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 how British citizens and subjects were impacted by larger political, social, and ideological change; trace 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 occasionally include short lectures 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 four potential points: one for being there, two for voicing your opinions, and three or four 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; offering one thoughtful, helpful, and well-substantiated comment will earn you more points than dominating the discussion with unfounded or tangential observations. Absences will be excused for personal issues, health issues, or extracurricular commitments only when accompanied by documentation from the appropriate office. An excused absence counts for one point. Late arrivals, leaving the room during class time, and talking privately while someone else has the floor undermines a collective atmosphere of mutual respect and commitment, and will be duly noted when assessing participation grades.

To prepare for discussion, you should engage in two layers of inquiry with the reading (or film viewing). The first is to understand what the texts are saying. To that end, you should come to class prepared to address the following questions about each source.
Make a note of your answers in the margins of the text and/or keep a separate running record – it will make your paper writing and exam preparations A LOT more efficient.

I. For primary sources (texts produced during the period under investigation, i.e. pieces of the historical record):
   1) What was the writer’s (or filmmaker’s, or artist’s) intent in creating that text?
   2) Who or what is the subject of the piece? Whom does the author claim to represent or speak for?
   3) Who was the intended audience? How does the author attempt to connect with that audience?
   4) 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?
   5) 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?
   6) What was the particular historical context in which the author was working?
   7) What kind of background or bias 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!)

II. For secondary sources (historians’ analyses of the past):
   1) What question is the writer (or filmmaker) posing?
   2) How does the author answer that question? Which sentence(s) best state the writer’s overall argument?
   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 use evidence to prove the argument? (Note: you need to read footnotes in order to answer this question!)

You may be called upon to provide answers to any questions that apply on a given day, and to support your answers with specific points in the text.

The second level of inquiry in preparing for discussion involves extrapolating larger sets of implications from the readings and grappling with their significance. To that end, you are also responsible for crafting and addressing larger interpretive questions about the reading. Ask yourself how the texts for the day relate to one another and to the larger themes and other readings you have encountered in the course – do they reinforce or complicate a particular angle of interpretation? What overlaps or discrepancies emerge when you hold up these texts next to each other? What kind of story do they tell about continuity and change over time? You should prepare your responses to the day’s discussion questions in conjunction with these standard questions.

For the days marked “Question leaders” on the syllabus, groups or two or three of you will be responsible for putting together discussion questions about the reading and emailing them to the class by 6:00 p.m. the night before. Please plan to meet first with each other and then with me before you send out the final questions. These questions will be evaluated on their success in generating discussion and will be factored into your overall participation grade. What makes for a successful discussion question? 1) It should have multiple credible answers 2) It should provoke debate 3) It should stay within the common
frame of reference – i.e., it should be answerable through the course material. On days when students are not responsible for discussion questions, I will provide the questions.

I do understand that speaking up in class is difficult for many people. As in honing any critical skill, contribution to group discussions requires preparation, practice, and feedback. The above requirements are designed to help you become more adept and more comfortable with posing and answering questions and responding to others’ ideas. I will provide mid-semester participation grades and comments to give you a sense of how your participation is developing.

**Two short papers (4-5 pages each), due Feb 26 & April 23: 15% each**

These essays will require you to engage critically with a specific historical issue or problem by synthesizing and analyzing primary and secondary sources. I will post the specific topics and instructions on Pweb about two weeks before each deadline. General paper expectations and guidelines are also available on Pweb. 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 Pweb for guidelines.

You have the option of revising the first of these two papers, based on my comments, for a new grade. If you choose this option, you must turn the revised paper in no later than one week before the deadline for the second paper.

**Mid-term exam (March 11): 10%**

This exam will consist of two sections: 1) Identifications, and 2) short documentary analyses, drawn from the primary sources we have read in class. More specific guidelines will be circulated closer to the exam.

**Final exam (May 21): 30%**

This exam will consist of two parts: 1) in-class IDs and documentary analysis (same format as the midterm) which will cover material from the second half of the course, worth 10% of your final grade, and 2) a take-home essay (6-7 pages) which will be cumulative, worth 20% of your final grade. The essay will require 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, and it is due no later than 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 free 48-hour extension on one of the two short papers. If choosing this option, you must notify me of your intent to take the extension no later than 24 hours before the deadline. Beyond that, late submissions will receive a deduction of one full 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 21, 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:

- Antoinette Burton, ed., Politics and Empire in Victorian Britain (Palgrave) – also available on reserve
- H. Rider Haggard, King Solomon’s Mines (Oxford) – also available online through Burling catalog
- Vera Brittain, Testament of Youth (Penguin) – also available on reserve
- George Orwell, The Road to Wigan Pier (Harcourt) – also available on reserve
- Sam Selvon, The Lonely Londoners (Longman) – also available on reserve

Other reading assignments will be available online, on Pweb, or on E-reserve (as noted below). For assignments which include films, screening times will be announced in advance.
Course meetings and assignments
Note: please do each day's readings in the order they are listed

