



History 247: The Making of Modern Britain, 1688-1867
College of Arts and Sciences, Boston University
Fall 2018, CAS 228
MWF 11:15-12:05

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Course Description:

In this lecture course, we will examine Britain's emergence as *the* global power in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. How did this small island nation come to epitomize the "modern" and amass an impressive (and rapidly expanding) empire? We will answer this question by charting Britain's ascendancy from 1688-1867, with an emphasis on the nation's political formation, military and industrial achievements, political philosophies (most notably liberalism), cultural and intellectual contributions, and imperial conquests. Particular consideration will be given to the tensions and contradictions that lay at the heart of Britain during this "ascendant" period (e.g. the often strained relations between Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England and the meaning of "Britishness," industrialization and the 'condition of England', the rights of workers and women, the problem of slavery and the burdens of empire).

Emphasis throughout will be on close reading of primary and secondary sources, as well as on careful analysis of visual images and historical films. Assignments will include brief weekly written responses, an analytical essay (5-7 pages), and two exams.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, you will no longer be puzzled or surprised when you see a headline about the rise of the Scottish National Party, the intensification of xenophobia in Britain, tensions between urban and rural England, or the Brexit phenomenon. Instead, you will be able to fit this news into a basic narrative of modern British history that will emerge from our weekly readings and vigorous class discussions. You will be able to distinguish key developments and turning points in 18th-19th-century British history, identify the central challenges and questions that Britons have wrestled with, and understand the often fraught relationship between Britain and its empire (as well as between England, Ireland, Wales, and Scotland). Additionally, through close

reading of primary and secondary sources, you will gain knowledge of modern British history as understood *both* by those who lived through it *and* by those who currently write about it. In this way, the course will also help you learn how to think like historians. In our weekly class discussions (both in the classroom and online), you will adjudicate between different historical perspectives and weigh the merits of different historical interpretations. The exams and paper, meanwhile, will give you the opportunity to flex your own muscles as historians. For the exams and paper, you will work on developing strong analytical claims and supporting those claims with convincing and wide-ranging evidence. My hope is that you will come away from this course appreciating that the past rarely lends itself to easy answers.

Hub Outcomes: In meeting these objectives, we will engage with the following Hub areas: **historical consciousness, global citizenship and intercultural literacy, and critical thinking.** To remind you, the learning outcomes for these Hub areas are:

- Students will create historical narratives, evaluate interpretations based on historical evidence, and construct historical arguments.
- Students will demonstrate an ability to interpret primary source material (textual, visual, or aural) using a range of interpretive skills and situating the material in its historical and cultural context.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of religious traditions, intellectual paradigms, forms of political organization, or socio-economic forces, and how these have changed over time.
- Students will demonstrate, through comparative analysis, an understanding of global diversity as expressed in at least two different languages, cultures, religions, political systems, or societies. *Note: A course in this area might, for example, explore the political systems of two countries, while another might explore multiple religious traditions within a single country, and another might explore the literature of a single country and, in assignments, invite comparative analysis of works of other national literary traditions, including those of students' countries of origin.*
- Students will be able to identify key elements of critical thinking, such as habits of distinguishing deductive from inductive modes of inference, recognizing common logical fallacies and cognitive biases, translating ordinary language into formal argument, distinguishing empirical claims about matters of fact from normative or evaluative judgments, and recognizing the ways in which emotional responses can affect reasoning processes.
- Drawing on skills developed in class, students will be able to evaluate the validity of arguments, including their own.

In this class, we will meet these outcomes by evaluating and weighing primary and secondary source evidence, gaining deeper understanding of the processes shaping modern British history, and constructing our own historical narratives (which will require marshalling historical evidence to develop a sustained line of inquiry).

For further discussion of Hub capacities and areas, please visit the following site:
<http://www.bu.edu/gened/practical-guide-for-faculty/bu-hub-requirements-for-students/>

Course Texts (required):

- Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (Norton edition 2000)
- Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative and other Writings* (Penguin 2003)
- Amanda Foreman, *Georgiana: Duchess of Devonshire* (Penguin 2001)
- Miles Ogborn, *Global Lives: Britain and the World, 1550-1800* (Cambridge 2008)
- Thomas Heyck, *The People of the British Isles from 1688-1870*, 4th edition (Lyceum 2014)

Additional readings will be available on Blackboard Learn and the web, as specified in the syllabus.

