THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
Department of History
Semester II (1992 - 1993)

History 124 British History: 1688 to the Present Mr. Donnelly

COURSE DESCRIPTION

History 124 is the second half of a two-semester sequence surveying the history of England and the British empire. The course extends from the "Bloodless Revolution" of 1688 to the "Welfare State" of the 1980s.

History 124 is concerned with the transformation of England from a thinly settled, mainly rural, economically underdeveloped, and politically unstable nation in the late 17th century into a thickly peopled and heavily urbanized country renowned for political stability in the 19th and 20th centuries. One major objective of the course will be to illuminate the process by which England achieved stable constitutional monarchy, based on a powerful elite of landed and monied families, and the ways in which this form of government peacefully evolved into a parliamentary democracy controlled by the masses. A second goal will be to explain how England harnessed its modest economic resources in such a way as to give birth to the epoch-making Industrial Revolution, and how the new industrial society moved from private enterprise and laissez-faire to socialism and the welfare state. A third objective will be to draw meaning from Britain's great extension and exploitation of empire in the 18th and 19th centuries as well as from the collapse of the imperial edifice of the 20th.

LECTURES

Lectures two days per week (TR, 2:30-3:45 p.m.), supplemented by weekly discussion meetings and/or audio-visual presentations, including films, sound filmstrips, slides, and music.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS

Besides a final exam, there will be either one or two hour exams, depending upon the decision of the students during the first week of class. Those students who take the course for 4 credits will be asked to do a short essay (2,500 words) on an issue relating to the subject matter of the course.

GRADING SYSTEM

If the students decide to have only one hour exam plus the final, the grade for the course will be determined on the following basis: active interest and regular participation in discussion, 15 percent; hour exam, 35 percent; final exam, 50 percent. If, on the other hand, the students decide to have two hour exams, plus the final, a number of grading options will be offered, allowing students to determine, within broad limits, how they wish their grade for the course to be determined.

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REQUIRED READINGS

Briggs, Asa, Victorian People (Chicago U.P.).

Hay, Douglas, et al., Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England (Pantheon Books).

Hobsbawm, E. J., Industry and Empire. Pelican Economic History of England, Vol. 3 (Penguin Books).

Porter, Bernard, The Lion's Share (Longman).

Prall, Stuart E., The Bloodless Revolution: England, 1688 (University of Wisconsin Press).

Webb, R. K., Modern England, 2nd ed. (Harper and Row).

Additional Paper Topics for History 124

The books listed on the syllabus and this sheet are meant as a beginning. Please use the resources of Memorial Library to expand these reading lists. You will find that the most recent works on these topics are usually to be found in journals. Check the *Historical Abstracts* guide in the Reference Room for citations of articles (they are listed by topics). You will find that *Past and Present, The Journal of Modern History, History, The Journal of Family History,* and *The Journal of Social History* will be extremely helpful.

1. Woman and the Industrial Revolution: Explore the relationship between the rise of capitalism and one class or group of women. Were these women harmed by the Industrial Revolution or did they make significant gains? If you (or the historians whom you read and support) believe that women's position declined, what were the setbacks which women suffered? And how did these setbacks outweigh any gains they may have made? If on the contrary, you believe that women's position in Victorian society was improved as a result of the rise of capitalism, explain what these improvements were and how they were more than offset by the setbacks which these women may have experienced.

   S. Alexander, *Women's Work in Nineteenth Century London.*
   Vern Bullough, *English Laundresses: A Social History, 1850-1930.*
   Lee Holcombe, *Victorian Ladies at Work: Middle Class Working Women in England and Wales.*
   Angela V. Johns, *By the Sweat of their Brows: Women Workers at the Victorian Coal Mines.*
   Elizabeth Roberts, *Women's Work: 1840-1940.*
   Norbert Solden, *Women in the British Trade Unions.*
   Barbara Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem.*
   Mariana Valverade. "Giving the Female A Domestic Turn: The Social, Legal and Moral Regulation of Women's Work in British Cotton Mills," *Journal of Social History,* 1988, 21 (4), p. 619-634.
   Martha Vicinus, *Suffer and be Still: Victorian Women.*
   ---------- *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850-1920.*

2. Social reform and social control: Was social reform used as a means of controlling the lower classes? Was the ultimate goal of some eighteenth- and nineteenth- century reformers to force the working classes to conform to middle-class values and/or culture? Or were these reformers simply moved by the plight of the lower classes? You will want to narrow your focus to a time period (either the eighteenth or nineteenth century) as well as to a type of social reform.