

Course Last Updated 4/2/2024



Understanding Modern Britain

Section I: Course Overview

Course Code: SOC350

Subject Area(s): Sociology

Prerequisites: None

Language of Instruction: English

Total Contact Hours: 45

Credits: 3

Course Fees: N/A

Course Description

One of the most effective ways of understanding a nation is by examining the images, values, symbols, and individuals by which a nation represents itself. This multi-disciplinary course explores a variety of forms of national representations – ‘ideals and icons’ – to investigate the ways in which modern Britain and British identities have been imagined, constructed, and experienced at home and internationally. This theme is examined through specific topics including: imperialism and its legacy; immigration and racial politics; music and popular culture; politics and government, and varieties of critique and dissent. The course also gives students the opportunity to engage directly with the heritage industry and contemporary British culture, utilizing London’s cityscape and its vast array of distinct neighborhoods, cultural venues, and historical sites as primary tools of analysis. Classes are arranged thematically, combining contextual lectures, film, seminar discussion, and weekly field studies. Emphasis is placed on understanding and interpreting the legacy of Britain’s past upon the ways in which the contemporary nation and British identities are structured in the twenty-first century.

Learning Objectives

- Identify the significant factors influencing the emergence of modern Britain.
- Examine various ways in which British history is represented in museums, heritage sites and popular culture
- Analyze the multicultural and multinational layers of modern Britain and London in particular.

- Discuss the relevant concepts and ideas of modern British society, politics and cultures.

Section II: Instructor & Course Details

Instructor Details

Name: TBC

Contact Information: TBC

Term: TBC

Course Day and Time: TBC

Office Hours: TBC

Grading & Assessment

The instructor assesses students' mastery of course learning objectives by using the forms of assessment below. Each of these assessments is weighted toward the final grade. The Assessment Overview section provides further details for each.

Engagement - 20%

Midterm Field Study Paper - 25%

Research Paper - 30%

Presentation - 25%

Assessment Overview

This section provides a brief description of each form of assessment listed above. Forms of assessment may be slightly modified in the term syllabus.

Engagement (20%): Students are expected to be engaged in class, to have read the [CEA CAPA Engagement Policy](#), and to understand the [Class Engagement Rubric](#) that outlines how engagement is graded.

Participation in lectures and field classes is an expected component of the course and will enhance students' understanding of the material for their research projects and presentations. Lectures and field studies encourage discussion based on students' observations and insights from course materials. Students are expected to have completed the readings before each class and to contribute to discussion through relevant comments, questions, and analysis.

Field Class Analysis (2000 words; 25%): This paper is based on an analysis of one or more of the field trips from weeks one to six. Your paper should provide an original interpretation of how the field class enhances your understanding of a specific aspect of Britain in historical and/or contemporary perspectives. Papers should be analytical rather than descriptive, based on a well-defined argument, and supported by specific details from the tour and your own observations. Specific assignment details and questions will be provided on a separate handout. This assignment is worth 25% of the final grade.

Research Paper (2500 words; 30%): This essay involves an analysis of a specific icon, event, concept, or ideal which embodies a particular aspect of modern Britain or British identity. Research papers must combine analyses of primary and secondary sources and may incorporate images and photographs, along with students' observations from field classes and other experiences in Britain. Suggested topics include: iconic individuals – Winston Churchill, Charles Darwin, or fictional characters, such as James Bond and Sherlock Holmes; structures – St. Paul's Cathedral, Harrods, the Palace of Westminster; events – the Blitz, the death of Queen Elizabeth II, the Northern Ireland conflict, regions or neighbourhoods – Brick Lane, Camden Market, "the North"; or attributes/values – sense of humour, xenophobia, free speech. Elements of popular culture, such as films, television shows, albums, exhibitions, and style could also be used effectively for this assignment. Students may develop their research project from one of the topics examined in class, drawing on relevant readings and field study material, or may select their own topic. Due to the short length of the term, students are urged to consult with me early in the term to determine potential topics for their research. This assignment is worth 30% of the final grade.

Oral Presentation (25%): In the final weeks of the course, each student will deliver a presentation to the class based on the research they have undertaken for their research paper. Presenters will address the main points of interest and significance of their chosen topic, demonstrating how it connects with the main themes and ideas of the course. Presenters should incorporate questions for the class to create discussion and debate.

Presentations should be approx. 20 minutes duration, and students are encouraged to be creative in their presentation technique through the use of audio/visual display etc. Students will be evaluated on their ability to introduce and analyse their topic, assess its significance for an understanding of modern Britain and British identities, connect the topic to the main themes of the course, and generate discussion with the class. The presentation is worth 25% of the final grade.

Active Learning

Experiential learning is an essential component of education abroad, and participation in field studies is a required part of coursework. In this course, students explore the city in which they are studying using a variety of methods. This provides the opportunity to gain nuance and perspective on the host context and course content, as well as to collect information and resources for assigned papers, projects, and presentations.