Course Requirements:

- **Attendance.** Course attendance is required. (See “attendance policy” for details.)
- **Class Participation.** Although this is a lecture course, we will devote significant class time to discussion of the assigned reading. It is essential that you come to class on designated discussion days ready to talk about the required readings and other relevant course materials. To help prepare you for these discussions, I will be requiring you to post comments on a discussion board located on Blackboard Learn. On the weeks indicated, you must post at least one ****substantive**** comment in response to the week’s readings. Your comments must be posted *prior to the discussion meeting (usually Fridays, but occasionally on other days)*. *I will read these comments carefully, and the successful completion of these responses will factor into your class participation grade.*
- **Writing Assignments.** In this course, you will be assigned an essay, 5-7 pp. in length, designed to help you develop your critical thinking and writing skills. I will be available to read drafts, provided they are submitted to me well in advance of the due date.

Grading Breakdown:

Class participation, weekly discussion board participation, and attendance: 20%

Paper (5-7 pages): 25%

Mid-Term Exam: 25%

Final Exam: 30%

Major Deadlines:

Exam I: Friday, October 26

Paper: Friday, November 16

Exam II: Wednesday, December 12

Late Assignments:

Please contact me well in advance of an assignment’s due date if you think that you will have difficulty meeting a particular deadline. *All papers submitted late without my permission will automatically be marked down one half-grade per day.*

Attendance Policy:

Class attendance is required. Please notify me in advance (if possible) if you know that you will need to be absent from class. *After two unexcused absences, I will begin deducting 1/3 of a letter grade off your final grade for every missed class.*

Plagiarism Policy:

This course is designed to encourage critical thinking and writing. In order to become critical thinkers and writers, you must complete all stages of your work yourself: taking the words of

others, or presenting the ideas of others as your own not only prohibits you from learning, but also violates the CAS Academic Conduct Code: <https://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/>. This Code applies to *all* classroom assignments, from the weekly discussion board postings to your final exams. *The minimum penalty for such offenses is to fail the assignment; the more common penalty is to fail the course.* Please contact me if you have any questions about plagiarism. We will review proper citation techniques throughout the semester.

Disability:

If you are a student requiring accommodations for a disability, please let me know as soon as possible. The Office of Disability Services can assist you and may be contacted at 353-3658.

Course Schedule:

WEEK ONE: Introductory

9/5: The Making of Modern Britain I

9/7: The Making of Modern Britain II

Reading due:

- Heyck, Chapter 1

WEEK TWO: The Glorious Revolution: How Revolutionary?

9/10: Glorious Revolution I: A Model Revolution?

9/12: Glorious Revolution II: Political, Economic, Religious, and Cultural Legacies

9/14: Discussion

Reading due:

- Heyck, Chapter 2 and 4
- Hobbes, excerpt from *The Leviathan* [available at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/hobbes-lev13.asp>]
- Locke, excerpt from *Second Treatise on Government* [available on Blackboard]
- Locke, excerpt from “A Letter Concerning Toleration” [available on Blackboard – see “Enlightenment Documents,” week 4]
- excerpt from *The Bill of Rights* (1689) [available on Blackboard]

WEEK THREE: 18th-Century Empire and the Idea of Britishness*

9/17: Expansion Within and Without

9/19: Slavery and Sugar

9/21: Discussion

Reading due:

- Miles Ogborn, *Global Lives: Britain and the World, 1550-1800*, Chapters 4 and 5, pp. 78-142
- Linda Colley, “Britishness and Otherness” [available on Blackboard]
- Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative* (Editor’s Introduction, Front Matter, and Chapters 1-3, pp. 1-76)

* Discussion Board posting required

WEEK FOUR: Enlightenment and Its Others**

9/24: Enlightened Theories, Enlightened Practices

9/26: Enlightenment's Others

9/28: Discussion

Reading due:

- Heyck, Chapter 5
- Roy Porter, "The Birth of an Ideology," in *The Creation of the Modern World* [available on Blackboard]
- John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding**
- Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason**
- David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature**
- Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations**
- Jeremy Bentham, *The Principle of Utility**
- John Howard, *The State of Prisons**
- David Hume, "Negroes...naturally inferior to the whites..."*
- Catharine Macaulay, *Women's Education**

