

Spring 2012

Modern British History

George Mason University

Dr. Megan Myers

Meeting Time:
TR 3:00 - 4:15 pm
Robinson B 113

Office: Robinson B 371B
Email: mmyers12@gmu.edu
Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 1:00-2:30 PM
and by appointment



History of Britain from the mid-18th century to the present.

This course will examine the political, economic, social and cultural history of modern Britain. In particular, the course will address the transformations caused by industrialization and imperialism. The course will also trace debates about sex, gender, class, and national identity from Victorian Britain through the disruption caused by two world wars, to the election of the first female prime minister. We will examine the transformation of the monarchy, the creation of a welfare state, and the rise of Thatcherism and New Labour. Students will study trends in British popular culture such as the role of the Murdoch press and the global influence of musicians like the Beatles. The course will take up the question of what it means to be British, from the union of England with Scotland, Ireland, and Wales to the creation of a diverse, multi-racial society in the post-war era.

Feedback:

If you have a question about a grade or would like further feedback, you must first read through my comments and then submit your paper to me with your questions in writing and set up an appointment at office hours to discuss the matter.

Participation/Attendance:

Course attendance is an area in which you can affect your own grade on a regular basis. You will be graded on your participation. During each session we will discuss history as a group, and your grade will reflect the extent to which you demonstrate that you have done the reading, attended lecture, and thought about the issues with which we are engaging. The GMU catalog states: "Students are expected to attend class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation."

Evaluation:

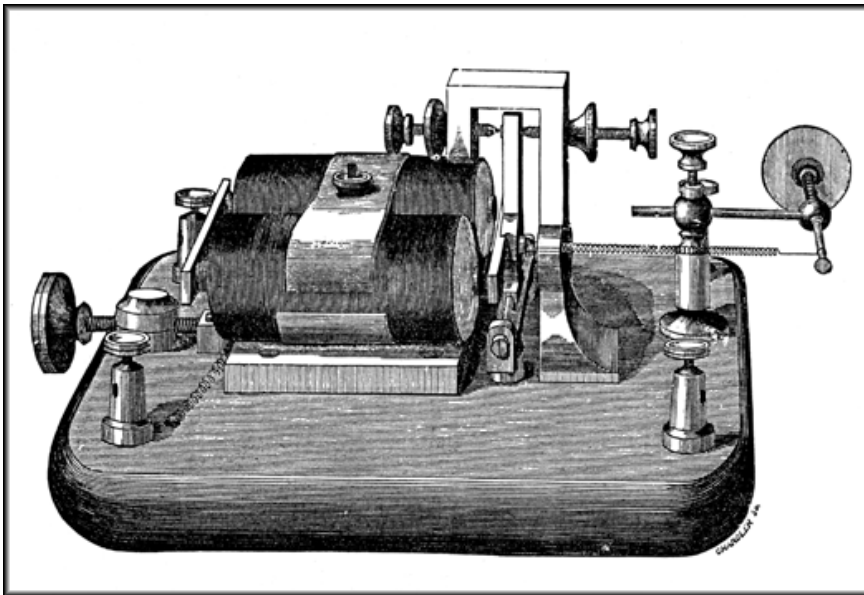
Class Participation: 20%
Quizzes: 20%
Midterm: 20%
Final: 20%
Written Assignments: 20%

Course Policy on Make-up Work:

Make-up work will be given only for serious, documented medical reasons (usually only your hospitalization or a death in your immediate circle). Work in discussion/lecture cannot be made up.



Students with documented learning disabilities are asked to consult me by the second week of class with the appropriate paper work.

