



## **BRITAIN IN THE MODERN WORLD, 1550-1815**

HIS 235; Fall 2010

M,W,F 10:00-10:50; Mears 115

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**Fall Office Hours:**  
M, W, 2-4; Tue, 10-11:30  
& by appointment

### *Course Overview*

By 1815, Britain had emerged as one of the most powerful and prosperous societies in modern history. Such an outcome would have surprised earlier generations of Europeans, who often held a dim view of the British Isles, with its small population, its geographic isolation, its internal divisions and endemic conflict, as well as the marginal nature of its economy. In 1500, for example, the English crown did not even control the majority of territory on the British archipelago, and there were actually more sheep than subjects. Yet by 1815, 'Britain' had emerged as a powerful nation-state, with an impressive population, the first industrializing economy, and an enormous global empire that included forty-three colonies around the world. This class will explore how this surprising transformation occurred, focusing not only on the historical processes behind this tremendous growth and change, but also the complexities, contradictions and conflict that surrounded it.

Over the course of the semester, we will tackle these issues by analyzing a variety of historical documents, artifacts, and scholarly accounts that address the evolution of Britain and its empire from the sixteenth century until the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. The readings, as well as the written assignments, focus on how the modern British state, social and economic organization, and cultural identities developed in a global context. Such a focus entails an examination of how Britain exported its institutions abroad and how it was itself "made" by contact with other states and societies around the globe.

For better or for worse, the history of Britain and the history of the modern world are intricately tied together. And the purpose of this course—along with its companion class, HIS 236—is to explore how this underlying connection drove the evolution of British society, modernity, and global history.

## ***Required Texts***

The following texts are required and can be purchased at the Campus Bookstore (a copy of *Web of Empire* and *Britons: Forging the Nation* will also be available on reserve at Burling Library).

- Allison Games, *Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
- Olaudah Equiano, *The Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1999).
- Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992).

Note: There are a number of shorter articles, essays, and primary sources that are also required reading for the course. These will be made available through the course module on Pioneer Web.

## ***Course Requirements & Policies***

### Class Attendance

Please contact me if a medical or personal issue is preventing your class attendance, and have the relevant office (Health Services or Student Affairs) do the same.

### Class Sessions & Participation

While the majority of our class time will be devoted to discussing the common readings, I will give a number of short lectures to provide more context, explore particular examples in greater depth, or occasionally to cover an interesting topic that simply could not be fit into the reading schedule. But I want to emphasize that class discussion is really the heart of the course—it provides an opportunity for each student to examine the issues in a critical light, to move beyond just reading “comprehension” to a deeper level of *analysis* in which you identify the essential components of an argument and explore how they relate to one another, and to the larger issues of the course. By sharing our different questions, perspectives and insights, we all have an opportunity to get a better understanding of the past.

It is also important to work on articulating your views to other people. Many times, we think we have a solid grasp of a topic or an argument, but then struggle to “find the words” to explain what we actually mean. This often happens when individuals sit down to write papers, and discover that their command of a topic seems to suddenly vanish as they try to actually formulate their ideas in concrete form. So I strongly urge you to participate fully in our group discussions throughout the semester.

Since class discussion provides our main opportunity to examine and debate the key issues of British history, it is crucial that students come to each class fully prepared to engage the questions at hand. This involves not only completing the assigned readings prior to class, but also taking the appropriate time to address discussion questions, to organize your notes accordingly, and to jot

down specific examples and passages you want to highlight in class. Remember that effective note taking and class participation will lay the foundation for a focused grasp of the material, and will allow you to succeed when you return to these topics later for a paper or an exam.

Class participation accounts for 20% of your overall grade, and like any other assignment for this course, will be evaluated seriously. I assign a participation grade for each and every class session, and will use the overall average to calculate your participation grade. Before Fall break, I will email you a mid-semester participation grade so that you are aware of where you stand in this respect. But feel free to contact me earlier if you have questions or concerns about how you are doing in class discussions (or about ways to improve your participation).

