

The University of Wisconsin  
Department of History  
Semester I, 1983-84

History 372    A Social History of the English People, 1450-1780    MacDonald

Course Description

This course surveys the social history of England from the later Middle Ages until the Industrial Revolution. The principal theme of the lectures is social change and its effects on daily life. The major alterations in the social and economic structure of the nation are described, and the most significant efforts to explain them are considered. The ramifications of social and economic change are analyzed topically. The nature of aristocratic power and the condition of the peasantry, family structure and emotional ties between people, popular recreations and folk rituals, beliefs in witchcraft and magic, conceptions of time, and architectural expressions of cultural values are all examined and related to the structural transformations England experienced during the early modern period.

Lectures and Discussion Sections

Lectures will be on MW, 2:25-3:40; there will be one discussion section or activity period (e.g.s., a film or review) per week.

Written Assignments and Examinations

There will be one mid-term examination, held in class, on 24 October. The day and time of the final examination may be found in the Timetable. Four-unit students will be asked to write a term paper, not to exceed fifteen pages in length, in addition to taking the mid-term and final. The topics for term papers, bibliographies for them, and individual research and writing schedules will be devised in consultation with the instructor. Early in the semester there will be a meeting of four-unit students to discuss the materials available for research in British history and methods of finding them.

Grading system

All students will be graded A-F. The approximate weight given to each assignment or activity will be as follows: three-unit students--mid-term 25%, final 55%, class participation 20%; four-unit students--mid-term 15%, final 35%, term paper 30%, class participation 20%.

Readings

Required:

- D.C. Coleman, The Economy of England, 1450-1750 (Oxford)  
Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy (Oxford, abridged edn.)  
Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800 (Harper)  
Roy Porter, English Society in the Eighteenth Century (Penguin)  
Mark Girouard, The English Country House (Penguin)  
Alan Macfarlane, "Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England," in Crime in England, 1550-1800, ed. J.S. Cockburn (Princeton), ch. III.  
E.P. Thompson, "Patrician Society, Plebian Culture," The Journal of Social History, 7 (1974): 382-405;  
or E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," Past and Present, no. 38 (1967): 56-97;  
or E.P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," Past and Present, 50 (1971): 76-136.

(The articles by Macfarlane and Thompson are on reserve in H.C. White and the History Department Library, room 4257 Humanities.)