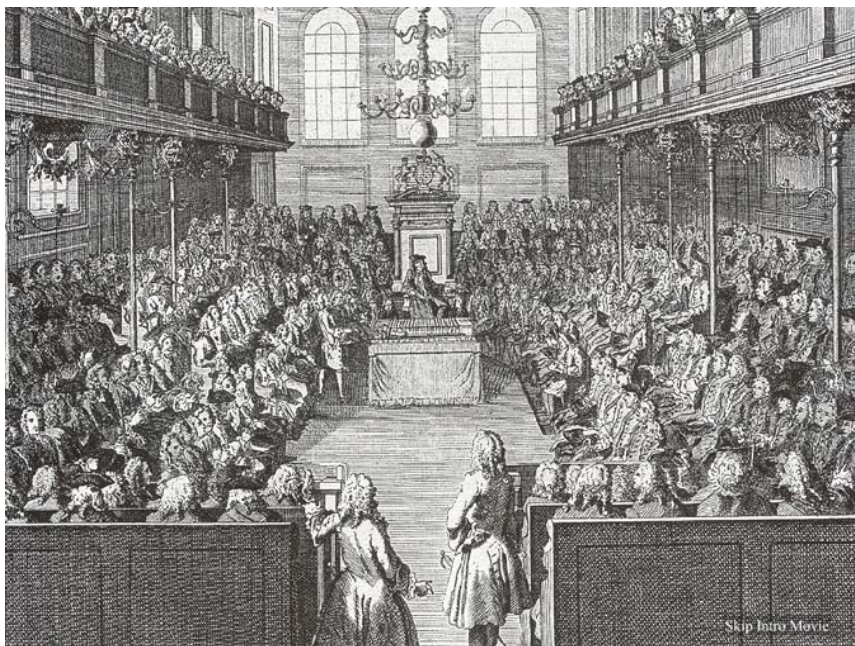


Basic Classroom Etiquette:

You may feel invisible in the crowd but please do your best to behave politely and consider this as training for future professional behavior. Please turn off all other communication devices during class. Do not talk to other students during lectures or arrive late to class. You may use a laptop in class, but if I find you are using it for other purposes than to take notes, you will lose the right to use a laptop in class. I also may ask you to send a time-stamped copy of your notes at any point.

Communication:

- **Office Hours:** I will have office hours prior to class each day. I heartily encourage students to attend to discuss any questions about the class or the specific assignments.
- **Your Accessibility:** It is very important that I have your current email address and that you check your email often, as this is how I will communicate with the class regarding logistical matters, assignments, reading, any kind of emergency, etc.
- **My Accessibility:** I check my email pretty regularly between 9-5 during Monday-Friday. On evenings and weekends I check it only sporadically, so plan accordingly if you need to reach me via email.



Books to Purchase:

David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism* (OUP, 2001)

Sonya Rose, *Which People's War* (OUP, 2003)

Katie Rophie, *Uncommon Arrangements* (Dial Press Trade, 2007)

Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain* (Cornell U Press, 1997)

Jeremy Black and Donald MacRaid, *Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Palgrave MacMillian 2003)

Assignments: We will talk more about constructing a historical argument and writing history papers prior to the due date. You will need to use 1-inch margins, double spacing, 12 pt. font, and footnotes. Additionally, be very careful to cite all ideas, theories, and writing that were not originally your own. Late papers will be graded down one-third of a grade (A to A-, A- to B+, etc.) per day late. If you email in a late paper at any point, copy yourself on the email so that you know I received it.

Plagiarism/Honor Code: Abiding by the GMU Honor Code is essential if you plan on passing this course. The Honor Code states: *“To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.”* Plagiarism, or putting forward someone else’s thoughts, ideas, or work as your own, is a serious offense. It is crucial to prepare your own original work and to properly cite the writing and thought process of others. We will go over proper source citation multiple times in preparation for the course paper. Please take this issue seriously.

Writing Center/Academic Workshops: If you need some assistance in writing your research paper or would like to attend study skills workshops, please do not hesitate to take advantage of the resources on campus. The Writing Center is in Robinson Hall A room 114. Academic Workshop schedules can be found in Student Union I room 354. You are always welcome to make an appointment with me to go over your progress in class or request assistance with your papers.

Course Aims:

Students will demonstrate familiarity with the major chronology of British history.

Students will be able to explain long-term changes and continuities in British history.

Students will analyze primary sources of various kinds (texts, images, music) and use these sources as evidence to support interpretation of historical events.

Students will communicate effectively—orally and in writing—their understanding of patterns, processes, and themes in British history.



Jan 24: Introduction

Jan 26: The 18th Century

Read: Black: 1-24; 207-220

Jan 31: Industrialization and Famine

Read: Black: 167-205

Selections from the Sadler Committee and Women Miners

Feb 2: Urbanization and the Transformation of London

Read: Black: 39-123

Feb 7: Life and Politics in Industrializing Britain

Read: Black: 125-147

Excerpts from the *People's Petition*

Feb 9: Life and Politics in Industrializing Britain

Read: Black: 147-167

Excerpts from the *Communist Manifesto*

Feb 14: 19th-century Culture and Power

Read: Black: 244-317

Feb 16: 19th-century Culture and Power

Read: Rappaport, "A New Era of Shopping" and "Epilogue" (see Blackboard)