### Document Exercise, due Sept. 15th

This short response paper (2-3 pages) will offer you own analysis of Richard Hakluyt's "Inducements to the Linking of the Voyage Intended towards Virginia," (1585). Your interpretation will respond to some of the major themes put forward by Allison Games and Nicholas Canny, who offer different accounts of how to explain the impulse and mindset of English colonization. Additional guidelines for the paper will be distributed on September 6<sup>th</sup>.

### Two short papers (3-5 pages), due Sept. 27<sup>th</sup> and Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>

These papers will require you to develop an interpretive argument based upon your analysis of a key primary source from the period, comparing it to the themes and issues explored in the secondary scholarship. For the first paper, you will select a sixteenth or seventeenth-century travel account, and will explore how particular aspects of the source either illuminate, challenge, or revise a major argument put forward by other historians of the period. The second paper will involve a similar exercise, this time focusing on eighteenth-century newspapers and how their portrayal of economic, social, and political change squares with the accounts you read in weeks 9-12. I will post a fuller explanation, including guidelines, on P-web at least 10 days before each deadline.

### Paper Rewrites

The improvement of writing skills will be a major focus of the class assignments, and accordingly, students will have the option of rewriting their early papers & submitting them for a new grade. This will apply to the Document Exercise, Paper #1, and Paper #2. For more details, see the "Guidelines for Paper Submissions" on P-web.

### Two in-class Exams (Midterm, Oct. 11<sup>th</sup>; Final, Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>)

Because the in-class exams are only 50 minutes, they will not have an essay component. Instead, the exams will be comprised of historical identifications, source analysis, and/or short answer questions. The midterm exam will cover the material from weeks 2-7, while the final will cover weeks 8-15. Additional guidelines and study suggestions will be distributed closer to the time.

### Research Proposal & Paper (Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> & Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>)

The final assignment for the semester is a short research paper (8-10 pages) that will allow you to explore a particular issue of your choice in greater depth. The two main requirements are: a.) that the paper topic either connects to, or is rooted in, Olaudah Equiano's autobiography, which you will be reading for the course. Equiano's text covers an amazingly broad array of topics and issues, so

you will have a wide range of subjects to choose from. b.) your research project must involve the use of several eighteenth-century sources to address your central research question/topic. There is no shortage of material you can work with, from enormous online databases such as the Eighteenth-Century Collections Online (ECCO), Empire Online, and America's Historical Newspapers, to a considerable range of printed material in Burling Library.

Each student should schedule an appointment, or come by my office hours, to discuss their ideas for a potential research topic and the sources they might use. A short project proposal (1-2 pages) will be due on December 6<sup>th</sup>, and it will briefly explain your central research question, how it sheds light on some aspect of Equiano's world, and the primary documents you plan to use. More detailed guidelines about the research project (and the proposal), will be posted on P-web after Fall break.

### Religious Holidays

The religious observance policy of the college states:

Grinnell College acknowledges and embraces the religious diversity of its faculty, students and staff. Faculty and students share responsibility to support members of our community who observe religious holidays. Students will provide faculty members with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which they will be absent, and this notice would be expected to occur no later than the third week of the semester. Faculty members will make reasonable efforts to accommodate students who need to be absent from examinations or class due to religious observance. Students are responsible for completing any part of the course work, including examinations, that they have missed due to religious observance, and faculty members are responsible for giving them the opportunity to do so.

As the policy indicates, I will be glad to work with students to make sure that class requirements do not conflict with religious holidays and observances. But it is your responsibility to let me know in advance when these potential conflicts may occur, so that we can address these issues at the beginning of the semester.

### Extensions & Late assignments

Late papers will receive a deduction of 1/3 of a letter grade per day. Exceptions may be made for extraordinary medical or personal issues. Each student is also allowed a **one time** extension of five days to turn in a written assignment late (the two exams and the final research paper excluded) without incurring any penalty. You should email me in advance so that I am aware that you plan to use your extension for a particular assignment. However, nothing will be accepted after December 17<sup>th</sup>, since the college requires that ALL coursework be submitted by the end of exam week (unless you are taking an incomplete in the class).

### Disabilities

If you have specific physical, psychiatric or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please let me know early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide documentation of your disability to the Associate Dean and Director of Academic Advising, Joyce Stern, whose office is located in Rosenfield Center (x3702).



