Modern Britain since 1688

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History 453
Spring 2013
Location: SH279
Class # 18302

**Description:** The course provides a chronological and thematic survey of major social, political, cultural, economic, and intellectual developments in Britain from 1688 to the present. Through primary and secondary sources, this course covers such topics as industrialization, the emergence of a class society, political reform, the monarchy, changing gender roles, the impact of war, the various responsibilities of an expanding (and contracting) empire, and the tensions of a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural society.

**Readings** (All are required and available at the Matador Bookstore):
- Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Sign of Four* (Penguin)
- Gretchen Rubin, *Forty Ways to Look at Winston Churchill* (Random House)
- Samuel Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners* (Longman)

**Learning Objectives**
- To become familiar with the major political, economic, social, and cultural changes that took place in Britain between 1688 and the present day
- To analyze the causes of political reform
- To understand the emergence of a class society
- To recognize the positive and negative effects of industrialization
- To trace significant changes in gender roles
- To consider the effects of imperial expansion and decolonization
- To reflect on the impact of war
- To explore the tensions of a multi-ethnic, multi-racial, multi-cultural society

**Assignments/Requirements**
- Regular attendance and in-class participation (10%). You are permitted two absences. Each additional absence, regardless of the reason, will result in a grade reduction.
- Two quizzes, scheduled for Feb. 6 (which will include a map) and March 27 (5% each).
- Three 3-page papers: a summary of *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (due Feb. 25); an exploration of a single theme (e.g., empire, science, London) in *The Sign of Four* (due March 18); and an analysis of *Lonely Londoners* (due May 6) (15% each).
- Reading Worksheet on *Forty Ways to Look at Winston Churchill* due April 17 (10%)
- Final Examination, scheduled for Wednesday, May 15, from 8-10 am (25%)
Course Policies:

- You are expected to attend each and every class, and to arrive on time, ready to take notes, having completed the assigned reading(s) for that day. More than two absences for any reason will adversely affect your grade, as will repeated lateness.
- Please turn off your cell phone when you enter the classroom. There should be no text messaging during class. It is rude, distracting, and not conducive to learning.
- All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the specified due date. Late papers will be marked down one-third grade (e.g., from an A to an A-) per day. Missed assignments will be entered as a zero.
- The final exam must be taken as scheduled. There will be no early exams.
- There are no make-ups for the quizzes or final exam except in case of your own hospitalization.
- On the days that we are discussing Engels (The Condition of the Working Class in England), Conan Doyle (The Sign of Four), and Selvon (Lonely Londoners), bring your book with you to class. You did not ever need to bring the Wesson textbook.
- Any student caught plagiarizing (copying or borrowing someone else’s work, whether on paper or from the internet, without crediting them fully) will receive a failing grade for the course and will be referred to the Office of Academic Affairs for disciplinary action.
- Students with disabilities must register with the Center on Disabilities (Bayramian Hall 110). COD Staff will approve appropriate accommodations.
- This course will use the +/- grading system.
- The instructor reserves the right to modify the course schedule or assignments. Students will be given adequate notice of any changes.
Lecture Topics and Readings

Introduction
Jan. 23  Introduction
Jan. 28  Tour of Britain in 1688
         Wesson, *Modern Britain*, ch. 1

Britain’s Eighteenth-Century Inheritance
Jan. 30  Society and Politics
         Wesson, *Modern Britain*, ch. 2
Feb. 4   Economics and Empire
         Wesson, *Modern Britain*, ch. 3

The Industrial Revolution
Feb. 6   Causes and Contours
         Wesson, *Modern Britain*, ch. 4 and pp. 144-148
         Quiz: Wesson, *Modern Britain*, ch. 1-3 and map
Feb. 11  Consequences
         Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class*, pp. 36-86, 106-96 (Ch. 2, 5-6)
Feb. 13  Two Nations
         Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class*, pp. 101-5, 281-302 (Ch. 4, 11)
Feb. 18  Reforming the British State
         Wesson, *Modern Britain*, ch. 5 and pp. 151-154
         Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class*, pp. 220-247 (Ch. 8)
The Mid-Victorian Era

Feb. 20  The Great Exhibition of 1851
Feb. 25  Victoria and Victorianism

Engels Paper Due

Feb. 27  The Angel in the House
March 4  The Great Duel: Gladstone and Disraeli

Wesson, Modern Britain, ch. 6

The Empire

March 6  London: The Heart of Empire
March 11  Addiction and Addition: The Cultural Underpinnings of Empire

Conan Doyle, The Sign of Four

March 13  Ireland: The Empire Denied

Wesson, Modern Britain, ch. 7

March 18  Victorians Overseas

Conan Doyle Paper Due

The Lights Go Out

March 20  The Strange Death of Liberal England

Wesson, Modern Britain, ch. 8

March 25  Britain at War

Wesson, Modern Britain, ch. 9
Rubin, Forty Ways to Look at Winston Churchill, pp. 1-32

March 27  The First World War and British Society

Quiz: Wesson, Modern Britain, ch. 4-8
April 1  The Monarchy

**Britain and the Second World War**

April 3  Appeasement

  Rubin, *Forty Ways to Look at Winston Churchill*

April 8/10  Spring Break

April 15  Churchill

  Wesson, *Modern Britain*, ch. 10 (to p. 281)
  Rubin, *Forty Ways to Look at Winston Churchill*

April 17  Blitzed

**Post-War Britain**

April 22  Labour and the Welfare State

  Wesson, *Modern Britain*, ch. 10 (pp. 281-289)

April 24  From Worldwide Empire to European Community

  Wesson, *Modern Britain*, ch. 10 (pp. 289-303)

April 29  The Empire Strikes Back

  Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners* (entire)

May 1  The Troubles

  Wesson, *Modern Britain*, ch. 11 (pp. 315-320)

**Contemporary Britain**

May 6  The Thatcher Years

  Wesson, *Modern Britain*, ch. 11; Selvon Paper Due

May 8  Harry Potter’s England

May 15  Final Examination