

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
Department of History & Art History

From Peace to War to Welfare State: Great Britain, 1900-1956
Autumn 2012

Course	Building/Hall	Room	Days	Time
HIST 635-004	Robinson B	105	Thursdays	4.30-7.10 p.m.



World War I recruiting poster, featuring Lord Kitchener, then Secretary of State for War

INSTRUCTOR:	Dr Kevin Matthews
OFFICE:	Robinson B 373B
OFFICE HOURS:	10.30 a.m.-4.00 p.m. Thursdays, or by appointment.
TELEPHONE:	(Telephones have been removed from most offices; it is easiest to reach me via E-mail)
E-MAIL:	cmatthe2@gmu.edu

REQUIRED TEXT & MATERIALS:

1. Clarke, Peter. *Hope and Glory: Britain, 1900-2000*
2. Dangerfield, George. *The Strange Death of Liberal England*
3. Sandbrook, Dominic. *Never Had It So Good*
4. Strunk, William and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*
5. US War Department. *Instructions for American Servicemen in Britain, 1942*

In addition, the course instructor will supply students with readings via the internet to supplement the required texts. These additional readings are listed in the calendar at the end of this syllabus. By this same method, students will also receive material - maps, cartoons, and other illustrations - to enhance the student's understanding (and, it is hoped, enjoyment) of the topics covered in this seminar.

RECOMMEND TEXTS: (You are not required to obtain these books; they are listed here as additional sources that you may wish to be aware of:)

1. Addison, Paul. *The Road to 1945: British Politics and the Second World War*
2. Graves, Robert and Alan Hodge. *The Long Weekend: A Social History of Great Britain, 1918-1939*
3. Marr, Andrew. *A History of Modern Britain*
4. Morgan, Kenneth. *The People's Peace: British History, 1945-1989*
5. Rhodes James, Robert. *The British Revolution: 1880-1939*
6. Stewart, Graham. *Burying Caesar: The Churchill-Chamberlain Rivalry*
7. Taylor, A.J.P. *English History: 1914-1945*

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

This course will explore the many challenges faced by the British people during the first half of the 20th century. In 1900, the United Kingdom, with its imperial possessions, was the largest political, military, and economic power on earth. By 1956, this position had been fatally undermined by war, economic depression, and the retreat from empire. Yet, amid this tumult the British people laid the foundations of the modern welfare state. Topics for discussion will include the legacy of Britain's last Liberal government, the challenge of Irish nationalism, the impact of both world wars on British politics and society, the "long weekend" of the inter-war years, the struggle against economic decline, the origins of the welfare state, the impact of the Suez crisis, and the ambivalent feelings that characterize the Anglo-American "special relationship".

TEACHING TECHNIQUES & EXAMINATIONS:

Varied, although the emphasis will be on lectures, classroom discussions, and readings. From time to time, these sessions will be supplemented with film presentations which will also be the basis for discussion. Typically, I use what is called a "semi-Socratic" method of teaching. If you are prepared, your individual contribution to these discussions will lead to a more lively and interesting experience for everyone concerned. On a more prosaic level, your participation in class will benefit your final grade.

You are **personally responsible** for ensuring that you know the time and date of all assignments. You are expected to take the final exam when it is given to the class; students are not allowed to take exams or deliver assignments at a time of their choosing. If you fail to deliver an assignment on time or to attend the final exam without a **documented excuse** (usually medical in nature), you will **not** be **allowed** to hand in late work or take a make-up exam. You will, instead, be given a zero grade without appeal.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION:

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources (ODR) at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. You should see me about this matter immediately so that ODR can plan for the specific accommodation to assist you.

GRADING SCALE:

Bibliographical essay	15 percent
Research paper	30 percent
Final examination	35 percent
Classroom participation/attendance:	20 percent
Total:	<hr/> 100 percent

RESEARCH PAPER - “Land of hope and glory”?

Within the time-frame covered by this course, easily within the living memory of countless Britons, the people of the United Kingdom experienced an upheaval unique in their history. At the dawn of the 20th century, it was still said, and without irony, that “God is an Englishman”. By mid-century, it was becoming clear that, as the American Dean Acheson later put it, “Great Britain has lost an Empire and has not yet found a role.”

