

HIS 374 01: British History, 1688 to the Present

T/TH: 9:30-10:45am, Bryan 114

Professor: Jill Bender

Office: MHRA 2116

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2:00-3:00pm; Thursdays, 11:00am-12:00pm; and by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course provides a historical survey of Britain, from the late-seventeenth century to the present. During these 300+ years, the British electorate increased significantly, the British Empire reached its widest expanse, the British Empire collapsed, and the Beatles took the music world by storm. It was, in other words, an exciting time of significant change for Britain. We will study this change by examining and analyzing a variety of historical sources – from political documents to novels to music to films. Specific course themes include the ramifications of Britain's industrial development, contestations over political power, and the expansion of the British Empire. The course will focus on Britain, but an effort will be made to examine the country's history within a global context.

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will be introduced to the multiple approaches to Modern British history – economic, cultural, and political – through exposure to a variety of historical documents.
 2. By the completion of the course, students will be able to identify and give the significance of the major events, peoples, and debates in the history of Modern Britain.
 3. Students will improve their ability to construct and support an analytical argument based on primary historical sources. These skills will be developed both through writing assignments and classroom discussions.
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REQUIRED TEXTS:

The following books are required and available for purchase at the university bookstore:

Ellis Wasson, *A History of Modern Britain, 1714 to the present*

Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

Sam Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners*

All reading material marked with an * is available on the course Blackboard site or will be distributed in class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Participation

To perform well in this course, you must attend all classes, take notes, and thoroughly engage with the assigned readings. A portion of most class meetings will involve discussion. With this in mind, students should complete all reading assignments in advance and come to classes prepared to participate – in other words, ready to ask questions and discuss the assigned readings. I recommend that students bring a copy of the assigned readings and their notes to class meetings.

Papers

Students will be required to write two papers over the course of the semester. The first paper will be due on February 7th; the second paper will be due on April 17th. Paper topics will be provided in advance of both due dates. Papers are due in class. I do not accept emailed copies of papers.

Exams

There will be two exams in this course. Both exams will be content-driven, based largely on the lectures, readings, and class discussions. The first exam will be a take-home exam. The exam will be distributed in class on March 13th and will be due in class on March 20th. The final exam will be conducted in-class on Tuesday, May 1st.

Academic Integrity: Please familiarize yourself with the university's academic integrity policy: <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/>.

Grading

Grades will be based on four different aspects of your performance: (1) papers (2) take-home exam (3) participation (4) final exam. The final grade will be determined according to the following calculation:

Papers 40% (20% each)
Take-home Exam 20%
Participation 15%
Final Exam 25%

SEMESTER SCHEDULE:

WEEK ONE

Jan 10: Introduction

Jan 12: The Glorious Revolution

Reading: Wasson, *A History of Modern Britain*, 5-9; 38-44.

WEEK TWO

Jan 17: Eighteenth-century Britain

Reading: Wasson, *A History of Modern Britain*, 15-31; (recommended 44-64).

Jan 19: Britain and France

Reading: Wasson, *A History of Modern Britain*, 66-72; 77-89; 112-122.
Documents on the French Revolution*

WEEK THREE

Jan 24: Britain and its Eighteenth-Century Empire

Reading: Documents on the Hastings Trial*

Jan 26: The Industrial Revolution

Reading: Wasson, *A History of Modern Britain*, 94-108.
Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, pages 9-14*

WEEK FOUR

Jan 31: Social Upheaval

Reading: Evidence given before the Saddler Committee on Child Labour
(excerpt)*
Chadwick's Report on Sanitary Conditions (excerpt)*

Feb 2: Political Upheaval

Reading: Wasson, *A History of Modern Britain*, Chapter 5.
"The People's Petition" (excerpt)*

WEEK FIVE

Feb 7: Free Trade Nation

*****PAPER ONE DUE*****

Reading: Wasson, *A History of Modern Britain*, 151-162.

Feb 9: The Irish Question

Reading: Documents on the Irish Famine*

WEEK SIX

Feb 14: The Victorians I

Reading: Wasson, *A History of Modern Britain*, 162-167; 182-192; Chapter 8.

Feb 16: The Victorians II

Reading: Judith Walkowitz, "Jack the Ripper and the Myth of Male Violence," *Feminist Studies* 8:3 (Autumn 1982): 543-574.*

WEEK SEVEN

Feb 21: Britain, Europe, and New Imperialism

Reading: Wasson, *A History of Modern Britain*, 167-180.

Feb 23: The Great War

Reading: Wasson, *A History of Modern Britain*, 241-250.
World War I poetry*

WEEK EIGHT

Feb 28: Labour and the Left

Reading: Wasson, *A History of Modern Britain*, 192-199; 253-265.

Mar 1: Interwar Imperialism

Reading: Wasson, *A History of Modern Britain*, 250-253; 265-266.
Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant"*
Orwell, "A Hanging"*

WEEK NINE

Mar 6: *No Classes*

Mar 8: *No Classes*

Suggested Reading: Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

WEEK TEN

Mar 13: Interwar Feminism *****TAKE-HOME EXAM DISTRIBUTED*****

Reading: Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

Mar 15: *No Classes* – work on take-home exam

WEEK ELEVEN

Mar 20: The Era of Appeasement *****TAKE-HOME EXAM DUE IN CLASS*****

Reading: Wasson, *A History of Modern Britain*, 267-270.
Select speeches by Churchill*

Mar 22: The People's War

Reading: Wasson, *A History of Modern Britain*, 272-281.
Harrison, *Living Through the Blitz* (excerpt)*

WEEK TWELVE

Mar 27: Building a New Jerusalem

Reading: Wasson, *A History of Modern Britain*, 281-284.
"Let Us Face the Future," 1945*
Churchill, "Conservative Party Principles," 1946*

Mar 29: Post-war British Culture

Reading: Wasson, *A History of Modern Britain*, 284-295.

WEEK THIRTEEN

Apr 3: Film: *Darling*

Reading: No reading assignment

Apr 5: Film: *Darling*

Reading: No reading assignment (but, I recommend that you begin *The*

WEEK FOURTEEN

Apr 10: End of Empire

Reading: Wasson, *A History of Modern Britain*, 295-303.
Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners*

Apr 12: Post-imperial Britain

Reading: Rushdie, "The New Empire Within Britain"*

WEEK FIFTEEN

Apr 17: Thatcher and Blair

*****PAPER TWO DUE*****

Reading: Wasson, *A History of Modern Britain*, Chapter 11.

Apr 19: Conclusion

*****FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, May 1, 12:00-3:00pm*****