The assigned field component(s) are:

- One student-led urban assignment.
- One visit to the Imperial War Museum
- Two walks through London

Readings and Resources

The below readings and resources are representative of what will be assigned as required in this course but may vary slightly in the term syllabus.

All students are given access to the online library of the University of New Haven (UNH), accessible [here](#), and are expected to comply with [UNH Policies](#) regarding library usage.

Wherever possible, required readings are made accessible through the online library or Canvas. Students are responsible for obtaining all required readings.

Each course utilizes Canvas as its LMS. Students are expected to check Canvas regularly for updates and deadlines. Canvas is also the primary platform for contacting your instructor in case of questions or concerns about the course.

Required Reading

Marr, A. (2017). *A history of modern Britain*. London: Pan Books.

Selected Reading

Benson, J. (2005), *Affluence and Authority: A Social History of Twentieth-Century Britain* London

Beward, C. (2004). *Fashioning London: Clothing and the Modern Metropolis*, Oxford

Hall, S. (2013). *Policing the Crisis. Mugging, the State and Law and Order*

Sandbrook, D. (2006). *Never Had it So Good: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles*, London

Recommended Reading(s)

Cara Acred, *Homelessness in Britain* (Cambridge: Independence Educational Publisher, 2014)

Akala, *Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire* (London: Penguin, 2019).

John Benson, *Affluence and Authority: A Social History of Twentieth-Century Britain* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2005)

Christopher Beward, *Fashioning London: Clothing and the Modern Metropolis* (Oxford: Berg, 2004).

David Cannadine, *In Churchill's Shadow: Confronting the Past in Modern Britain* (London: Penguin, 2002).

Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (London: Allen Lane, 2001).

Philip Cohen, *London's Turning. The Making of Thames Gateway* (London, 2008).

Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707 –1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

Geoff Dench, *The New East End: Kinship, Race and Conflict* (London, 2006)

David Edgerton, *The Rise and Fall of the British Nation: A Twentieth-Century History* (London, 2018).

Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (London: Routledge, 2002).

Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2002).

Stuart Hall, *Policing the Crisis. Mugging, the State and Law and Order* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan 2013)

James Hampshire, *Citizenship and Belonging Immigration and the Politics of Demographic Governance in Postwar Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

Ted Harrison, *Remembrance Today: Poppies, Grief and Heroism* (London 2012)

Christopher Harvie & Colin Matthew, *Nineteenth-century Britain: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: OUP, 2000).

Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Routledge, 1995).

J. Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire. From 1750 to the Present Day* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1999).

Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918 – 1957* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

Susan Kingsley Kent, *Gender and Power in Britain, 1640-1990* (London, Routledge, 1998).

R. Louis, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire, vol. III: The Nineteenth Century*, eds. A. Porter & A. Low (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Andrew Marr, *A History of Modern Britain* (London: Macmillan, 2008).

Mike Phillips and Trevor Phillips, *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-Racial Britain* (London: HarperCollins, 1999)

Erica Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London's West End* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

Sonya O. Rose, *Which People's War?: National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain, 1939 -1945* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003).
 Cathy Ross, *Twenties London: A City in the Jazz Age* (London: Philip Wilson, 2003).
 Sheila Rowbotham, *A Century of Women: The History of Women in Britain and the United States* (London: 1999).
 Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had it So Good: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* (London: Abacus, 2006).
 Sandbrook, *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London, 2006).
 Sathnam Sanghera, *Empireland: How Imperialism Has Shaped Modern Britain* (London, 2021).
 Nick Tiratsoo, ed., *From Blitz to Blair: A New History of Britain since 1939* (London: Phoenix, 1998).
 Paul Ward, *Britishness Since 1870* (Abingdon, 2004)
 Wendy Webster, *Imagining Home: Gender, 'Race' and National Identity, 1945-1964* (London: UCL Press, 1998).
 Paul Wetherly, *Islam and the West* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012)
 Jerry White, *London in the Twentieth Century-A City and its People* (London: Penguin,2001).
 Robert Winder, *Bloody Foreigners: The Story of Immigration to Britain* (London: Abacus, 2005).
 Lindy Woodhead, *Shopping, Seduction & Mr. Selfridge* (London: Profile Books, 2008).
 Tim Marshall, *Divided: Why We're Living in an Age of Walls* (London: 2018).

Useful Websites for British History & Contemporary Culture:

BBC history <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/>
 The Guardian <http://www.guardian.co.uk/>
 19th C History <http://www.victorianweb.org/>
 Immigration and Race <http://www.blackpresence.co.uk/>
 Political History <http://bubl.ac.uk/link/b/britishpoliticalhistory.htm>
 Imperial War Museum <http://www.iwm.org.uk/>

Moving Here: 200 years of migration to England
<http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/English/EventsExhibitions/Community/MovingHere.htm>

Course Calendar

Session 1	
Topics	WHAT IS IT? 'WHO DO WE THINK WE ARE?'; BRITAIN, BRITISHNESS, AND CULTURAL IDENTITY.
Activity	Lecture, cultural analysis, discussion, video material
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Marr Pt 1 Assignments: Class participation