Feb 21: The Age of Empire

Read: Black: 221-244

Assignment: Map Quiz

Feb 23: The Age of Empire

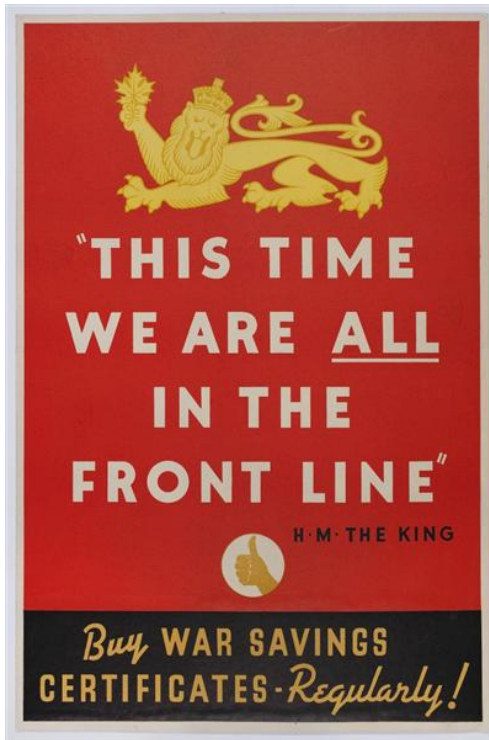
Read: David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*

Feb 28: Anxiety at the Turn of the 20th Century

Read: Black: 319-335

Blackboard: Suffrage docs

March 1: Anxiety at the Turn of the 20th Century and Midterm Review



March 6: Midterm Exam

March 8: Britain and the Great War

Read: Nicoletta Gullace, "White Feathers and Wounded Men: Female Patriotism and the Memory of the Great War" *Journal of British Studies*, 36 (April 1997): 178-206.
 Blackboard: Excerpt from Vera Brittain: *Testament of Youth*

March 12 - 18: Spring Break

March 20: Britain and the Great War

Read: Seth Koven, "Remembering and Dismemberment: Crippled Children, Wounded Soldiers and the Great War in Great Britain" *American Historical Review* (Oct. 1994): 1167-1199.

March 22: Interwar Angst

Read:

Blackboard:

The Treaty of Versailles, June 28, 1919 Woodrow Wilson, *The Fourteen Points*
 John Maynard Keynes, *Economic Consequences of Peace*

March 27: Interwar Angst

Read: Katie Roiphe, *Uncommon Arrangements: Seven Marriages*
Assignment: Response Paper (2-3 pgs)



March 29: Britain and the Second World War

Read: Sonya Rose, *Which People's War?*, Intro

April 3: Britain and the Second World War: 1939-1945

Read: Sonya Rose, *Which People's War?*, Chapters 2, 5, Conclusion

April 5: Postwar World

Read: See Blackboard

April 10: The Suez Crisis and the End of Empire

Read: Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Postwar Era*, 1-90

April 17: What Is it to Be British in the 20th Century?

Read:

Blackboard: Enoch Powell, "River of Blood" Speech (1968)
Dominic Grieve, "Multi-Ethnic and Multi-Faith Britain" (2004)
Manchester Guardian Series, "What is Britain?" (2005)
Daily Telegraph Series, "What Does It Mean to Be British?" (2005)
Excerpt from *Talking Independence* (Scottish Nationalist Party Policy Paper)

April 19: Northern Ireland

Read:

Blackboard: John Hume, Nobel Prize Speech
George Mitchell
CAIN Website (See links)
NYU Hunger Strikes library

April 24: Thatcherism

Read: See Blackboard

April 26: Britain and Europe

Read: See Blackboard

May 1: New Labour and Beyond

Read: See Blackboard:

May 3: Conclusions and Review



An opportunity:

If you wish to complete this assignment, I will substitute this grade for your lowest quiz grade. You will write a one-page summary on Blackboard and present your research in class. Research should be conducted in journals, newspapers, etc., and you must cite your sources. You will sign up by posting your topic on Blackboard two weeks in advance. Once three students have signed up for a particular week, that week is full.

Some ideas for topics:

The Bloomsbury Group. The British Invasion. Punk Rock. The Beatles. British Art. Carnaby Street and Fashion in the Sixties. Public transportation. Winston Churchill as a War Leader. Football culture. The British school system. The role of the Established Church. Britain's tabloid press. The changing role of the royals in the 20th century. The Festival of Britain. Other topics will be accepted but gain approval first.