant to American Studies, representing the culmination of academic skills development; it may be taken either as a twenty or forty-credit module, providing you with the opportunity to tilt the emphasis of your programme more, or less, towards independent research. Modules, more narrowly defined than at previous levels, address, for example, the social and cultural ferment of 1960s/70s USA; the American Civil War and its heritage; the politics, strategy and culture of the Vietnam War; the Anglo-American 'special relationship'; contemporary popular culture and American literature. Transferable, as well as advanced academic, skills are embedded within all modules, thus preparing you for the world of employment or postgraduate study.

Level 6 modules enable you to take a higher degree of responsibility for the planning, direction and management of your own learning. You will be required to work with an enhanced degree of autonomy and independence.

The essay, essay/exam approach, together with the dissertation, is utilised to further your ability to develop and refine your skills.

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's [general regulations for](#) undergraduate/postgraduate [*delete as applicable*] 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: 16/12/2019

Programme originally approved: 24/01/2020