



Boston University Study Abroad
London

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Visionary Capital: The Writing of London
CAS EN 340 (Core course)
Fall 2017

Instructor Information

Name Ms. Julie Charalambides
Day and Time Wednesdays, 2.00-5.00 pm
Location
BU Telephone
Email
Office hours By appointment

Course Description

This course has a wide variety of texts that all explore the imaginative potential of the great metropolis.

The course begins with a reading of a selection of poems about London. We then look at the way an early Sherlock Holmes story places London in counterpoint with India, and the way an early Jean Rhys novel places London in counterpoint with the Caribbean. Next we revisit the poems and have a short exam. After the break we read a historical novel by one of the UK's foremost writers, who will be visiting the class, and then read an account of a peculiarly London music, Grime, by a writer who will also be visiting the class. Then we go back in time to study a classic novel by Virginia Woolf which shows London recovering, or failing to recover, from the first world war. This is followed by a contemporary novel which paints a very gloomy view of the city, again with a writer's visit, and which engages with terrorism, as does the next novel. We then turn to a collection of essays, and conclude with the account of a series of walks, which makes the same claim as the essays, to reveal a 'different' kind of London. We enjoy a final writer's visit, before enjoying the final exam.

Course Objectives

Firstly, the development of a first-hand acquaintance with a range of works that dramatise and explore London in a wide variety of aspects and through different phases of historical transformation.

Secondly, a familiarisation with various methods of interpretation and analysis that will inform and strengthen critical inquiry and evaluation.

Assessment

One 2000-2500-word paper after consultation on the selection of a topic with the tutor. (You may use material from your presentation, or from interviews of the writers, if you wish.)

Selection of a topic will be confirmed with the tutor in Session 11.

This paper is to be submitted in Session 12 in hard copy, and accounts for 25% of the final grade.

One presentation each (arranged at the first session) on a set text and/or an exploration of literary London - 20%. When a writer visits, a detailed and well-prepared interview can substitute for the presentation.

Two examinations. The first in Session 5 (one hour), has a choice between a question on Conan Doyle and a question on Jean Rhys - 10%.

The final exam, in Session 14 (two hours), has questions on the authors and texts studied since the break - 25%. The choice is three out of seven questions, one on each text. No books or notes may be used in either exam.

Informed class participation - 20%.

Grading

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

**Final Grades are subject to deductions by the Academic Affairs Office due to unauthorised absences.*

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Classes

All Boston University London Programme students are expected to attend each and every class session, seminar, and field trip in order to fulfill the required course contact hours and receive course credit. Any student that has been absent from two class sessions (whether authorised or unauthorised) will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their continued participation on the programme.

Authorised Absence:

Students who expect to be absent from any class should notify a member of Academic Affairs and complete an Authorized Absence Approval Form 10 working days in advance of the class date (except in the case of absence due to illness for more than one day. In this situation students should submit the Authorised Absence Approval Form with the required doctor's note as soon as possible). The Authorised Absence Approval Request Form is available from: <http://www.bu.edu/london/current-semester/>

Please note: Submitting an Authorised Absence Approval Form does not guarantee an authorised absence

Students may apply for an authorised absence only under the following circumstances:

- • **Illness (first day of sickness):** If a student is too ill to attend class, the student must phone the BU London Student Affairs Office (who will in turn contact the student's lecturer).
- • **Illness (multiple days):** If a student is missing more than one class day due to illness, the student must call into to the BU London Student Affairs Office each day the student is ill. Students must also provide the Student Affairs office with a completed Authorised Absence Approval Form and a sick note from a local doctor excusing their absence from class.
- • Important placement event that clashes with a class (verified by internship supervisor)
- • Special circumstances which have been approved by the Directors (see note below).

The Directors will only in the most extreme cases allow students to leave the programme early or for a significant break.

Unauthorised Absence:

Any student to miss a class due to an unauthorised absence will receive a **4% grade penalty** to their final grade for the course whose class was missed.

This grade penalty will be applied by the Academic Affairs office to the final grade at the end of the course. As stated above, any student that has missed two classes will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their participation on the programme as excessive absences may result in a 'Fail' in the class and therefore expulsion from the programme.

Religious Holidays

Boston University's Office of the University Registrar states:

'The University, in scheduling classes on religious holidays and observances, intends that students observing those traditions be given ample opportunity to make up work. Faculty members who wish to observe religious holidays will arrange for another faculty member to meet their classes or for cancelled classes to be rescheduled.'

Special Accommodations

Each student will need to contact the Office of Disability Services to request accommodations for the semester they are abroad. Students are advised by BU-ODS not to expect the same accommodations as they receive on campus.

BU London can only uphold special accommodations if we have received the appropriate documentation from the BU-ODS. We cannot accept letters from other universities/centres.

All disabilities need to be known to the ODS in Boston if they are to be used as a reason for requiring a change in conditions, i.e. reduced internship hours or special accommodations for the internship schedule.

Lateness

Students arriving more than 15 minutes after the posted class start time will be marked as late. Any student with irregular class attendance (more than two late arrivals to class) will be required to meet with the Associate Director for Academic Affairs and if the lateness continues, may have his/her final grade penalized.

Course Chronology - meetings are on Wednesdays, 2-5 pm, except for first meeting, on a Thursday

Session 1: Introduction. **Barnaby Rogerson (ed.), *London: Poetry of Place* (2003)**
(7th September)
Reading: Selected poems about London. No preparation is required for this first meeting, but you should bring the book of poems.
Student presentations will be arranged at this meeting.

