History 837: Modern Imperial Britain
Spring 2014
Tuesday, 11:00-12:55
Humanities 5257

Professor Daniel Ussishkin
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The seminar introduces students to some of the principal topics in the historiography of modern Britain and its empire. Using both older and recent work, we will look at the types of questions that have animated research in the field, the various approaches that historians have used to answer them. We will pay particular attention to the ways in which of Britain’s political, cultural, and economic modernization have often been regarded as exemplary, and we will ask how new historiographical approaches have challenged or transformed our understanding of these trajectories.

Books:
Jordanna Bailkin, The Afterlife of Empire (Berkeley, 2012)
Matt Haulbrook, Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957 (Chicago, 2006)
Chris Otter, The Victorian Eye: A Political History of Light and Vision in Britain, 1800-1910 (Chicago, 2008)

-All books listed above and on the seminar schedule below have been place on reserve at the College Library. Journal articles (marked with a ‘*’) are available online.
Requirements:
- Critical presentations (as needed)
- Learn@UW discussion board: a short paragraph, including a set of questions, to be posted by Monday 8:00pm (these comments are to be incorporated into the critical presentation the following day).
- 2x 5-p. historiographic essay on one week's readings (to be handed in on the day those readings are discussed).
- Review essay of two to three books (AHR or LRB style), or a bibliographical essay on a particular subject of your choice (great option for those planning a prelim field), roughly 7-8 pages; due 05/06.

All written assignments should be submitted in hard copy as well as electronically (through the DropBox feature at Learn@UW), 12 pt. double space 1” margins.

Schedule
1. 01/21  Introduction

2. 01/28  The Long Eighteenth Century

Steve Pincus, 1688: The First Modern Revolution (Yale, 2009), pp. 3-29, 49-90, 366-399.


3. 02/04  Statecraft and imperial rule


4. 02/11 Eighteenth-century political culture


5. 02/18 Trade, manufacture, capitalism


6. 02/25 Class and Its histories


7. 03/04    Liberalism: politics
Elaine Hadley, Living Liberalism: Practical Citizenship in Mid-Victorian Britain (Chicago, 2010), 1-62.


8. 03/11    Liberalism: government
Chris Otter, The Victorian Eye: A Political History of Light and Vision in Britain, 1800-1910 (Chicago, 2008), 1-134, 253-263.


Mary Poovey, Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830-1864 (Chicago, 1995), 1-24, 98-114.


Spring Break

9. 03/25    Imperial practices and visions


10. 04/01   Humanitarianism, development, internationalism
Michelle Tusan, Smyrna’s Ashes: Humanitarianism, Genocide, and the Birth of the Middle East (Berkeley, 2012), 1-39, 113-183.


11. 04/08  War and democratic citizenship


12. 04/15  Sex and space


13. 04/22  Science and the search for the social


14. 04/29  After empire


15. 05/06  Course conclusions.