

History 600: London: A Modern Imperial Metropolis

Fall 2012

Wednesday 11:00-1:00

5245 Mosse Humanities Building

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 2:00-4:00

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.
- * 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.

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. 09/05 Introduction**
- II. 09/12 Culture, Commerce, and Polity in the 18th-Century**

Read:

- *John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth-Century* (Chicago, 1997), chapter 2, "The Pleasures of the Imagination," pp. 56-122.
- *Miles Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity: London's Geographies, 1680-1780* (New York and London: Guilford Press, 1998), chapter 4, "The Pleasure Garden," pp. 116-157.
- *Roy Porter, "Capital Art: Hogarth's London," in *The Dumb Show: Image and Society in the Works of William Hogarth*, edited by Frederic Ogee (Oxford, 1997, pp. 47-64
- *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. 09/19 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. 09/26 Reform, Spatial and Moral

Read:

*Robert B. Shoemaker, "Reforming the City: The Reformation of Manners Campaign in London, 1690-1738," in *Stilling the Grumbling Hive: The Response to Social and Economic Problems in England, 1689-1750*, edited by Lee Davison et al. (Wolfeboro Halls, NC: Alan Sutton, 1992), 99-120.

-Chris Otter, "Cleansing and Clarifying: Technology and Perception in Nineteenth-Century London," *Journal of British Studies* 43, no. 1 (2004), Special Issue on Transforming Metropolitan London 1750-1960:pp. 40-64]

*Brenda Assael, "Music in the Air: Noise, Performers, and the Contest over the Streets of the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Metropolis," in Tim Hitchcock and Heather Shore, eds., *The Streets of London: From the Great Fire to the Great Stink* (London, Rivers Oram, 2003), 183-197.

Assignment:

1) In 250 words or less, discuss one of the articles above: what is the argument, and why is it at 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. 10/03 A Modern Babylon?

Read:

*Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992): chapter 3, "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon," pp. 81-122.

*Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship between Classes in Victorian Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), chapter 16, "From 'Demoralization' to 'Degeneration': The Threat of Outcast London," pp. 281-314.

*Henry Mayhew on the costermongers, from his *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851).

*Octavia Hill on the influence of blocks of model dwellings on character, in Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People of London*, 3rd edition, vol. 5, (1902).

-For Stead's article on the Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon, see <http://www.victorianlondon.org/publications/maiden.htm> (this is an excellent website with lots of primary sources on Victorian London).

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. 10/10 London and Britishness

Read:

*Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), Part I: "Imperial London," chapter 5, "Popular Culture in the Imperial Metropolis," 93-115.

*Mica Nava, "Wider Horizons and Modern Desire: The Contradictions of America and Racial Difference in London, 1939-1945," *New Formations* no. 37 (1999), special issue on Sexual Geographies: 71-91.

-Matt Houlbrook, "Soldier Heroes and Rent Boys: Homosex, Masculinities, and Rent Boys in the Brigade of Guards, c. 1900-1960," *Journal of British Studies* 42, no. 3: 351-388 [JSTOR]

Assignment:

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

VII. 10/17 **Postwar Fantasies**

-Frank Mort, "Fantasies of Metropolitan Life: Planning London in the 1940s," *Journal of British Studies* 43, no. 1 (2004), Special Issue on Transforming Metropolitan London 1750-1960: 120-151.

Becky Conekin, "Here is the Modern World Itself: The Festival of Britain's Representations of the Future," in *Moments of Modernity: Reconstructing Britain 1945-1964*, edited by Becky Conekin, Frank Mort, and Chris Waters (London and New York: Rivers Oram, 1999), pp. 228-246.

Assignment:

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

VIII. 10/24 **Global London on Film**

Movie: *Dirty Pretty Things* (Stephen Frears, 2002)

Read:

Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization: The Human Consequences* (Cambridge, 1998), chapter 4: "Tourists and Vagabonds," 77-102.

Assignment:

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

IX. 10/31 Individual meetings with Instructor (10/30-31).

X. 11/07 No class

XI. 11/14 No class

**** First draft due Friday, November 16, noon****

XII. 11/21 No class

XIII. 11.28 Final Presentations

XIV. 12/05 Final Presentations

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