All students taking this course are required to write **two** papers: a **5-** to **7-page** bibliographical essay, followed by an **18-** to **20-page** analytical paper. Overall, your assignment is to choose a policy or incident during the period covered by this course and **analyze** its significance (short- or long-term) in the course of British history. As you will see from the list of suggested paper options below, you may investigate this question through the medium of biography.

The **bibliographical essay** should cover the sources you plan to use for your analytical paper. Preferably, your essay and your paper should be based on a mix of sources: ideally, at least four (4) books and at least three (3) academic journal articles. Contemporary sources – e.g., newspapers, government documents, and parliamentary debates - may also be used for these assignments.

(NOTE: Your essay and paper may use the books assigned for this course. But - they must be used **in addition** to the four books and three articles required for these assignments. Therefore, it will not necessarily be to your advantage to use these books.)

The bibliographical essay should briefly summarize the content of your sources, followed by an evaluation of these works. Your grade for this assignment will be based less on your summary of these works than on how effectively you critique them. Your evaluation should answer questions such as: Were the arguments presented clear and convincing? In the case of diaries and memoirs, in particular, how reliable are they? Finally, how do the works you have chosen relate to one another? An example of a bibliographical essay will be sent to you via the internet.

The bibliographical essay should then be the springboard for your **analytical paper**. It is critical to bear in mind that this is **not** to be a simple **narrative paper**. It will not be enough for you to summarize a series of events, followed by a concluding paragraph asserting your that subject was, say, significant at its time, but had no long-lasting impact on Britain - or, conversely, that your subject resonates in the life of the British people and nation to this day. Your paper should instead lace your analysis throughout, using examples from your research to substantiate your verdict.

As well as avoiding the trap of writing a purely narrative paper, you should also be aware that this is **not** an exercise in writing counterfactual history. Any speculation should only go so far as the evidence allows. Put another way, your paper should not be an example of "what if" history.

This assignment affords a wide range of possibilities. For this reason, each student's selection should be unlike those of his or her fellow students. At the same time, you should make sure that your topic can be examined within 18 to 20 pages. It should not be so broad that it cannot be analyzed, but neither should it be so narrow that your paper is repetitive. Arrange to **consult** with the instructor when considering your ideas for this assignment. Afterward, your selection should be submitted as a typed, one-page memorandum on 8" by 11" paper (**no** later than the **13th of September** - and **not** via E-mail), briefly sketching your paper's topic. **You should not begin your research for the paper until your selection has been approved by the instructor.** A sample memorandum, written by a student for another course, follows:

{STUDENT'S NAME}
{STUDENT'S E-MAIL ADDRESS}
{COURSE TITLE} "HIST 635/004 Paper Proposal"
{DATE}

Leni Riefenstahl has created some of the most innovative and controversial films of our time. As a woman film maker in a male dominated profession, her chances of success in this field were slim. One powerful man, Adolf Hitler, brought her into the spotlight and promoted her career. Young and in awe of the situation in which she found herself, Riefenstahl went on to create films such as *Triumph of the Will* (now banned in Germany) and *Day of Freedom - Our Armed Forces*. I wish to explore the turbulence of the time surrounding Riefenstahl's life and to answer the following questions: What role did Riefenstahl play in promoting the Nazi regime? Should she be viewed as evil, or should her work be considered from a purely artistic perspective?

Your bibliographical essay and term paper must be typed, paginated, with margins of **no more than one inch**, double-spaced and **footnoted**; other citations - e.g., endnotes, MLA style, etc will **not be**

accepted. Both assignments should also include a **complete bibliography** of all sources cited or referred to in your paper. If you use alternative citations or fail to include a bibliography, your papers will be returned to you ungraded, and your subsequent grade for the assignment will be lowered by a full letter grade. A guide showing how footnotes and your bibliography should be presented will be issued shortly.

I understand that students will use the **internet** to research their papers. However, the use of internet sources is in itself **insufficient** for these papers, and I strongly **discourage** an over-reliance on internet material. My reason is simple: while printed material typically passes in front of four or five pairs of eyes before it is published, material that appears on the internet is too often scanned in but not subsequently checked for accuracy. This occurs even on reputable sites, where the most glaring errors occur. On one site, for instance, a colleague found that Abraham Lincoln died not in 1865, but in 1965. For this reason, your paper should rely **mainly**, if not **exclusively**, on printed sources (books, academic articles, etc.). If you depend on internet sources that prove to be inaccurate, the grade for your paper will suffer accordingly. Having said that, you are permitted to use academic articles obtained via reputable sites such as JSTOR.

