

HI 434/WS 434
The Monarchy in Modern Britain
College of Arts and Sciences, Boston University
Fall Semester, 2019
Mondays 2:30-5:15, 226 Bay State Rd, rm. 304



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Course Description:

In 1688, Britain became for all intents and purposes a constitutional monarchy. The model of “king-in-parliament” introduced with the Glorious Revolution consigned the monarch to a more ceremonial role on the political stage. Despite this demotion, however, sovereigns and their families have continued to wield considerable informal power, and have been at the heart of some of the major transformations – and crises – of modern Britain. This upper-level seminar will explore the evolving role of the monarchy in British society, from 1688-present, focusing both on how kings, queens, princes, and princesses have struggled to define their own place in a modern, industrializing, and increasingly democratic polity and on how their subjects have been impacted by, and helped shape these dynamics. To address these issues, we will probe seminal moments in the history of modern British sovereignty, when the politics of the court intersected, often dramatically, with the politics of the people. Topics to be explored will include: the warring pan scandal of James II, royal culture in pre-Revolutionary America, the madness of King George III, the death of Princess Charlotte, the Queen Caroline affair, the Bedchamber Crisis of Queen Victoria, the death of Prince Albert, the Cleveland Street Scandal, the abdication crisis of Edward VIII, George VI and the People’s War, Queen Elizabeth II’s coronation in national and imperial contexts, the spectacle of Princess Diana, William and Kate’s rebranding of the monarchy, and America’s relationship to British royalty. In addition to reading texts, we will also consult visual images,

films and news footage. A key question that we will consider throughout is why monarchy has been able to survive as an institution in Britain given how outmoded the model now seems. Requirements for this course will include: weekly response papers (1-2 pages) and a longer research paper on a topic chosen by the student (12-15 pages).

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, you will no longer be puzzled or surprised when you see a headline about Queen Elizabeth II's relationship to the UK parliament, William and Kate's efforts to combat bullying, or Meghan Markle's testy relationship with the media. Instead, you will be able to fit this news into a basic narrative of the history of the modern British monarchy that will emerge from our weekly readings and vigorous class discussions. You will be able to distinguish key developments and turning points in the history of the monarchy (dating back to the 17th century), and understand how and why the monarchy provides an ideal lens for studying cultural, political, imperial, economic, and social developments. Additionally, through close reading of primary and secondary sources, you will gain knowledge of modern British royal 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, you will adjudicate between different historical perspectives and weigh the merits of different historical interpretations. The weekly response papers and final research paper, meanwhile, will give you the opportunity to flex your own muscles as historians. For the research paper especially, 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.
- 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 the history of the British monarchy, 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):

- Walter Arnstein, *Queen Victoria* (Palgrave)
- Tina Brown, *The Diana Chronicles* (Anchor)
- Brendan McConville, *The King's Three Faces* (University of North Carolina Press)
- Steven Pincus, *The Glorious Revolution in documents* (Bedford)
- W.A. Speck, *A Concise History of Britain, 1707-1975* (Cambridge)

There is also a Blackboard Learn site, which includes a range of primary and secondary sources.

Course Requirements:

- **Attendance.** Course attendance is required. (See below for specifics regarding attendance policy.)
- **Class Participation.** As this is a seminar, it is absolutely essential that you come to class ready to discuss the required readings and other relevant course materials. To help you with this, I will be requiring you to write 1-2 pp. responses to most weeks' reading. *I will read these "responses" carefully, and they will be graded.* In addition to completing these weekly assignments, I encourage you to take an active approach to learning. Make sure to take notes while you prepare for class, and ask yourself questions. Why do you think that a particular reading has been assigned? What are its main ideas and concepts? If you find a reading dull, why? What about it seems strange or difficult to understand? Asking yourself these kinds of questions will help you to participate more effectively in class discussion.
- **Writing Assignments.** In addition to the weekly response papers, you will be required to write a 12-15pp. research paper. I will circulate more information about this assignment well in advance of the due date.

Grading Breakdown*:

Class participation and attendance: 25%

Weekly Response Papers (1-2 pages): 35%

Oral Presentation: 5%

Research Paper (12-15 pages) – includes prospectus, outline, works cited list, and rough and final drafts: 35%

*Throughout the semester, there will also be the opportunity for extra credit work – related to the optional film screenings.

Format for Papers and Weekly Response Papers:

All papers (including drafts) must:

- Be typed/word-processed. Handwritten work is not acceptable;
- Be double-spaced in 12 pt. font;
- Be spell-checked – spelling errors are not acceptable;
- Be grammar-checked to the best of your ability – we will review grammar conventions throughout the semester;
- Include your name, a title, the course title, assignment (i.e. paper #1, draft #1), page numbers, and the date.

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. *Under no circumstances will a student who misses more than 3 days of class pass this course. Those who have more than 1 unexcused absence will see this reflected in their class participation grade.*

Plagiarism Policy:

This course is designed to encourage critical thinking and writing about history. In order to become critical thinkers and writers, you must complete all stages of the work yourself: taking the words of others, or presenting the ideas of others as your own not only prohibits you from learning the skills of academic research, it also is a violation of the University's Code of Academic Integrity (<http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/undergrad-resources/code/>). *The minimum penalty for such offenses is to fail the assignment; the more common penalty is to fail the course.* If you ever have questions about how to cite a source (be it a text, website or person), please contact me. I'm more than happy to help answer your questions – that's what I'm here for. We will be regularly reviewing the University's plagiarism policy throughout the semester.