Session 2: VISIT TO LONDON LIBRARY
(13th September)

Session 3: London and India
(20th September)
Reading: Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Sign of Four* (1890)
This was the second outing for Sherlock Holmes. We might consider how far his London setting contributed to his continuing global fame.
A visit to the Sherlock Holmes museum in Baker Street is recommended, but as it's very expensive you might make do with the attached shop. The Sherlock Holmes pub near Embankment has a reconstruction of the study.

Session 4: London and the Caribbean
(27th September)

Reading: Jean Rhys, *Voyage in the Dark* (1934)

This is set mainly in 1914. Many London streets are namechecked, so you can track Anna round London, and you may be interested in what she observes and fails to observe. Is London completely wasted on her?

Session 5: London from multiple viewpoints. **FIRST EXAM.**
(4th October)

Reading: Further reading of London poems

This collection of short pieces claims to be 'a guide to a city you never knew existed'. Does it live up to this claim?

BREAK

Session 6: (WRITER'S VISIT) London imagined in the nineteen-twenties
(18th October)

Reading: Sarah Waters, *The Paying Guests* (2014)

Sarah has more than once been shortlisted for our major literary prize, the Booker. She has eight honorary doctorates, and has turned down an OBE. Five of her novels have been filmed. This novel is most importantly a love story.

Session 7: (WRITER'S VISIT) London and music
(25th October)

Reading: Jeffrey Boakye, *Hold Tight: Black Masculinity, Millennials & the Meaning of Grime* (2017)

I am completely out of my comfort zone here, but was taken by the observation that 'Grime will always be a geographical and cultural product of London, making its Londonness a defining characteristic and London, more than anywhere else in the UK, is a product of rampant multiculturalism' (pp.328-329).

Session 8: London and class
(1st November)

Reading: Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* (1925)

Right from its opening sentence this novel is riddled with class assumptions – is Woolf critical of them? You can track the protagonists' progress through the city.

**Session 9: (WRITER'S VISIT) London and the underclass
(8th November)**

Reading: Stephen Thompson, *No More Heroes* (2015)

Ninety years on, is London any less class-bound? This novel engages with the threat of terrorism which preoccupies Ian McEwan, and also with the Caribbean connection which preoccupies Jean Rhys.

**Session 10: London, war and terrorism
(15th November)**

Reading: Ian McEwan, *Saturday* (2005)

Another one-day novel, and another that is very precise in its use of London streets, this debates, among other things, our location in the twenty-first century.

**Session 11: London as unknown territory
(22nd November)**

Reading: Kit Cales (ed.), *An Unreliable Guide to London* (2016) (WEST and NORTH)

This collection of essays claims to be 'a guide to a city you never knew existed.' Is this claim justified?

ESSAY TOPICS IN

**Session 12: London continued
(29th November)**

Reading: We go on to SOUTH and EAST

ESSAYS IN

**Session 13: (WRITER'S VISIT) London as a walk
(6th December)**

Reading: John Rogers, *This Other London: Adventures in the Overlooked City* (2013)

How would you describe this? Is it a history of London? A travel guide? A memoir?

**Session 14: FINAL EXAM, 3 PM
(TUESDAY, 12th December)**

Readings

The **required reading** for each class session is indicated in the Course Chronology:

Boakye, Jeffrey, *Hold Tight: Black Masculinity, Millennials & the Meaning of Grime*, 2017.

Caless, Kit (ed.). *An Unreliable Guide to London*, 2016.

Doyle, Arthur Conan. *The Sign of Four*, 1890.

McEwan, Ian. *Saturday*, 2005.

Rhys, Jean. *Voyage in the Dark*, 1934.

Rogers, John. *This Other London: Adventures in the Overlooked City*, 2013.

Rogerson, Barnaby (ed.). *London: Poetry of Place*, 2003.

Thompson, Stephen. *No More Heroes*, 2015.

Waters, Sarah. *The Paying Guests*, 2014.

Woolf, Virginia. *Mrs Dalloway*, 1925.

Supplementary Reading:

Many of the following texts will be invaluable for researching papers and presentations, and for preparing for the final examination. Books are available in the BU London Library or other academic libraries in London (Students will have a meeting on libraries in London during orientation week). There will be an opportunity for students to meet with the lecturer to discuss reading lists for their selected paper topics.

P.Ackroyd *London: The Biography* (2001)

J.Brewer *The Pleasures of the Imagination : English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*
(1997) ch.1 'Changing Places : The Court and the City'.

A.L.Beier & R.Finlay eds., *London 1500-1700: The Making of the Metropolis* (1986)

L.Manley *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London* (1995)

D.Grantley *London in Early Modern English Drama: Representing the Built Environment* (2008)

J.G.Turner *Libertines and Radicals in Early Modern London: Sexuality, Politics, and Literary Culture, 1630-1685*
(2001)

J.Lindsay *Monster City: Defoe's London, 1688-1730* (1978)

A.Robinson *Imagining London, 1770-1900* (2006)

J.Chandler & K.Gilmartin *Romantic Metropolis: The Urban Scene of British Culture, 1780-1840* (2005)

L.Picard *Victorian London: The Life of A City, 1840-1870* (2006)

J.Tambling *Going Astray: Dickens and London* (2008)

M.Dickens, J.Greaves & A.R.Williams *the London of Charles Dickens* (2006)

N.Freeman *Conceiving the City: London, Literature, and Art 1870-1914* (2007)

L.Philips ed. *A Mighty Mass of Brick and Smoke: Victorian and Edwardian Representations of London* (2007)

J.M.Wilson *Virginia Woolf's London: A Guide to Bloomsbury and Beyond* (2000)

S.M.Squier *Virginia Woolf and London: The Sexual Politics of the City* (1985)