



SYLLABUS

CONTEMPORARY BRITAIN IN A GLOBAL SETTING

Instructor: Katy Layton-Jones

Contact Hours: 40

Class times: Wednesday 9.30am-12.30pm

LONDON, UK

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Contemporary Britain in a Global Setting examines contemporary British politics, culture and society. We will discuss the commanding themes in British politics and public life and look at their historical context. This will extend to consideration of key social issues - including race, gender and social class, as well as aspects of popular culture from broadcasting to sport, and music to the monarchy.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course analyses key cultural, social, economic and political developments. It will provide students with the grounding and analytical tools to compare and contrast contemporary Britain with the United States. We aim to take advantage of London's unique status not simply as Britain's political and cultural capital but also as one of the world's most diverse urban centres. Classes will be complemented by excursions and study trips.

LEARNING OUTCOME

Students who undertake this course and participate fully can expect to gain a thorough knowledge of the country's political process, as well as its key cultural, social and economic challenges.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

The course introduces competing interpretations, drawing in particular on the fields of comparative politics, history and economics.

RULES AND PROCEDURES

Attendance at the sessions and excursions is obligatory. The sessions combine introductory lectures, presentations, discussions and group work. In some sessions, students will be asked to participate in debates and to prepare and deliver group presentations. You are expected to prepare actively for all classes and to contribute to all seminars.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorised help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorised by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the student's obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act.

GENERATIVE AI

Students can use GenAI tools in this class to help with certain aspects of course work and assignments. This includes brainstorming ideas, creating a paper outline, or summarizing research findings of articles. However, you cannot use content such as text or graphics created by GenAI tools in your work; rather, you must be the author/creator of your work submissions. For example, you can use a GenAI tool to suggest a paper outline based on a draft you provide it, but you cannot submit a paper with text generated by GenAI as if the text is your own writing. If I believe you've handed in work created whole or in part by GenAI tools, I may submit a report of suspected academic misconduct to the GEO London office. They will work with your home institution's Office of Student Conduct to make a determination of responsibility and any resultant sanctions.

ESSENTIAL READING

Links to relevant articles will be shared in the prior class. You are expected to read these and be aware of the main themes and topics of each class.

Our course will be shaped by current political debates and developments - and you need to be well informed. The BBC's news website is a good place to start www.bbc.co.uk/news - but you also need to read more partisan news platforms. The Guardian www.guardian.co.uk tends to take a left of centre view - while the Telegraph www.telegraph.co.uk (a subscription website but you can make several visits a month without subscribing) is right of centre.

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

The standards for this course will not be lower than at home. An A will be awarded only for the best quality work; poor work will be appropriately graded. Include a bibliography and cite all relevant work.

1. Class Presentation: 20%
2. Class Participation: 10%
3. Two Written Assignments: each 15%
4. Research Project and Presentation: 40%

1. Class Presentation

Over the course of the quarter, students are expected to give a presentation to the class. These are designed to encourage discussion and debate.

2. Class Participation:

Students are expected actively to take part in class discussion and debates and to ask questions of visiting speakers. Failure to do so, and failure to attend without appropriate reason for absence, will be reflected in your grade.

3. Written Assignments:

Over the course of the term you will be required to undertake two written assignments, each of 750 words. The first written assignment will be due by midnight on 29 April. The second written assignment will be due by midnight on 20 May. A more detailed rubric is appended to this syllabus.

4. Research Project:

Research Project and Presentation:

‘Updating Booth’s Poverty Map’

The written project is due 3 June. In addition, you will present your research to the rest of the class in our final session. You need to think about how you make your research interesting and accessible to others. Your presentation should be ten minutes and you should be prepared to answer questions. A more detailed rubric is appended to this syllabus.

The grade for late assignments will be reduced by one grade increment (e.g. from B+ to B) per 24 hour period. An assignment will be counted as late if submitted even one second past the deadline. Extensions will only be granted in extreme circumstances with supporting documentation.

You must not resubmit any assignments from other classes. Assignments resubmitted from other classes will not be accepted.

COURSE OUTLINE

- 1 April **Britain and the 'British'**
Where are you and who are the British people? An introduction to Britain and the British, the North/South divide, and illusive British 'identity'.
- 8 April **Subject or citizen?**
An exploration of the British political system, monarchy, and parliament. Class session followed by a walking tour around Westminster.
- 15 April **Representing the nation: the British canon.**
Classroom session followed by visit to the 'Treasures of the British Library'.
- 22 April **'Us and Them' Social Class**
Upper, middle and working class
Social mobility and division
Classroom session followed by a 'Booth's Poverty Map' walk to Kings Cross.
- 29 April **Immigration and Race - Brixton: walking in the steps of the Windrush generation**
Public historian and creator of the 'black history tube map' Kelly Foster takes us around Brixton, an area of London known as the cultural capital of Black Britain.

