Boston University British Programmes
Class, Power and the Making of British Identity
CAS HI 326 (Elective A)
Spring 2011

Instructor Information
A. Name Dr Michael Thornhill
B. Day and Time Mondays and Tuesdays (plus Friday 11 February), 1.30- 5.30pm
C. Location Prince Consort room, 43 Harrington Gardens, SW7 4JU
D. Telephone 01865 552950
E. Email michael.thornhill@bu-london.co.uk
F. Skype Michael Tom Thornhill
G. Webpage www.bu-london.co.uk/academic/hi326
H. Office hours By appointment

Course Objective
The course explains how Britain created a unique political and cultural identity, and the way this impacted on the rest of the world. No prior knowledge of British history is required.

Course Overview
This course explores the evolving politics of the state in England – and later Britain – since 1534 and considers how these shifts were shaped by social and economic changes. The impact of these interrelated processes on the making of a distinct cultural heritage will also be assessed. Britain’s architecture, literature and art will thus be considered in the context of who pays for the specific works, from the palaces, stately homes and oil portraits in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, via the rise of the novel in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to the consumers of popular culture created in the age of the welfare state since 1945. The impact of ‘Britishness’ overseas will also be examined.

Methodology
The course is taught in nine classes, followed by a written examination lasting two hours. Most classes will begin with a formal presentation after which there is usually a discussion period based on an assigned reading. Documentaries will also be used to support student learning. There will be three guided field trips as part of the classes. Students are required to attend all sessions and participate in discussions. This aspect will account for 10% of the final grade. A 2000-word essay (about 8 typed pages, double-spaced in 12 point font) must be submitted to the instructor at the start of class 8 (a further 40% of the grade). This will be graded and returned to students at the start of class 9. In the written examination (worth 50%) students must answer two essay type questions from a selection covering all aspects of the course. No notes will be allowed in the examination room.

Grading
Please refer to the Academic Handbook for detailed grading criteria, attendance requirements and policies on plagiarism:
**Reading**

* denotes class reading or class documentary; other titles as given are ‘further reading’ and are especially relevant for essay research.

General:
Kenneth O. Morgan (ed.), *The Oxford History of Britain* (Revised edition 2010)
Kenneth O. Morgan (ed.), *The Oxford History of Britain* (2001 edn)

Additional readings may be posted on the course webpage:
http://www.bu-london.co.uk/academic/hi326 (you must be logged in to view materials)

**Course Timetable**

**Politics and Political Philosophy: Mon 17 Jan and Tue 18 Jan**

1. The rise of Parliamentary democracy
   - [http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/](http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/)

2. The individual and the state from Hobbes to Keynes
   - George Orwell, ‘England your England’ in *The Lion and the Unicorn* (1941)*
   - ‘History of Britain: Orwell and Churchill’, Simon Schama, documentary: BBC1, tx. 2003*

**Art and Architecture: Mon 24 Jan and Tue 25 Jan**

3. The politics of landscapes and portraits / visit one to National Portrait Gallery

4. Who pays for the buildings? Power and status as reflected in British architecture / visit two to St Paul’s Cathedral

**Popular Culture: Mon 31 Jan and Tue 1 Feb**

5. Britain through the lens of literature / Student presentations based on previous week’s field trips

6. Class and popular culture in the twentieth century (Monday)

**Exporting Britishness: Mon 7 Feb and Tue 8 Feb**

7. The impact of empire
8. Britain between Europe and America / visit three to Imperial War Museum
   • David Reynolds, Britannia Overruled (2000)
   • http://www.iwm.org.uk/
   • Essays must be submitted by 1:30pm.

Stocktaking: Fri 11 Feb

9. The legacy of past greatness: Britain today

EXAM Tues 15 Feb Exam times and locations will be posted on the BU London website and in the Student Newsletter two weeks before exam dates.

* Contingency Class Date: Friday 4 February. Students are obligated to keep this date free to attend class should any class dates need to be rescheduled.

Terms and Conditions
Failure to produce essays at the allotted time may result in the lowering of the grade. Punctuality for class is essential. No work can be left outstanding to be finished after the semester has ended; incompletes are only permitted in exceptional circumstances such as serious illness.

**Attendance at all classes and field trips is mandatory. Students must check their email and the weekly Student Newsletter for field trip updates and reminders. Students missing lectures without a doctor’s letter or authorisation from the Director will automatically be docked a – or a + from their final grade. Persistent lateness will also be penalised in the final grade; conversely, excellent attendance will result in an upgrade of the classification where the final examination standard is borderline. A register of attendance will be taken at the beginning of each session, and marks will be awarded for attendance. Absence can be conveyed either by advising a senior member of staff in the Academic Affairs Office with a request that the information be passed on to me; or by emailing me at MTThornhill@aol.com prior to class. Leaving it to another class member to convey messages will not be acceptable. Appointments for interviews for internships should not conflict with attendance at classes. **

Any student who is unable to attend a class, or take part in an assignment because of religious reasons, must give notice of the fact in advance. He/she will be required to make up for time lost. In this situation arrangements must be made with another student for class notes to be shared. Written papers must be delivered before agreed deadline, failure to hand in the paper will result in deducted marks.

I will make some time available in each session for students to raise questions etc. Should students wish to discuss matters with me in person I will also be available during the break mid-lecture and at the end of class. Alternatively, please feel free to e-mail me with questions. If you have problems with the availability of reading materials (all of which should be in the library) please contact me either through the Academic Affairs Office or via e-mail.

MTT Jan 2011