The Crystal Palace at the Great Exhibition, 1851

The British Isles are a wet and chilly archipelago in the forbidding waters of the North Sea. Not much larger than the state of Illinois, Great Britain existed at the outer fringes of the civilized world for much of recorded history. Yet Britain was a central (indeed the central) actor in the social, economic, political and cultural transformations of the modern world. By the nineteenth century, it projected unparalleled economic and political might across the globe. This course asks why British history matters. What was Britain’s contribution to world history? Is the British past unique, or does it offer a template for other national histories? To what extent does British industrialization and modernization offer an exemplary or peculiar model of modernity?

Through readings, lectures, and class discussions, this course introduces students to the main themes of British history, with a focus on the modern period. Following a brief review of the social, political and cultural inheritance of the 16th and 17th centuries, we examine the path to democratic politics and liberal modernity. After analyzing the structure of British politics and society in the “old regime,” we turn to the great social and economic transformations of the industrial revolution, the politics of class consciousness, and political reforms of the Victorian
era. At the same time, we consider the loss of the American colonies, and the haphazard emergence of Britain as a global imperial power. We examine the extent to which the colonial encounter impacted British culture and society, and the repercussions of British economic and military might on the rest of the world. The course then shifts to a consideration of mass culture, the organization of democratic politics, and the advent of modern political parties and state institutions. Moving to the twentieth century, we discuss the impact of the world wars, the transition from a “warfare” to “welfare” state, and the politics of decline.

By the end of the course, students will demonstrate an understanding of the key themes in British history, and assess Britain’s place in a global and European context. In particular, students will develop an appreciation for the dynamics of coercion and consent, violence and humanitarianism, and expansion and decline that animate the British past. More generally, students will show an understanding of historical methods, the interpretation of evidence, and an appreciation for competing historiographical understandings of the past.

TEXTEBOOKS

The following books are available for purchase at the University Bookstore:


Nicholas Dirks, Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain (Belknap Press, 2008).


Other readings will be posted on Sakai in PDF format. There is no textbook assigned for this course, but for extra context to the assigned readings, students may wish to consult Walter Arnstein, Britain Yesterday and Today: 1830 to the Present (Cengage Learning, 2000).

EXPECTATIONS

A primary responsibility of students is to listen attentively to lectures, complete the weekly readings before class and contribute their thoughtful, reflective opinions in the weekly class discussion. Students should allocate enough time to complete the required reading, approximately 150 pages per week. The readings can be interpreted in a variety of ways and students should formulate some initial positions and questions to offer in the class discussion.
Students should keep the professor informed of absences well in advance if possible. Notification of an absence does not excuse the absence; upon returning to classes, students are responsible for contacting instructors, producing appropriate documentation for the absence, and completing any missed work. Students who are disabled or impaired should meet with the professor within the first two weeks of the semester to discuss the need for any special arrangements.

All cellphones, smartphones, tablets, MP3 players and any other electronic devices should be turned off during class. The use of laptop computers is a privilege, which may be taken away at any time. Laptops may only be used for taking notes and consulting readings. Anyone caught using a laptop for any other purpose will be asked to leave the class, and will no longer be permitted to bring a computer to class.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Over the course of the semester, students must write 5 reaction papers of approximately 3 pages in length (1-inch margins, double-spaces, Times New Roman, 12-point font). All students must write at least one paper by Week 4. Papers must be turned in during class time. LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. A question prompt for each reaction paper will be given out in class one week in advance and posted on Sakai.

Since this class is designated as a writing intensive course, these short essays will constitute the bulk of our writing work. Through the process of writing several short papers, students will hone particular writing skills that include:

1. Articulating a clear thesis in an introductory paragraph.
2. Selecting, quoting and analyzing passages from the reading that serve as evidence for making an argument.
3. And using correct punctuation and clear and stylish prose to present a coherent essay.

We will dedicate a portion of class time to discuss the fundamentals of good writing.

In addition, there will be a take-home final essay exam that asks students to analyze the key issues raised by the readings in the class. The final essay exam will consist of two essay questions, and students will answer one of the questions (8-10 pages).