Meet at 10.30 at the mural of David Bowie in Brixton. The mural is on the side wall of Morley's Department Store on Tunstall Road (directly opposite the exit of Brixton Tube station, across the main road).
- 6 May **Soft Power**
Institutions which provide soft power: the Premier League, the Universities, the BBC, the NHS, and popular music.
- 13 May **Soho: a mince through time**
Following a classroom introduction, queer performer and researcher Dan de la Motte shares the history of Soho before decriminalisation, the stories of LGBTQIA activists, and Polari (the secret gay code).
- 20 May **Fractured Britain? 'Brexit Britain', Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales**
The Brexit vote, The 'Troubles', the rise of the Scottish Nationalist Movement, and the future of a 'United Kingdom'.

Written Assignment #2 due

27 May

How do the British say ‘No’? Politics of Protest in Britain

The British are infamous for being shy, retiring and ‘uptight’. You may disagree with this by this stage in the course!

However, there are traditions of dissent in Britain. In this class we will explore their origins and how British people protest and challenge authority.

3 June

Your Presentations

‘Updating Booth’s poverty map’

* *Final project report due*

CLASS PRESENTATION RUBRIC

Presentation topics will be assigned in our first class. Each presentation should last 10 minutes and you should use visual aids to illustrate your talk.

I anticipate minimum preparation time of around one-two hours to include research and planning your presentation. Wikipedia is a good starting point but do not stop there, and certainly do not simply read from the relevant Wikipedia page! If you get stuck you are welcome to communicate with me though I will not be available for discussion of this assignment over the weekend.

For an 'A' grade I expect an engaging presentation that covers the topic in your own words and includes some of your own thoughts. Your presentation will demonstrate research from a variety of sources and your presentation will be enhanced by appropriate visual aids.

You must send me your slide deck as a Microsoft PowerPoint attachment (NOT link to google slides) at least 15 minutes before class begins OR bring it on a USB.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT RUBRIC

Both written assignments may be emailed directly to me at katy_lucy_jones@yahoo.co.uk

The first is due at midnight on 29 April and the second is due at midnight on 20 May.

Prompt. For each assignment choose one aspect of British society, politics or culture that particularly interests you. In putting together your papers, you are encouraged to draw on the materials and approaches you encounter in all your classes, walks, tours and other experiences. You are free to be as creative and contemporary as you wish in your use of media. Your research should not rely exclusively on internet sources. You will be required to make use of a range of different kind of resources only available to you because you are in London.

Choosing a topic: You could choose a street, a person, a moment in time, the impact on Britain of redevelopment, immigration, fashion, music, the representation of Britain in film or painting ... be adventurous!

FINAL PROJECT RUBRIC

The final paper may be emailed directly to me at katy_lucy_jones@yahoo.co.uk

The presentation portion of the assignment will take place during class on **Wednesday 3 June**. The presentation is worth 10% of your final grade for the course.

The written portion of the assignment is due at **midnight on Wednesday 3 June**. The paper is worth 30% of your final grade for the course.

Paper

The research paper should be approximately 1,500 words and cite at least 6 sources. I am looking for a paper that is well-written, thoughtful, engaged, and analytical.

Prompt: At the end of the nineteenth century, Booth was increasingly concerned with the socio-economic inequality across London. He recruited an army of volunteers to travel across the whole of London and categorise every household (usually from the outside). Booth then produced coloured maps that show poverty levels across the whole of London. The maps are now fully digitised, along with many of the notebooks that the observers made. As a result, it is possible to get a snapshot of those moments in London's history and also compare them to the present.

Choose an area from this list: *Paddington, Lambeth, Hampstead, Kilburn, St. John's Wood, Camden Town, Marylebone, Mile End, Chelsea, Brixton, Battersea, Southwark, Dalston, Limehouse, Highbury, Belsize Park, Notting Hill, Whitechapel.*

Find it on the digitized archive and get a sense of its socio-economic character in the 1880s and 1890s. Look at the colour codes for categorising households. Then visit the area. Devise your own criteria for **contemporary London and map 2 or 3 roads using your new criteria**. You don't have to do every household - this is an exercise about how we perceive poverty and its 'signposts' and what that might reveal to us about contemporary attitudes to wealth, poverty, and social class. The archive can be found here:

<https://booth.lse.ac.uk/map/14/-0.1174/51.5064/100/0>

You need to support your field work with research into the area in question and consider issues such as average income, demographics, services, and housing.

Presentation

You will need to give a presentation to the class on your chosen area, criteria, and map. Presentations should last about 15 minutes. Please prepare a PowerPoint presentation or similar and come prepared to answer questions.