

History 124: Britain since 1688

Lectures: M, W, F, 1131 Mosse, 12:05-12:55

Professor Daniel Ussishkin

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The course introduces students to the major themes in the history of modern imperial Britain and to some of ways historians tried to make sense of it all. Such themes include (but not limited to) the changing patterns of life during those centuries, the development of modern identities and notions of the selves, the emergence of a modern, commercial civil society, the rise of industrial capitalism, liberalism, the modern state, and imperial and total war (for more details see the lecture schedule below). We will pay particular attention to gender in terms of both “lived experience” and representations of power (and its critique), and to the transnational nature of modern British history, largely, but not only, through the history of the economic, political, and cultural foundations of the modern British empire.

The course consists of three lectures per week and one discussion section. Attendance to both is required. The textbook is merely a teaching aid and is **not** a substitute for attending lectures (in other words, most of the material covered in the lectures does not appear in the textbook). Section grade consists of recorded attendance and active participation.

Required Books:

1. Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (Modern Library edition 2004, ISBN 0-375-76115-2)
2. Thomas R. Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (Oxford World’s Classic, 2008, ISBN 978-0-19-954045-7).
3. George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (Penguin edition, ISBN 0-14-118529-5)
4. Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* (Vintage, ISBN 0-375-70386-1)

Textbook:

5. Ellis Wasson, *Modern Britain: 1714 to the Present* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

All books are available at the bookstore. However, are **not** required to purchase these particular editions. There are many other editions of the books available for purchase at a very low price.

In addition to the books there are numerous primary sources. Most of these are available on the Web (and are hyperlinked on this syllabus). Others are available in PDF format. Links to all sources are available at Learn@UW → Content → Course Reader. You are required to **print** the sources and bring the hard copy to discussion section.

Assignments and grading:

2-3 pp. paper: 10% (Oct 07)
Midterm: 20% (Oct 21, in class)
5 pp. paper: 20% (Nov 22)
Final: 35% (Dec 17, 7:25-9:25 pm)
Section: 15%

*Papers should be submitted in both a hard copy as well as electronically (through the “drop” feature on Learn@UW).

Course Schedule

09/02 *Why Britain? Introduction and course mechanics.*

Week I: Restoration and Revolution

09/05 LABOR DAY – NO CLASS
09/07 *Britain during the Restoration*
09/09 *The Glorious Revolution*

Read:

1. Gregory King’s “Social Table” for 1688 (1696).
 2. Richard Baxter on oppression of husbandmen (from Ann Hughes, *Seventeenth Century England*).
- Wasson, chapter 1.

- **For next week’s discussion:**

1. [John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government* \(1690\), chapters II, VII.](#)
 2. Richard Price on the Glorious Revolution, from Steven Pincus, *England’s Glorious Revolution: A Brief History with Documents* (2006).
 3. Edmund Burke on the Glorious Revolution, from Pincus (2006).
- On the Glorious Revolution, read the relevant parts online from [Wasson, Chapter 0](#).

Week II: A Modern Polity

09/12 Political Stability
09/14 War and Finance
09/16 Empire, Nation, and Trade

Read:

-Wasson, chapter 2.

Week III: Polite and Commercial People

- 09/19 The Enlightenment
09/21 Commerce and Pleasure
09/23 Luxury, Virtue, and the Modern Self

Read:

1. [Bernard Mandeville, "The Grumbling Hive" \(1705\)](#) (entire)
2. [The First English Coffee Houses \(1670s\)](#)
3. Steele on the Lottery (*The Tatler* 1710), from Erin Mackie, *The Commerce of Everyday Life: Selections from the Tatler and the Spectator* (Bedford, 1998)
4. Addison on the Bank of England and the Allegory of Lady Credit, *The Spectator* (1711), from Mackie, 1998.
5. Addison's Allegory of Luxury and Avarice, *Spectator* (1711), from Mackie, 1998.

Week IV: The Age of Revolutions

- 09/26 The abolition of slavery
09/28 The political challenges of the 1760s
09/30 Britons and the French Revolution

Read:

1. Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative* (entire).
- Wasson, chapter 3.

For next week's discussion:

1. [Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* \(1791\)](#)
2. [Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* \(1792\)](#)
3. Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man* (1791) (excerpts)

Week V: Industry and Class

- 10/03 The Industrial Revolution
10/05 Class society (1): the middle classes
10/07 Class society (2): the working classes and the radical critique

Read:

1. [P. Gaskell, *The Manufacturing Population of England* \(1833\)](#)
2. [Samuel Bamford on the Peterloo Massacre \(1819\)](#)
3. [Samuel Smiles, *Self Help* \(1882\)](#)

-Wasson, chapter 4.