Students may include prints, charts, etc, but these should **not** be used as a substitute for your text. If you include a chart, that takes up half a page, for instance, that half page will not count toward the 18-20 page requirement. Also, any graphics should be included **only** if they materially add to the case you are making.

It is expected that papers written for any university course will be free of factual, spelling and grammatical errors. For this reason, I urge students to purchase and use Strunk & White's *Elements of Style*. This reliable, inexpensive guide will save you from numerous errors both now and in the future and is well worth having. Needless to say, it is the student's responsibility to submit a correct, legible copy of his or her paper.

This assignment gives students the opportunity to further explore a subject dealt with in this course that he or she finds particularly interesting. There are a wealth of topics for you to choose from, some of which are listed below. However, this list is by no means complete and students are allowed - indeed, encouraged - to present alternative topics:

Old world at sunset (1900-1914): The impact of the Boer War; Labour in Parliament; Joe Chamberlain & "tariff reform"; the "New Liberalism"; David Lloyd George & the "People's Budget"; radical feminism: the Pankhursts; Winston Churchill as a social reformer; the impact of Fabianism; "Ourselves Alone" - Arthur Griffith & the creation of Sinn Féin; the quest for Irish Home Rule; King's rebel - Sir Edward Carson; "None dared call it treason" - the Conservative Party's decision to back the Ulster Unionists; a peacetime premier - H.H. Asquith; "Triple Alliance" - the challenge of the trade unions; Huns on the shore: the press and the pre-war invasion scares; the July Crisis of 1914.

Armageddon (1914-1918): Mobilizing for war; Disaster at the Dardanelles": the British empire attacks at Gallipoli; women and the home front; attack from the air: the bombing of Britain; "Lions led by donkeys" - the British high command & war strategy; the impact of the Battle of the Somme; David Lloyd George - "the man who won the war"; the price of victory - Britain becomes a debtor nation; the royal family & the anti-German war hysteria; legacy of the war poets; the "coupon election" of 1918; women (over 30) get the vote.

A world unhinged (1919-1922): The British at Versailles; John Maynard Keynes & the “lost peace”; strains in the Empire; “red scare” - the impact of Bolshevism on post-war Britain; “Troubles” - again - in Ireland; Michael Collins & the origins of modern, urban guerrilla warfare; partition - creating Northern Ireland; A “government of all the talents”: the Lloyd George Coalition; “Black Friday” & the collapse of trade union solidarity; Lloyd George and the sale of honours; revolt at the Carlton Club.

Safety first (1922-1931): The “unknown prime minister” - Andrew Bonar Law; Reparations & war debts; the first Labour government; Ramsay MacDonald’s quest for a prosperous Europe; “Safety first” - Stanley Baldwin’s rise to power; the strange tale of the “Zinoviev letter”; “Auntie” - the creation of the BBC; Churchill’s “greatest mistake” - Britain’s return to the gold standard; the General Strike of 1926; the legacy of the “Bloomsbury set”.

A dishonest decade (1931-1939): Thwarting democracy: the formation of Britain’s 1931 “National Government”; declaration of independence - the Statute of Westminster & the empire; “Safety First” - Baldwin & the origins of British appeasement; “War of the Spanish Oppression” - British policy during the Spanish Civil War; the Jarrow Crusade; the rise of British fascism; for the woman he loved - Britain’s abdication crisis; John Maynard Keynes & Keynesianism; “Alone” - Winston Churchill battles appeasement; “Peace in our time”: Britain abandons Czechoslovakia, 1938.

Their finest hour (1939-1945): Reluctant war leader - Neville Chamberlain; fiasco in Norway; Tory rebels & the fall of the Chamberlain government; a roll of the dice - Churchill takes over as prime minister; “Sea Lion” - Hitler fails to invade Britain; the lion roars: Britain destroys the French fleet at Mers-el-Kebir, 1940; how important was the Battle of Britain; the “Blitz” & the British; mobilizing Britain’s women for war; Churchill as warlord; a lifeline - “Lend-Lease”; uneasy partners - the Anglo-American alliance with the Soviet Union; Beveridge lays the foundations of the welfare state; “Occupied” - the Yanks in Britain; summer of terror - the V1 & V2 attacks on British cities; the empire at war.