Discussion and class participation is a very important part of your grade. Incisive, imaginative and thoughtful comments that generate and facilitate discussion are weighed heavily in final grades. Asking questions, responding to student questions and contributing to an ongoing discussion are a necessary part of the learning experience. Every week, students will pose a question on Sakai Discussion Board that deals with a fundamental issue raised by weekly readings. These must be thoughtful questions that provide evidence that the student has read and thought carefully about the readings. We will address these questions in class discussion. Failure to pose a question each week will have a negative impact on your grade. Students may also be asked to make presentations on class readings at different points in the semester.
Grading is as follows:

5 reading responses (3 pages each)  50%
Participation including presentations and weekly discussion forum question  25%
Final Paper (8-10 pages)  25%

WEEKLY READING SCHEDULE

WEEK 1. Introduction to the Course (August 28th)

WEEK 2. Universal or Unique: Britain’s Exemplary Past? (September 4)


WEEK 3. Nationalism and Identity: Who is a Briton? (September 11)


WEEK 4. The First Industrial Nation (September 17)


*FIRST WRITING RESPONSE DUE*

**WEEK 5. Histories of Class (and Gender) (September 25)**


**WEEK 6. Identity Politics (October 2)**


**WEEK 7. Democracy, Elections, and the End of the Ancien Regime (October 9)**


**WEEK 8. Imperial Conquest (October 16)**


**WEEK 10. Between Metropole and Colony: Empire at Home (October 30)**


AND one of:


or


**WEEK 12. Mass Society in Victorian Britain and Beyond (November 13)**

**WEEK 13. Warfare (November 20)**


**WEEK 14. Postwar Decline and Retreat from Empire (December 4)**


* **FINAL PAPERS DUE DECEMBER 11** *

**STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

A basic mission of a university is to search for and to communicate the truth as it is honestly perceived. A genuine learning community cannot exist unless this demanding standard is a fundamental tenet of the intellectual life of the community. Students of Loyola University Chicago are expected to know, to respect, and to practice this standard of personal honesty. Academic dishonesty can take several forms, including, but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, copying another student’s work, and submitting false documents.

Academic cheating is a serious act that violates academic integrity. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, such acts as:
• Obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher
• Providing information to another student during an examination
• Obtaining information from another student or any other person during an examination
• Using any material or equipment during an examination without consent of the instructor, or in a manner which is not authorized by the instructor
• Attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted
• Unauthorized collaboration, or the use in whole or part of another student’s work, on homework, lab reports, programming assignments, and any other course work which is completed outside of the classroom
• Falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences or extensions of deadlines
• Any other action that, by omission or commission, compromises the integrity of the academic evaluation process

Plagiarism is a serious form of violation of the standards of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is the appropriation of ideas, language, work, or intellectual property of another, either by intent or by negligence, without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the taking and use of specific words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgement of the sources, and includes the following

• Submitting as one's own material copied from a published source, such as print, internet, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.
• Submitting as one's own another person's unpublished work or examination material
• Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit
• Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper

The above list is in no way intended to be exhaustive. Students should be guided by the principle that it is of utmost importance to give proper recognition to all sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty. Any failure to do so, whether by intent or neglect, whether by omission or commission, is an act of plagiarism. A more detailed description of this issue can be found at [http://luc.edu/english/writing.shtml#source](http://luc.edu/english/writing.shtml#source).

In addition, a student may not submit the same paper or other work for credit in two or more classes without the expressed prior permission of all instructors. A student who submits the same work for credit in two or more classes without the expressed prior permission of all instructors will be judged guilty of academic dishonesty, and will be subject to sanctions described below. This applies even if the student is enrolled in the classes during different semesters. If a student plans to submit work with similar or overlapping content for credit in two or more classes, the student should consult with all instructors prior to submission of the work to make certain that such submission will not violate this standard.
Plagiarism or any other act of academic dishonesty will result minimally in the instructor’s assigning the grade of "F" for the assignment or examination. The instructor may impose a more severe sanction, including a grade of “F” in the course. All instances of academic dishonesty must be reported by the instructor to the chairperson of the department involved, and to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

The College of Arts and Sciences maintains a permanent record of all instances of academic dishonesty. The information in that record is confidential. However, students may be asked to sign a waiver which releases that student’s record of dishonesty as a part of the student’s application to a graduate or professional school, to a potential employer, to a bar association, or to similar organizations.

If you have questions about plagiarism or the citing of sources, please discuss them with me; the consequences of academic dishonesty can be serious!

NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus at any time.