- Fri (Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup>):           **Reforming Church & State**  
 Reading Due:           Elton, “The Tudor Revolution,” (P-web)  
                                   Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (P-web)  
                                   Tanner, *Tudor Constitutional Documents* (P-web)

### Week 3           The Dynamics of English Expansion

- Mon (Sept. 6<sup>th</sup>):           **Beyond the Pale: The Celtic Marchlands**  
 Reading Due:           Ellis, “The Tudor Borderlands,” (P-web)  
                                   Canny, “The Ideology of Colonization: From Ireland to America,” (P-web)
- Wed (Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>):           **Worlds in Motion**  
 Reading Due:           Games, *Web of Empire*, pp. 1-46
- Fri (Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>):           **Lessons from the Mediterranean**  
 Reading Due:           Games, *Web of Empire* , ch. 2  
                                   16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> Century Travel Accounts (P-web)

### Week 4           New Horizons: The Growth of Overseas Trade and Settlement

- Mon (Sept. 13<sup>th</sup>):           **Commerce & the Merchant Community**  
 Reading Due:           Games, *Web of Empire*, ch. 3-4
- Wed (Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>):           **English Plans for Colonization**  
 Reading Due:           Hakluyt, “Inducements to the Liking of the Voyage,” (P-web)  
                                   *Document Exercise (due in class)*
- Fri (Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>):           **Trade, Diplomacy, and Statecraft**  
 Reading Due:           Games, *Web of Empire* , ch. 5-6

## Week 5 Religion & Politics in the Seventeenth Century

- Mon (Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>):      **The Visible Saints: Puritanism & Dissent**  
 Reading Due:      Collinson, "Protestant Culture and the Cultural Revolution," (P-web)  
                          Documents & Sources, Set 2 (P-web)
- Wed (Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup>):      **A Nation of Prophets**  
 Reading Due:      Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down* (P-web)  
                          Everard, *The True Levellers Standard Advanced* (P-web)  
                          Knollys, "A Glimpse of Sion's Glory," (P-web)
- Fri (Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>):      **Exporting Religion**  
 Reading Due:      Games, *Web of Empire*, ch. 7

## Week 6 Crisis, Conflict, and the Stuart Regime

- Mon (Sept. 27<sup>th</sup>):      **The Problem of the Three Kingdoms**  
 Reading Due:      Bucholz and Key, "Early Stuarts and the Three Kingdoms," (P-web)  
                          Russell, "The British Problem and the English Civil War," (P-web)  
                          *First Paper (due in class)*
- Wed (Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>):      **Revolution & Republicanism**  
 Reading Due:      Kishlansky, "Saints and Soldiers," (P-web)  
                          Documents & Sources, Set 3 (P-web)
- Fri (Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>):      **The English Civil Wars: An Atlantic Perspective**  
 Reading Due:      Games, *Web of Empire*, ch. 8  
                          Pestana, *The English Atlantic in an Age of Revolution* (P-web)

## Week 7 The Restoration of Monarchy and the Consolidation of Empire

- Mon (Oct. 4<sup>th</sup>):      **Reconstructing the British State**  
 Reading Due:      Miller, "Politics in Restoration Britain," (P-web)  
                          Braddick, "Government, War, Trade, and Settlement," (P-web)

Wed (Oct. 6<sup>th</sup>):      **The Political Economy of Mercantilism**

Reading Due:      Games, *Web of Empire*, pp. 289-99  
 Documents & Sources, Set 4 (P-web)

Fri (Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>):      **East versus West: Connecting British Expansion**

Reading Due:      Stern, “British Asia and the British Atlantic,” (P-web)  
 Canny, “Asia, the Atlantic and the British Monarchy,” (P-web)  
 D’Avenant, *Essay on the East-India Trade* (P-web)

**Week 8      1688: “The Great Divide”**

Mon (Oct. 11<sup>th</sup>):      ***Midterm Exam***

Wed (Oct. 13<sup>th</sup>):      **The Glorious Revolution**

Reading Due:      Kishlansky, “A Protestant Succession,” (P-web)  
 Documents & Sources, Set 5 (P-web)

Fri (Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>):      **Britain’s Long Eighteenth Century, 1688-1832**

Reading Due:      Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation*, pp. 1-54