Session 2	
Topics	FIELD TRIP: STUDY TOUR OF MARITIME GREENWICH, AND VISIT NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM
Activity	Visit to Maritime Greenwich
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Marr Pt 1 (Continued) Assignments: Class participation

Session 3	
Topics	THE WAY IT WAS: EMPIRE, WW 2, IMPERIAL NOSTALGIA
Activity	Lecture, cultural analysis, discussion, video material

Readings and Assignments	<p>Readings: Marr Pt 1 (Continued)</p> <p>John Benson, <i>Affluence and Authority: A Social History of Twentieth-Century Britain</i> (London: Hodder Arnold, 2005)</p> <p>Assignments: Class participation</p>
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Session 4	
Topics	FIELD TRIP; STUDY TOUR TO IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM, ELEPHANT & CASTLE
Activity	Museum Visit
Readings and Assignments	<p>Readings: Marr Pt 2</p> <p>Assignments: Class participation</p>

Session 5	
Topics	THE WAY IT IS: BRITISH POLITICS: GOVERNANCE, PARLIAMENT... AND MONARCHY
Activity	Lecture, cultural/political analysis, discussion
Readings and Assignments	<p>Readings: Marr Pt 2 (Continued)</p> <p>Assignments: Class participation</p>

Session 6	
Topics	FIELD TRIP: STUDY TOUR AROUND WESTMINSTER
Activity	Mid-term Field Study (London Study Tour Location) - Paper Due Walking tour of Westminster Environs
Readings and Assignments	<p>Readings: Marr Pt 2 (Continued)</p> <p>Assignments: Class participation</p>

Session 7	
Topics	Midterm Break

Session 8	
Topics	BRITAIN'S ETHNIC TAPESTRY; BRITISH MULTICULTURALISM
Activity	Lecture, cultural/political analysis, discussion
Readings and Assignments	<p>Readings: Marr Pt 3</p> <p>Christopher Breward, <i>Fashioning London: Clothing and the Modern Metropolis</i> (Oxford: Berg, 2004).</p> <p>Assignments: Class participation</p>

Session 9	
Topics	FIELD TRIP: STUDY TOUR OF BRICK LANE/ SHOREDITCH

Activity	Walk around East London district of Brick Lane and City borders.
Readings and Assignments	<p>Readings: Marr Pt 3 (Continued)</p> <p>Stuart Hall Policing the Crisis. Mugging, the State and Law and Order (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan 2013)</p> <p>Assignments: Class participation</p>

Session 10	
Topics	BRITISH POPULAR CULTURE 1; MEDIA, TV, COMEDY AND SPORTS.
Activity	Lecture, cultural/political analysis, discussion
Readings and Assignments	<p>Readings: Marr Pt 4</p> <p>Dominic Sandbrook, Never Had it So Good: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles (London: Abacus, 2006).</p> <p>Assignments: Class participation</p>

Session 11	
Topics	FIELD TRIP: STUDY TOUR TO CINEMA MUSEUM
Activity	Museum Visit
Readings and Assignments	<p>Readings: Marr Pt 4 (Continued)</p> <p>Assignments: Research Paper ('Brit Icon') due – Week 11 Class participation</p>

Session 12	
Topics	BRITISH POPULAR CULTURE 2; MUSIC, SUBCULTURES, FASHION.
Activity	Lecture, analysis, discussion, video material. Presentations 2.
Readings and Assignments	<p>Readings: Marr Pt 5</p> <p>Assignments: Class participation</p>

Session 13	
Topics	FIELD TRIP: STUDY TOUR AROUND SOHO (WEST END)
Activity	Walking Tour of Soho in London's West End
Readings and Assignments	<p>Readings: Marr Pt 5 (Continued)</p> <p>Assignments: Presentation / Class participation</p>

Session 14	
Topics	Research Review
Activity	In class review of student research
Readings and Assignments	<p>Readings: Research and Course revision material on CANVAS</p> <p>Assignments:</p>

	Final Research Project draft
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Session 15	
Topics	BRITISH CLASS SYSTEM - WINNERS AND LOSERS; CLASS REVIEW
Activity	Any Student Presentations / Class Review
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Research and Course revision material on CANVAS Assignments: Final Research Project

Section III: Academic Policies and Standards

Academic Policies

Students are expected to review and understand all CEA CAPA student policies, including our [Academic Policies](#) and [Engagement Policy](#). CEA CAPA reserves the right to change, update, revise, or amend existing policies and/or procedures at any time. Additional requirements that may be associated with a specific course or program are addressed in the term syllabus.

Student Learning & Development Objectives

CEA CAPA has identified [Student Learning and Development Objectives \(SLDOs\)](#) for all programs in all locations: content in context, navigating differences, power and equity, critical thinking and intellectual curiosity, career and professional development, and sustainability and migration.

These are meta-level learning objectives that transcend coursework and are infused across all elements of program delivery, beyond specifics of course offerings, addressing student learning holistically and framing it a larger learning context.