Labour in office (1945-1951): Giving Churchill the “order of the boot” - why Labour won the 1945 general election; an “economic Dunkirk” - Britain’s postwar economic position; Mr Keynes goes to Washington; building the “New Jerusalem” - creating the welfare state; Labour decides to “build the bomb”; “Clem” Attlee as prime minister; Mountbatten & the partition of India; rebel in government - the career of Nye Bevan; retreat from empire; queuing up - rationing in post-war Britain; Ernest Bevin & the Marshall Plan; the “jewel in Labour’s crown” - the National Health Service.

A last hurrah (1951-1956): Churchill’s “Indian summer”; the legacy of “One Nation Toryism”; traitors to their class - the Cambridge spy ring; the Empire comes home - the challenge of post-war immigration; “Look Back in Anger” - John Osborne & the new British playwrights; prime minister-in-waiting - the frustration of Anthony Eden; creating the affluent society; saying “no” to Europe; the Anglo-American partnership; humiliation at Suez; the soothing hand of Harold Macmillan.

ATTENDANCE:

Since lectures and discussions are the foundation of this course, **class attendance is mandatory**. Each student is responsible for all material and all announcements presented at each session. Students should also be aware that they will be tested on material covered in class but which will not necessarily be

found in the assigned readings and vice versa.. If a student **must** miss a class, (s)he should obtain class notes from a fellow student. Lecture notes **will not be provided** by the instructor.

A **great amount of reading is required** for this course, and it is important that each student should stay abreast of the weekly assignments so as to be prepared for classroom discussions. **Failure to attend class** will make it extremely difficult to keep up with the course and can result in a lowering of the student's final grade. **Specifically**, the course grades for students who fail to attend class on a **regular basis** (as determined by the instructor) will **drop an entire letter grade** - without exception. This is beyond the percentage part of your grade covered by "classroom participation". Valid excuses for missed lectures (again, usually medical in nature) must be in **writing**; verbal explanations will not be accepted.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Cheating and plagiarism - **Either offense will constitute grounds for failure of the course.** The university has a code governing academic ethics. Any student who is caught cheating on a quiz or exam or who plagiarizes will have his or her case sent to the Dean's office for adjudication.

It is a **serious academic offense** to plagiarize, i.e. to present the ideas, particularly the use of direct quotes, as if they were your own. This is particularly important when writing the term paper for this course and students should take care to properly cite the work of others in footnotes. More serious still is the **presentation of a paper which has been acquired via the internet**. Cases of this nature will be immediately submitted to the Dean's office.

The Internet - The instructor's E-mail address is at the top of this syllabus, & I will check messages on a regular basis. However, I prefer face-to-face communication when it comes to detailed matters such as your analytical paper assignment.

Classroom decorum - Students are expected to **show up for class on time** and, once in class, to remain for the entire session, except in case of dire emergency. Arriving late or leaving in the middle of a class is disruptive and disrespectful to your fellow students. Those who violate this rule can expect to receive a lower course grade.

Use of tape-recorders & lap-top computers - These are permitted during sessions. However, you will be required to discontinue their use if they are disruptive to other students. Also, your use of lap-tops or other such devices will be banned if you use them during lectures to check E-mail, play video games, etc. Continued use of these devices after you have been told not to do so will result in a failing grade for this course - **without appeal**..

Pagers and cell phones are to be **turned off** at the beginning of each class. Repeated failure to do so will adversely affect your course grade. Any attempt to use unauthorized devices during an examination will constitute grounds for failure of the course. You are welcome to bring drinks to class. However, **eating** during lectures & exams is **forbidden**. Put another way - **I don't lecture in your kitchen; don't eat in my classroom.**

IMPORTANT DATES & READING ASSIGNMENTS:

Week 1 27 – 31 August **“Rule, Britannia”**

The day of small nations has long passed away. The day of Empires has come.
- Joseph Chamberlain, 1904

30th - **First** meeting of HIST 635/004

Readings: Clarke, Prologue-ch. 1; Dangerfield, Part I, ch. 1-3

Week 2 3 – 7 September **Liberals & the spirit of reform**

The argument of the broken pane of glass is the most valuable argument in modern politics.
- Emmeline Pankhurst, speaking on 16 February 1911

3rd - Labor Day holiday; university closed

4th - **Last day to add a course or drop a course for a 100% refund**

Readings: Clarke, ch. 2 (to bottom, p. 62); Dangerfield, Part II, ch.1,3-4; Part III, ch. 3-4

Week 3 10 – 14 September **Ireland & Home Rule**

I can imagine no length of resistance to which Ulster can go in which I would not be prepared to support them.