***Fall Break (October 18<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>)***

***SECTION II: BRITAIN, EMPIRE, AND THE GLOBAL EIGHTEENTH CENTURY***

**Week 9      “The Great Transformation”**

Mon (Oct. 25<sup>th</sup>):      **The Cult of Commerce**

Reading Due:      Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation*, ch. 2  
 E.P. Thompson, “The Moral Economy of the Crowd,” (P-web)



Wed (Oct. 27<sup>th</sup>):      **Empire & Industry**  
 Reading Due:      Breen, “The Meaning of Things,” (P-web)  
                          Cain and Hopkins, “Gentlemanly Capitalism,” (P-web)

Fri (Oct. 29<sup>th</sup>):      **Capitalism & Slavery: The Political Economy of Labor**  
 Reading Due:      Williams, “Slavery, Industrialization, and Abolition,” (P-web)  
                          Documents & Sources, Set 6 (P-web)

## Week 10      Imperial Warfare and the Nation

Mon (Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>):      **The Rise of the Military-Fiscal State**  
 Reading Due:      Brewer, *Sinews of Power* (P-web)  
                          Documents & Sources, Set 7 (P-web)

Wed (Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>):      **The Imperial Crucible**  
 Reading Due:      Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation*, ch. 3

Fri (Nov. 5<sup>th</sup>):      **Reconstructing the Ruling Class**  
 Reading Due:      Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation*, ch. 4  
                          Image Gallery (P-web)

## Week 11      Political Culture in the Augustan Age

Mon (Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>):      **The Transatlantic Web of Patronage & Power**  
 Reading Due:      Harris, *Politics and the Nation* (P-web)  
                          Olson & Brown, eds., *Anglo-American Political Relations* (P-web)  
                          Documents & Sources, Set 8 (P-web)

Wed (Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>):      **Parties and Popular Politics**  
 Reading Due:      Wilson, “The Case of Admiral Vernon,” (P-web)  
                          British Newspapers (P-web)

Fri (Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>):      **Royalty & Loyalty**  
 Reading Due:      Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation*, ch. 5

## Week 12      Print and the Public Sphere

Mon (Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>):      **The World of Civil Society**  
 Reading Due:      Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (P-web)  
 Documents & Sources, Set 9 (P-web)

Wed (Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>):      **The British Enlightenment**  
 Reading Due:      Porter, *The Creation of the Modern World* (P-web)  
 Documents & Sources, Set 10 (P-web)

Fri (Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>):      **Print Culture**  
 Reading Due:      Harris, "Print Culture," (P-web)  
 Bishop, "Book History," (P-web)  
***Second Paper (due by 5:00pm)***

## Week 13      The Black Atlantic

Mon (Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup>):      **Equiano's Narrative, Part 1**  
 Reading Due:      *The Life of Olaudah Equiano*, pp. 1-96

Wed (Nov. 24<sup>th</sup>):      **Equiano's Narrative, Part 2**  
 Reading Due:      *The Life of Olaudah Equiano*, pp. 97-184

***Thanksgiving Break (No Friday Class)***

## Week 14: The Age of Revolution

### Mon (Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>): **America's Colonial Rebellion: A British Perspective**

Reading Due: Heyck, "The Crisis of Empire," (P-web)  
 Oliver, *Origin and Progress of the American Rebellion* (P-web)  
 Documents & Sources, Set 11 (P-web)

### Wed (Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>): **Debating Rights: The Polarization of British Thought**

Reading Due: Eighteenth-Century Collection Online (ECCO) Assignment

### Fri (Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>): **The French Revolution and the Growth of British Radicalism**

Reading Due: MacLeod, "The Crisis of the French Revolution," (P-web)  
 Documents & Sources, Set 12 (P-web)

## Week 15: The Napoleonic Wars

### Mon (Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>): **The Politics of Gender**

Reading Due: Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation*, ch. 6  
***Project Proposals (due in class)***

### Wed (Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>): **Mobilization and Popular Commitment**

Reading Due: Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation*, pp. 283-320, 364-75

### Fri (Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>): ***Final Exam***

***Exam Week (Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>)***

***Final Project Due Thursday, December 16<sup>th</sup> (4:00pm)***