-2-3 pp. paper due in class 10/07-

Week VI: Social and Political Reform

- 10/10 The poor and the Poor Laws
- 10/12 Crime and punishment
- 10/14 The "Great" Reform Act

Read:

1. Thomas R. Malthus, *Essay on Population* (entire).
2. [T. B. Macaulay's Speech on the Reform Bill \(1832\)](#)

-Wasson, 130-139.

Week VII: Empire

- 10/17 The British in India (I):
- 10/19 The British in India (II)
- 10/21 MIDTERM

Read: (For discussion in the following week)

1. [Edmund Burke, Speech in Commons on India \(1783\)](#)
2. [William Bentinck on Ritual Murder in India \(1829\)](#)
3. [Thomas Babington Macaulay, Minute on Indian Education \(1835\)](#)

-Wasson, 169-180.

Week VIII Liberalism at Mid-Century

- 10/24 Empire and Free Trade
- 10/26 *Laissez-Faire* on Display: The Irish Famine and the Great Exhibition
- 10/28 Nation, Class, and Political Reform

Read:

1. [Lead Editorial on the Irish Famine, London Times, February 10, 1846](#)

-Wasson, 141-142, 154-157.

Week IX The Victorians

- 10/31 The New Imperialism
- 11/02 Science and Religion
- 11/04 Sex and the City

1. [Elisa Greathed on the opening of the Indian Mutiny \(1857\)](#)
2. [John A. Hobson, *Imperialism* \(1902\).](#)
3. [Rudyard Kipling, *White Man's Burden* \(1899\)](#)
4. [George Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant" \(1936\)](#)

-Wasson, 199-203 (end of page), 225-228,

Week X *“And Then History Came to a.”*

- 11/07 Liberalism and the Social Question
- 11/09 Challenges to the Separate Spheres
- 11/11 The Great War

Read:

1. [Blease on New Liberalism \(1913\)](#)
 2. [L. T. Hobhouse, *Liberalism* \(1911\)](#)
 3. [Emmeline Pankhurst on Militant Suffragists \(1913\)](#)
 4. [Wilfred Owen, "Dulce et Decorum Est" \(1918\)](#)
- Wasson, 189-196, 208-221, 241-253

Week XI *The Long Weekend*

- 11/14 Reconstruction
- 11/16 Men, Women, and the Conservative Turn
- 11/18 Depression and Unemployment

Read:

1. George Orwell, [The Road to Wigan Pier](#) (entire)
 2. [Marie Stopes, *Married Love* \(1918\)](#) (Author's Introduction only)
- Wasson, 253-264

Week XII *The People's War*

- 11/21 Blood, Sweat, and Tears
- 11/23 Towards a New Jerusalem
- 11/25 THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS

Read:

1. [Churchill's speech, "We shall fight on beaches" \(1940\)](#)
2. [Churchill's "Blood, sweat, and tears" \(1940\)](#)
3. [The Beveridge Report \(1940\)](#)
4. Mass Observation, *People in Production* (1942)

-Wasson, 267-281

-5 pp. paper due 11/22-

Week XIII *The People's Peace*

- 11/28 The quest for consensus
11/30 Consumerism and permissiveness
12/02 The retreat from empire

Read:

1. Contemporary reflections on the coronation.
 1. ["Let Us Face the Future," Labour Party's Manifesto \(1945\)](#)
 2. [Gay Liberation Front, *Manifesto* \(1971\)](#)
 3. [Philip Larkin, "Annus Mirabilis"](#)
- Wasson, 281-295.

Week XIV *Discontent*

- 12/05 Immigration, race, and identity
12/07 Troubles
12/09 The Winter of Discontent

Read:

1. Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* (entire)
 2. [Enoch Powell, Rivers of Blood Speech \(1968\)](#)
- Wasson, 295-303, 315-320.

Week XV *Plus ca change...?*

- 12/12 Thatcher's Britain
12/14 Course conclusions.

Read:

1. [Thatcher on Christianity and Wealth \(1988\)](#)
2. [Margaret Thatcher's interview to *Women's Own* \(1988\)](#)

-Wasson, 305-315, 320-333.

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