- Andrew Bonar Law, speaking as Conservative Party leader, 1912

13th - **Last day** to submit your term paper proposal

Readings: Clarke, ch. 2 (p. 62-70); Dangerfield, Part II, ch. 2; Part III, ch. 1-2, 5-6, Epilogue

Week 4 17 – 21 September **The Great War**

If any question why we died / Tell them, because our fathers lied.
- Rudyard Kipling, Epitaphs of the War, 1914-1918

Readings: Clarke, ch. 2 (p. 70-76); ch. 3 (p. 77-90); Keegan, *First World War* (excerpt supplied by instructor)

Week 5 24 – 28 September **War on the “home front”**

Truly the War had made masochists of us all.
- Vera Brittain, Testament of Youth

Readings: Clarke, ch. 3 (p. 90 to end of chapter)

Week 6 1 – 5 October **A country fit for heroes?**

What is our task? To make Britain a fit country for heroes to live in.
- David Lloyd George, campaign speech, 24 November 1918

Readings: Clarke, ch. 4 (to the middle of p. 134)

Week 7 8 – 12 October **From Empire to Commonwealth**

In my opinion it gives us freedom, not the ultimate freedom that all nations desire and develop to, but the freedom to achieve it.
- Michael Collins, defending the Anglo-Irish Treaty, 19 December 1921

8th – Columbus Day holiday (Monday classes meet on Tuesday; Tuesday classes cancelled)

Readings: Jeffrey, “British Isles/British empire; dual mandate/dual identity” (excerpt supplied by instructor)

Week 8 15 – 19 October **The General Strike & its legacy**

Not a penny off the pay, not a second on the day.
- A.J. Cook, Secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, 1926

Readings: Clarke, ch. 4 (p. 134-143); Brendon, “The Bane of Capitalism” (excerpt supplied by instructor)

Week 9 22 – 26 October **Locust years: the 1930s**

I and the public know what all schoolchildren learn/Those to whom evil is done, do evil in return.
- W.H. Auden, “September 1, 1939”

25th - **Last day** to submit your bibliographical essay

Readings: Clarke, ch. 5; Brendon, “The Slump in Britain” & “Britain’s Royal State (excerpts supplied by instructor)

Week 10 29 October – 2 November

Facing the dictators

You have sat too long here for any good you have been doing. Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God, go!

- Leo Amery to Neville Chamberlain, House of Commons, 7 May 1940

Readings: Clarke, 6 (to p. 190); Brendon, “Churchill, Chamberlain and Appeasement” (excerpt supplied by instructor)

Week 11 5 – 9 November

Allies

What kind of people do they think we are? Is it possible they do not realize that we shall never cease to persevere against them until they have been taught a lesson which they and the world will never forget?

- Winston Churchill, addressing the US Congress, 26 December 1941

Readings: Clarke, ch. 6 (p. 190-215); *Instructions for American Servicemen* (read the entire booklet)

Week 12 12 – 16 November

The triumph of Labour

Social insurance ... is an attack upon Want. But Want is one only of five giants on the road of reconstruction The others are Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness.

- Social Insurance and Allied Services (the Beveridge Report), 1942

Readings: Clarke, ch. 7; Addison, “The People’s William” (excerpt supplied by instructor)

Week 13 19 – 23 November

Thanksgiving Day holiday

21st – 25th – Thanksgiving Recess; no meeting of HIST 635/004 this week

Week 14 26 – 30 November

The Suez Crisis

Anthony, have you lost your mind?

- Dwight Eisenhower to Anthony Eden, October 1956

29th - **Last day** to submit your term paper

Readings: Clarke, ch. 8 (to bottom of p. 263); Sandbrook, ch. 1-2

Week 15 3 – 7 December

Never had it so good

Let's be frank about it; most of our people have never had it so good. ... What is worrying some of us is "Is it too good to be true?"

- Harold Macmillan, 20 July 1957

Readings: Sandbrook, ch 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12

Week 16 10 – 14 December

Final exam

Hist 635/004

Thursday

13th December 4.30 p.m. - 7.15 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE: ALL DATES AND ASSIGNMENTS ARE SUBJECT TO SLIGHT MODIFICATION DEPENDING UPON UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES.