

## **HIS 236: Britain in the Modern World, 1815-present**

Spring 2009

MWF 10:00-10:50, ARH 324

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Mears 306

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Spring office hours: MWF 11:00-11:50; Thurs 1:00-4:00

For better or for worse, the history of Britain and the history of the wider world are intricately tied together. This class will explore how modern British politics, social and economic organization, and cultural identities developed in a global context, by looking both at how Britain exported its institutions and how it was itself “made” by contact with other states and societies. In particular, we will investigate the historical experience of British citizens and subjects in conjunction with larger political, social, and ideological change; consider the relational formation of social categories like nation, class, gender, race, and religion; and consider how marginalized groups negotiated structures of power and lobbied for greater representation within an expanding and contracting imperial polity. We will take a critical approach to these developments in British and colonial history by working intensively with primary sources (consisting mainly of multiple shorter documents in the first half of the course, and single whole sources during the second half) and evaluating the scholarship of other historians.

### ***Course requirements and evaluation***

#### **Contribution to class discussions: 30%**

Although class days will also include lecture and group work, the vast majority of our time together will be devoted to collective discussion. History happens in dialogue; therefore, I really do evaluate class participation. If you do not participate regularly and substantively, you will receive a significantly lower grade for the course. For each day of discussion, you may earn three potential points: one for being there, two for voicing your opinions, and three for engaging meaningfully with the texts under consideration in a way that helps advance the discussion. Note that this mode of evaluation assigns more worth to the quality than the quantity of your participation each day. Absences will be excused for personal issues, health issues, or athletic commitments only when accompanied by documentation from the appropriate office. An excused absence counts for one point. Late arrivals, early departures, and leaving the room during class are disruptive and will be duly noted when calculating your final participation grade.

I will occasionally provide separate prompts or instructions for a particular text or set of texts in advance. However, for every day of discussion, you should come to class prepared to address the following questions about the assignment:

*(For primary sources)*

- 1) What was the writer’s (or filmmaker’s, or artist’s) intent in creating that text?
- 2) Who was the intended audience? How does the author attempt to connect with that audience?

- 3) What kind of story is the author trying to tell, and how does he/she structure that narrative? What argument does the author seek to advance? Which passage best exemplifies the underlying point of the piece?
- 4) What rationale or evidence does the author employ to make his/her case? Which elements of the story are factual, and which are subject to interpretation?
- 5) What was the larger historical context in which the author was working?
- 6) What kind of background or bias could have shaped the author's message?  
(*Note: if any of above questions cannot be answered by the text itself, or if any textual references are unclear, do a little outside digging!*)
- 7) On days when multiple primary sources are assigned: what overlaps or discrepancies emerge when you hold up these texts next to each other? What kind of historical narrative would you use these texts to construct?

(For secondary sources)

- 1) What question is the writer (or filmmaker) posing?
- 2) How does the author answer that question? Which part of the text best states the writer's overall argument? Does the text have a thesis?
- 3) What other interpretation(s) does the author appear to be arguing against?
- 4) How does the author develop the argument throughout the piece? What are the sub-arguments that bolster the main argument? What kind of story is the author trying to tell?
- 5) How does the author employ evidence to establish the credibility of the argument?  
(*Note: you need to read footnotes in order to answer that question!*)
- 6) Do you find the argument compelling? Why or why not?

On any given day, I may call on you to provide answers to any/all of these questions, and to support your answers with specific points in the text. Alternatively, on some days, I will highlight a particular passage and ask one person to "explicate" it – i.e., to explain how that passage can help illuminate the questions outlined above. You may choose to pass when called upon, but you will receive a zero for that day. A really successful explication, on the other hand, will earn you four class points for that day. Note: the excerpts on the documentary analysis portion of the exams will be drawn from among the passages chosen for explication.

### Two short papers (4-5 pages each), due Feb 20 & April 17: 30%

These essays will require you to engage critically with a specific historical issue or problem. I will post the topics and instructions on Blackboard about two weeks before each deadline. More general paper expectations and guidelines are also posted on Blackboard. All work must be typed and double-spaced, using 12-pt font and 1-inch margins. Citations must be in footnotes or endnotes using Chicago or Turabian Style – see document on Blackboard for guidelines.

You have the option of revising one of these two papers (your choice) based on my comments. If you choose to revise the first paper, it must be turned in by Spring Break; if you decide to revise the second, it must be turned in by the last day of class. Your new grade will then replace the old.

### Mid-term exam (March 9): 10%

This exam will consist of IDs and a short documentary analysis. More specific guidelines will be circulated ahead of time.

### Final exam (May 13): 30%

This exam will consist of two parts: in-class IDs and documentary analysis (same format as the midterm) which will cover material from the second half of the course, and a take-home essay (about 7 pages) which will be cumulative. This will be a synthetic essay, requiring you to draw upon primary and secondary sources we have used throughout the course and to develop a specific argument out of a general prompt. I will distribute the essay questions on the penultimate day of class (i.e., one week before the exam), and it is due at the start of the exam period. Your essay must be typed and double-spaced, using standard font size and margins and employing proper citations.

### Policy on late assignments:

Each of you may take a 48-hour extension on one writing assignment of your choice during the semester (i.e. the first paper, the second paper, or the final essay). If choosing this option, you must notify me of your intent to take the extension no later than 24 hours before the deadline. (Please remember that if you take an extension, you are still responsible for preparing the requisite reading or other assignments that may coincide with your revised paper deadline.) For all other assignments, late submissions will receive a deduction of one letter grade per day. Exceptions may be made for serious health or personal issues, but only if accompanied by documentation from the appropriate office (Health Services or Student Affairs).

Note: absolutely NO final essays will be accepted after Friday, May 15, at 5:00. 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. 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 the Student Affairs office at the Rosenfield Center (x3702).

### ***Course texts***

The following texts are required and can be obtained at the college bookstore:

- Christopher Harvie & H.C.G. Matthew, *Nineteenth-Century Britain: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford)
- Kenneth O. Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Britain: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford)
- Antoinette Burton, ed., *Politics and Empire in Victorian Britain* (Palgrave) – also available on reserve
- H. Rider Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines* (Oxford)
- Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth* (Penguin) – also available on reserve
- George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (Harcourt)
- Sam Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners* (Longman) – also available on reserve

Shorter readings will be available online, on Blackboard, on E-reserve, or as handouts (as noted below). For assignments which include films, screening times will be announced in advance.

## *Course meetings and assignments*

### ***PART I: THE AGE OF IMPROVEMENT***

#### Week 1: The British world in transition

Mon, Jan 19: British nationhood and identity

- Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation*, intro & ch. 1 – Blackboard

Wed, Jan 21: Revolutions in economy, government, and society

- Harvie & Matthew, ch 1-10

Fri, Jan 23: From first to second empire

- Philippa Levine, “After America,” from *The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset* – Blackboard

#### Week 2: Representation, emancipation, and reform

Mon, Jan 26: Liberalism and politics

- Burton, pp. 3-11, 21-25, 34-38
- T. B. Macauley, speech in support of the Ten Hours Bill (1846), from Bradshaw & Ozment, eds., *The Voice of Toil* – handout

Wed, Jan 28: Slavery and antislavery

- Burton, pp. 39-54, 31-34, 110-119 (please read in that order)

Fri, Jan 30: Commerce and Christianity

- Brian Stanley, “‘Commerce and Christianity’: Providence Theory, the Missionary Movement, and the Imperialism of Free Trade, 1842-1860,” *The Historical Journal*, 26:1 (1983), 71-94 – JSTOR link: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2638849>
- Burton, pp. 169-178

#### Week 3: Industrial society

Mon, Feb 2: The Birth of Class (I)

- Texts and instructions will be distributed as handouts

Wed, Feb 4: The Birth of Class (II)

- See separate handout

Fri, Feb 6: Women in the middle and working classes

- Selections from Sarah Stickney Ellis, *The Women of England: Their Social Duties and Domestic Habits* (1838), from Walter Arnstein, ed., *The Past Speaks* – handout
- Burton pp. 58-61, 77-80, 63-70

## Week 4: From Company to Crown rule in India

Mon, Feb 9: Competing missions

- D. A. Washbrook, "India, 1818-1860: The Two Faces of Colonialism," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. 3: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Andrew Porter – E-reserve
- Raja Rammohan Roy: *A Second Conference Between an Advocate for, and an Opponent of the Practice of Burning Widows Alive* (1820) – [http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~wldciv/world\\_civ\\_reader/world\\_civ\\_reader\\_2/roy.html](http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~wldciv/world_civ_reader/world_civ_reader_2/roy.html)
- William Bentinck, *On Ritual Murder in India* (1829) – <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1829bentinck.html>
- Burton, pp. 18-20
- Missionary & East India Company documents – Blackboard

Wed, Feb 11: The 1857 rebellion

- Documents from Pramod Nayar, ed., *The 1857 Reader* – Blackboard

Fri, Feb 13: Reporting the 1857 rebellion

- Articles & sermons – Blackboard
- Burton, pp. 102-4

## ***PART II: THE AGE OF ANXIETY***

### Week 5: Politics and society

Mon, Feb 16: Democratization?

- Harvie & Matthew, ch. 11-23

Wed, Feb 18: Feminism

- Burton, pp. 126-30, 139-168

Fri, Feb 20: No class (I will be at a conference)

*Paper due*

### Week 6: Race and labor

Mon, Feb 23: The new imperialism

- Burton, pp. 81-8, 98-102, 131-8, 204-14, 273-9

Wed, Feb 25: Civilizing missions at home & abroad

- Burton, pp. 217-253, 289-91

Fri, Feb 27: Did empire matter to the working class?

- Burton, pp. 253-5, 259-73, 280-4, 306-310
- J. A. Hobson, Introduction to *The Psychology of Jingoism* (1901) – Blackboard

### Week 7: Legitimizing and contesting colonial rule

Mon, Mar 2: Narratives of conquest

- Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines*

Wed, Mar 4: Empire and sexuality

- Anne McClintock, "Maidens, Mines, and Maps: *King Solomon's Mines* and the Reinvention of Patriarchy in Colonial South Africa," in *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, ed. Cheryl Walker – E-reserve

Fri, Mar 6: Critics of empire

- Burton, pp. 285-9, 303-6

### **PART III: THE AGE OF TOTAL WAR**

### Week 8: The end of Victorian Britain

Mon, Mar 9

*Midterm*

Wed, Mar 11: The lead-up to war

- Harvie & Matthew, ch. 24
- Brittain, *Testament of Youth*, ch. 1&2

Fri, Mar 13: The war in the trenches

- Morgan, ch. 1
- War poetry – handout

\*SPRING BREAK\*

### Week 9: The impact of the Great War

Mon, Mar 30: The war on the home front

- Brittain, ch. 3-10

Wed, Apr 1: The war in the empire

- Denis Judd, *Empire: The British Imperial Experience*, ch. 19 – E-reserve
- Additional texts and instructions posted on Blackboard

Fri, Apr 3: Social change and tension

- Morgan, Ch 2 & 3
- Brittain, ch. 11&12

## Week 10: The Great Depression and the interwar empire

Mon, Apr 6: The Hungry Thirties

- Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, Part I

Wed, Apr 8: Mandates, indirect rule, and development

- Judd, *Empire*, ch. 21 & 22 – E-reserve
- Frederick Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, ch. 31 – Blackboard

Fri, Apr 10: Indian nationalism

- Judd, *Empire*, ch. 18 & 20 – E-reserve
- Additional texts and instructions posted on Blackboard

## Week 11: The world at war

Mon, Apr 13: The European Civil War

- Orwell, Part II

Wed, Apr 15: Diplomacy, “appeasement,” and war

- Morgan, pp. 39-60
- Chamberlain/Churchill/Hitler correspondence, from Walter Arnstein, ed., *The Past Speaks* – handout

Fri, Apr 17: WWII and the Empire

*Paper due*

## ***PART IV: THE POST-WAR BRITISH WORLD***

### Week 12: Decolonization

Mon, Apr 20: From Empire to Commonwealth

- Morgan chap 5

Wed, Apr 22: The 1947 partition

- Readings TBA

Fri, Apr 24: Race, nation, and citizenship

- Chris Waters, “Dark Strangers in our Midst: Discourses of Race and Nation in Britain, 1947-1965.” *Journal of British Studies*, 35:2 (1997), 207-38 – JSTOR link: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/176012>
- Wendy Webster, “‘There’ll Always Be an England’: Representation of Colonial Wars and Immigration, 1948-1968.” *JBS*, 40:4 (2001), 557-584 – JSTOR link: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3070747>

Week 13: Post-war society

Mon, Apr 27: Immigration

- Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners*

Wed, Apr 29: Affluence

- *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (film – screening TBA)

Fri, May 1: Welfare

- *7-up!* (film – screening TBA)

Week 14: The end of consensus or a new consensus?

Mon, May 4: From Thatcherism to the New Labour

- Morgan, ch. 6
- Hanif Kureishi, “The Rainbow Sign” – Blackboard

Wed, May 6: Northern Ireland

- *Bloody Sunday* (film – screening TBA)  
*Take-home portion of final exam distributed in class*

Fri, May 8: Cool Britannia

- Morgan, ch. 7
- Linda Colley, “Britishness in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” (Downing Street Millennium Lectures, 1999) – Blackboard

Wed, May 13

*Final exam 9:00 a.m.; take-home essay due*