* All of these Enlightenment documents are available on Blackboard under "Enlightenment documents"

** Discussion Board posting required

WEEK FIVE: The American Revolution and the End of Empire?*

10/1: The Colonial Dilemma

10/3: Empire of the Free: The Anti-Slavery Movement and the New Imperialism

10/5: No Class

Reading due (for 10/3):

- Heyck, Chapter 8
- Ogborn, *Global Lives*, Chapters 8 and 10, pp. 197-229, 261-294
- Edmund Burke, "Conciliation with America" [on Blackboard]
- Josiah Tucker, "The True Interest of Great Britain," [on Blackboard]
- Thomas Paine, excerpt from *Common Sense* [available at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/paine-common.html>]

*Discussion Board posting required

WEEK SIX: The New Moral Empire

10/8: No Class – Columbus Day

10/9 [Monday schedule]: Abolitionism, continued

10/10: In-class debate on abolitionism

10/12: Ireland and India

WEEK SEVEN: Class and Gender in Georgian Britain*

10/15: The Duchess of Devonshire's World: Class and Gender in Georgian Britain/
Discussion of *Georgiana*

10/17: French Revolution and British Culture I

10/19: French Revolution and British Culture II

Reading due (for 10/15):

- Amanda Foreman, *Georgiana: Duchess of Devonshire* (intro, pp. 3-159, and epilogue)

*Discussion Board posting required

WEEK EIGHT: The French Revolution and British Culture

10/22: French Revolution discussion

10/24: Review Session/ *Sherlock's Last Case* at the Huntington Theater (7:30pm)

10/26: **Exam I**

Reading due (for Oct 22):

- Heyck, Chapter 11
- French Revolution Controversy documents [on Blackboard]
- *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen* (1789) [available at http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/rightsof.asp]
- Reread the excerpt from the 1689 *Bill of Rights* [on Blackboard, assigned 2nd week of class]

WEEK NINE: Industrialization and its Discontents*

10/29: Why Britain?

10/31: Impact

11/2: Discussion

Reading due:

- Heyck, Chapters 10 and 12
- E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism" [available on Blackboard]
- Industrial Revolution documents [on Blackboard]
- Begin reading Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*

* Discussion Board posting required

WEEK TEN: The Project of Reform

11/5: The Age of Reform

11/7: Charles Dickens' World/ Discussion of *Hard Times*

11/9: Writing Workshop

Reading due (for November 7):

- Heyck, Chapters 13 and 14
- Dickens, *Hard Times*

WEEK ELEVEN: Victorianism and its Contradictions

11/12: Inventing the Victorians I

11/14: Inventing the Victorians II

11/16: Discussion/ ***Hard Times* Paper Due**

Reading Due:

- Heyck, Chapter 16
- Jeffrey Auerbach, excerpt from *The Great Exhibition of 1851* [available on Blackboard]

WEEK TWELVE: Picturing Britishness

11/19: MFA trip (details tbd)

11/21: No Class – Thanksgiving Break

11/23: No Class – Thanksgiving Break

WEEK THIRTEEN: The Darwinian Moment*

11/26: Darwinism

11/28: Social Darwinism

11/30: Discussion

Reading due:

- Samuel Wilberforce, *Darwin's Faults* [on Blackboard]
- Thomas Henry Huxley, *Darwin's Virtues* [on Blackboard]
- Herbert Spencer, *Social Darwinism* [at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/spencer-darwin.html>]
- Samuel Smiles, *Self Help* [at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1882smiles.html>]

*Discussion Board posting required

WEEK FOURTEEN: The Second Empire at Mid-Century*

12/3: Ireland, India, Jamaica

12/5: The Reform Act of 1867 and the New Victorian Nation/

12/7: A Golden Age?

Reading due:

- Heyck, Chapters 15 and 17
- Thomas Metcalf, "Liberalism and Empire" in *Ideologies of the Raj* [available on Blackboard]

* Discussion Board posting required

WEEK FIFTEEN: Course Conclusions

12/10: Course Conclusions and Exam Review

12/12: **EXAM II**