History 600: London: A Modern Imperial Metropolis
Fall 2013
Tuesday 11:00-1:00
5255 Mosse Humanities Building

Professor Daniel Ussishkin
5112 Mosse Humanities Building
Email: ussishkin@wisc.edu
Phone: (608) 263 1839
Office Hours: Tuesday, 1:00-3:00

This subject of this seminar is London, as a lived and imagined place: for a long time the largest city in Europe; the first modern metropolis; the center of a thriving commercial culture; a global capital of finance; the heart of modern imperial Britain. The English writer, James Boswell, notoriously thought that “when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life.” The French philosopher Voltaire was one of the many who envied it as an exemplary site of modern civil society. London was seen as a source of pleasure, but quite often, as representing, and harboring, all the threats and maladies of modernity. Whereas some saw London as affording opportunities for sociability, pleasure, anonymity, or an escape from the constraints of home, others saw vice, degeneration, decay, and collapse of the social fabric. While some were allured by its increasingly cosmopolitan or multi-cultural nature, others saw it as a threat to what they regarded as the fundamental aspects of Britishness. For better or worse, for the past two centuries, modern meant urban, and urban meant London.

The first half of the seminar will be devoted readings and discussions that will direct us to grappling with the questions and problems that animate historical research on London. The second part of the seminar will be devoted to writing an original 20-25pp. original research paper based on primary sources (numerous such sources are available). Course assignments include short written responses, research exercises (related to your final paper), oral presentations, peer criticism and collegiality.

Course mechanics:
*Each meeting two students will present the sources and launch the discussion. Students should work together on to produce a critical presentation and suggest questions for discussion (at least 3).
*All written assignments should be submitted both electronically (through Learn@UW) and in a hard copy (12-pt. font, double space, 1.25 side margins).
*Unless otherwise mentioned, all hard copies are due in class.
*The first draft of you research paper is due 11/16 noon. Final draft due 12/12 1:00pm.
*For the final presentations, each student will present her/his own work (10 minutes) as well as prepare constructive commentary on a peer's paper (5 minutes).
*Further particulars on paper format will be described in class.
*Students are required to attend all meetings. Failure to do so is likely to severely affect your grade; students cannot accumulate an excess of three unexcused (undocumented) absences in order to pass the class.
* There are a couple of weeks during which the seminar is not scheduled to meet. However, you should keep regular class times free of other obligations, as changes to the syllabus are possible and a meeting may in the end be scheduled for that week.

**Course packet:** A course packet is available at the Copy Center, 1650 Humanities. A few items (marked by a ‘ – ‘ below) are available online through the library.

**Grade structure:**
Active participation: 15%
Written Assignments: 15%
Presentations and peer criticism: 15%
Final Paper (20-25pp.): 55%

**Schedule**

I. 09/03 Introduction

II. 09/10 Culture, Commerce, and Polity in the 18th-Century

Read:


*Addison on the Pleasures of the Imagination, Spectator (1712)

*Steele on the Barbaric State of “Publick Diversions,” Tatler (1709).

**Note:** Hogarth’s paintings, discussed in Porter’s article, are easily found online. An excellent online digital images collection on eighteenth-century England is the Lewis Walpole Library at Yale.
Assignments:
1) In 150 words, describe the principal argument presented by one of the authors (secondary sources only).
2) 150 words: why I took this class?

III. 09/17 Library Session

Class meets in Memorial Library, room 231, for a library session with Julianne Haahr, Western European Studies Librarian.

Assignment: Think about your question for the library specialist, and write them down.

IV. 09/24 Reform, Spatial and Moral

Read:


Assignment:
1) In 250 words or less, discuss one of the articles above: what is the argument, and why is it all important (i.e. what are the larger questions the author attempts to address).
2) What is my research question, and how will I answer it (1 page). Due Monday 09/24 noon.

V. 10/01 A Modern Babylon?

Read:
Assignment:
Find a primary source relating to the history of modern London using the research tools you have gained in the library session; ideally, this would be a source related to your own research, and write a 500-word analysis of the source (author, genre, audience, what you have learned from it, what questions it raised). Bring both the source and your analysis to class.

VI. 10/08 London and Britishness

Read:


Assignment:
List of available sources and a brief discussion (2 pp.); due Monday 10/08, noon.

VII. 10/15 Postwar Fantasies


Assignment:
Prepare 3-4 pp. plan of paper and bring it to class.

VIII. 10/22 Global London on Film


Read:

Assignment:
Revise your paper plan according to your peer's suggestion. Revised version due in class.

IX. 10/29 Individual meetings with Instructor

X. 11/05 No class

XI. 11/12 No class

** First draft due Friday, November 15, noon**

XII. 11/19 No class

XIII. 11/26 Final Presentations

XIV. 12/03 Final Presentations

XV. 12/10 **Final papers due 12/10 1:00pm**