Special Circumstances:

If you have a disability registered with Disability Support Services or some other special circumstance that might affect your work this semester, please let me know both verbally and in writing as soon as possible, so I can make appropriate accommodations.

Course Schedule:

UNIT ONE: FOUNDATIONS

September 9: Introductory: The Monarchy in/as British History

UNIT TWO: THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY

September 16: The Glorious Revolution and the Transformation of the Monarchy*

Reading:

Steven Pincus, *The Glorious Revolution in Documents* – including the Bill of Rights of 1689 (pp. 1-33, 69-71)

Rachel Weil, “The Politics of Legitimacy: Women and the Warming Pan Scandal” (on Blackboard Learn)

Antonia Fraser, on “William and Mary,” pp. 247-253 (on Blackboard Learn)

*Response paper due

September 23: Royal Culture in Pre- and Post-Revolutionary America*

Reading:

Brendan McConville, *The King’s Three Faces* (pp.1-11, 247-316)

Elisa Tamarkin, excerpt from “Monarch Love” in *Anglophilia* (pp. 1-30, on Blackboard Learn)

Antonia Fraser, on “George III,” pp. 280-287 (on Blackboard Learn)

Speck, pp. 4-17

Optional Film: *The Madness of King George* (1994)

*Response paper due

Special Class Trip, September 26: Six at the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge, 7:30pm

UNIT THREE: THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

September 30: The Queen Caroline Affair/Introduction to the Research Process and Research Paper*

Reading:

Anna Clark, “Queen Caroline and the Sexual Politics of Popular Culture” (on Blackboard Learn)

Thomas Laqueur, “The Queen Caroline Affair: Politics as Art in the Reign of George IV” (on Blackboard Learn)

Speck, pp. 50-88

Antonia Fraser, on “George IV,” pp. 288-293 (on Blackboard Learn)

*Response paper due

October 7: Queen Victoria and the Bedchamber Crisis*

Reading:

Walter Arnstein, *Queen Victoria* (pp. 1-47)

Arianne Chernock, “An Argument of a Very Popular Character” (on Blackboard Learn)

Charles Beem, excerpt from *The Lioness Roared* (on Blackboard Learn)
Walter Bagehot, “The Monarchy” [1867] (on Blackboard Learn)
Antonia Fraser, on “Victoria,” pp. 299-315 (on Blackboard Learn)
Optional Film: *Young Victoria* (2009)
Optional: Editor’s Introduction to Bagehot (on Blackboard Learn)

*Response paper due

October 15 (substitute Monday): Monarchy and the Politics of Empire*

Reading:

Walter Arnstein, *Queen Victoria* (pp. 165-193)
Miles Taylor, “Queen Victoria and India” (on Blackboard Learn)
David Cannadine, “The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual” (on Blackboard Learn)
Thomas Richards, “The Image of Victoria in the Year of Jubilee” (on Blackboard Learn)

*Response paper due

October 21: Mugar Library Orientation and Bibliographic Project (meet at Mugar Library, Estin Room [rm. 302], at 2:30pm)

UNIT FOUR: THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND BEYOND

October 28: The Abdication Crisis of Edward VIII/George VI and the People’s War

Reading:

Speck, pp. 115-130, 155-178
Anne Sebba, excerpt from *That Woman* (on Blackboard Learn)
Christopher Hitchens on *The King’s Speech* (on Blackboard Learn)
Fred Leventhal, “Essential Democracy: The 1939 Royal Visit to the United States” (on Blackboard Learn)
Antonia Fraser, on “George V,” “Edward VIII,” and “George VI,” pp. 330-357
Film: *The King’s Speech* (to be screened in class)

*Research proposals due

November 4: Elizabeth II and the Making of Postwar Britain*

Reading:

Frank Mort, excerpt from *Capital Affairs* (on Blackboard Learn)
Wendy Webster, excerpt from *Englishness and Empire* (on Blackboard Learn)
Hilary Sapire, “African Loyalism and its Discontents” (on Blackboard Learn)
Antonia Fraser, on “Elizabeth II,” pp. 358-374 (on Blackboard Learn)
Speck 179-200
Begin reading Tina Brown, *The Diana Chronicles*
Primary source materials (newspaper clippings, “A Queen is Crowned”) to be distributed in class
Optional Film: *The Crown*, seasons 1 and 2 (on Netflix)

*Response paper due

November 11: The Spectacle of Princess Diana*

Reading:

Tina Brown, *The Diana Chronicles* (all)

Primary source materials (including press footage of funeral, Tony Blair's speeches, *It's a Royal Knockout* tournament) to be distributed/viewed in class

Optional Film: *The Queen* (2006)

*Response paper due

November 18: Exchange of Research Paper Drafts/ Small Group Peer Writing Workshops

Rough drafts due

November 25: *Crown* (Season 3) Viewing Party (details TBD)

December 2: A Modern Monarchy? The Diamond Jubilee, Prince Charles, The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, Prince Harry, Meghan Markle and the Future of Monarchy in Brexit-era Britain

Hilary Mantel, "Royal Bodies" at <https://www.lrb.co.uk/v35/n04/hilary-mantel/royal-bodies>

Additional readings TBD

In-class Screening of *King Charles III* (Masterpiece)

December 9: Research Presentations/End-of-Semester Celebration

Research papers due at start of class