PART I: THE AGE OF IMPROVEMENT

Week 1: The British world in transition

Tues, Jan 26: Contextualizing British nationhood and identity
  • Linda Colley, Britons: Forging the Nation, intro & ch. 1 – Pweb

Thurs, Jan 28: Revolutions in economy, government, and society
  • Harvie & Matthew, Nineteenth-Century Britain, ch. 1-10

Week 2: Industrial society and politics

Tues: Feb 2: The making of the middle and working classes
  • Harold Perkin, “The Birth of Class,” from The Origins of Modern English Society – Pweb
  • E. P. Thompson, Preface to The Making of the English Working Class – Pweb
  • Burton, pp. 21-28, 34-38, 55-61, 65-8

Thurs, Feb 4: Revisiting the 1832 Reform Act
  • Burton, pp. 3-11

Question leaders

Week 3: Liberalism and evangelicalism in the British World

Tues, Feb 9: Labor and empire
  • Philippa Levine, The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset, chapters 2 & 4 – Pweb
  • Burton, pp. 39-54, 31-34, 110-119, 15-17, 77-80, 68-70

Thurs, Feb 11: Commerce and Christianity
  • Burton, pp. 169-178
**Question leaders**

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

Tues, Feb 16: Crises of liberalism
- Burton, pp. 18-20
- Documents on the campaign to abolish sati – Pweb
- Documents from Pramod Nayar, ed., *The 1857 Reader* – Pweb

Thurs, Feb 18: Reporting the 1857 rebellion
- British sermons – Pweb
- Documents from *The 1857 Reader* – Pweb
- Burton, pp. 102-4

**Question leaders**

**PART II: THE AGE OF EMPIRE**

**Week 5: Politics and society**

Tues, Feb 23: Democratization?
- Harvie & Matthew, ch. 11-23
- Burton, pp. 63-5, 126-38, 139-168

Thurs, Feb 25: Encountering the other
- Burton, pp. 217-253, 273-5, 321-4

Friday, Feb 26
*Paper due by 4:30 p.m.***

**Week 6: Legitimizing and contesting imperialism**

Tues, Mar 2: Narratives of conquest
- Haggard, *King Solomon’s Mines*
- Burton, pp. 275-9, 289-91

Thurs, Mar 4: Critics of empire
- Burton, pp. 208-10, 280-9, 303-6, 125-6, 179-204, 328-9

**Question leaders**
Week 7: Race and labor

Tues, Mar 9: Did empire matter to the working class?
- Burton, pp. 253-5, 259-73, 306-310
- J. A. Hobson, Introduction to *The Psychology of Jingoism* (1901) – Pweb

Thurs, March 11:
*Midterm exam*

**PART III: THE AGE OF ANXIETY**

Week 8: The end of Victorian Britain?

Tues, Mar 16: The lead-up to war
- Harvie & Matthew, ch. 24
- Brittain, *Testament of Youth*, ch. I & II
*Question leaders*

Thurs, Mar 18: The war in the trenches
- Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Britain*, ch. 1
- War poetry, in *The Past Speaks* – Pweb

*SPRING BREAK*

Week 9: The impact of the Great War

Tues, Apr 6: The war on the home front
- Brittain, ch. III-XI

Thurs, Apr 8: Colonial nationalism
- Denis Judd, *Empire: The British Imperial Experience*, ch. 18-20 – E-reserve
- Documents on Irish and Indian nationalism – Pweb
*Question leaders*

Week 10: The Great Depression and the interwar empire

Tues, Apr 13: Social change and tension
- Morgan, ch. 2 & 3
- Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, Part I

Thurs, Apr 15: Marketing the empire
- Judd, *Empire*, ch. 21 – E-reserve
- Program of the 1924 Wembley Exhibition – Pweb
- Frederick Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, ch. 31 – handout
Question leaders

Week 11: The British world at war (again)

Tues, Apr 20: The European Civil War
• Orwell, Part II
• Chamberlain/Churchill/Hitler correspondence, in *The Past Speaks* – Pweb

Thurs, Apr 22: WWII
• Morgan, chap 4

Friday, Apr 23
*Paper due by 4:30*

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

Week 12: Post-war society

Tues, Apr 27: From austerity to affluence
• Morgan, chap 5
• *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (film – screening TBA)

Thurs, Apr 29: The welfare state
• *7-up!* (film – screening TBA)

Week 13: Decolonization and immigration

Tues, May 4: Empire to Commonwealth
• Manto short stories – Pweb
• Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners*

Thurs, May 6: Race, nation, and citizenship

Question leaders

Week 14: A new consensus?

Tues, May 11: Competing nationalisms
• Morgan, ch. 6
• Hanif Kureishi, “The Rainbow Sign” – Pweb
• *Bloody Sunday* (film – screening TBA)
Thurs, May 13: Cool Britannia
- Morgan, ch. 7

Exam Week

Friday, May 21, 2:00 p.m.
*In-class exam; take-home essay due*