

SYLLABUS

Modern Britain
History 225
Rhodes College
Spring 2013

Professor Lynn Zastoupil
Office: Buckman 203
Office hours: MW 1:00-2:30 (and by appointment)
Telephone: X3654

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course will introduce students to some of the major historical developments of modern Britain. Attention will be focused not so much on individuals or a chronological narrative of events, as on major issues, trends, events and crises of this period. Topics to be covered include: eighteenth century society and religion; corruption and reform in eighteenth century politics; origins of industrialism; impact of French revolution; reform legislation and movements of the nineteenth century; social and economic consequences of industrialism; radical movements in late nineteenth century; imperialism and British politics; the Irish question; impact of world wars one and two; Britain's decline; origins and nature of the welfare state; and British society and politics since 1945. These and other topics will be covered by a combination of lectures, readings, and discussions. It is intended that students will leave this course with a firm grasp of many of the leading developments in modern British history.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students will be expected to attend lectures regularly, do assigned readings on time, and participate in class discussions. Occasionally there will be assigned readings to complement the lectures, and students must be prepared to discuss these readings. Often an entire class session will be devoted to discussion of assigned readings. It is essential that students participate fully in the class discussions in order best to understand the complexities of the issues at hand. Students who find it difficult to speak up in class are urged to submit summaries of the readings which will help improve their grade for class participation. There will be two take-home essay examinations; each will be graded on the basis of style, clarity, organization and content. Essay examinations submitted after the deadline has passed will be automatically reduced by one letter grade. **There are no exceptions to this rule.** Students must also properly cite all sources used for the essay assignment, including websites such as Wikipedia. **The professor reserves the right to assign a failing grade for the assignment, or for the entire course, for any misuse of sources.**

Final grades will be determined as follows: class participation – 30%; first essay examination – 30%; second essay examination - 40%.

OPTIONAL RESEARCH ESSAY

Students may opt to write a research essay due near the end of the semester. Those majoring in history or wishing to improve their research and writing skills are encouraged to choose this option. Research topics must be approved by the professor in advance of submission of the essay.

Final grades for those choosing this option will be determined as follows: class participation – 25%; first essay examination – 20%; research essay – 25%; second essay examination - 30%.

BOOKS TO PURCHASE

Jane Austin, *Pride and Prejudice*
C. Litzenger and E. Groth Lyon, eds. *The Human Tradition in Modern Britain*
George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*
Mark Donnelly, *Sixties Britain*

COURSE OUTLINE

Week I: Introduction

January 9 Introduction
January 11 Seventeenth-century background

Week II: Glorious Revolution and Aftermath

January 14 Glorious Revolution
January 16 Religion and society
January 18 **Discussion:** Litzenger & Lyon, Chps. 1-3

Week III: Eighteenth-Century Politics

January 21 **No class: MLK, Jr. Day**
January 23 Whig Oligarchy ([English Historical Documents, 1714-1783](#), pp. 182-88,
on Moodle)
January 25 Celtic Fringe (J. Swift, "A Modest Proposal")
Available at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1080/1080-h/1080-h.htm>

Week IV: Intellectuals and Reform

January 28 Enlightenment (D. Hume, "Of Miracles," **on Moodle**)
January 30 Popular culture and politics
Feb. 1 American rebellion and reform

Week V: Origins of Industrial Society

Feb. 4 Origins of industrialism
Feb. 6 Social and political consequences (Sadler Committee Report, selection, **on Moodle**)
Feb. 8 **Discussion:** Austin (all)

Week VI: French Revolution

Feb. 11 Britain and the revolution(s) in France
Feb. 13 Revolutionaries and reactionaries
Feb. 15 **Discussion:** E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*,
Chps. 1, 5 (**on Moodle**)

Week VII: Revival of Reform

Feb. 18 Post-war radicalism
Feb. 20 1832 and the age of reform
Feb. 22 **First essay examination due at class time**

Week VIII: The 1840s and 1850s

- Feb. 25 Chartism
- Feb. 27 Peel and conservative revival
- March 1 Age of equipoise and reform

Week IX: High Victorian Britain

- March 4 Gladstone and Disraeli
- March 6 Empire
- March 8 **Discussion:** Litzenberger & Lyon, Chps. 7-9

Spring Break March 11-15

Week X: Late Victorian and Edwardian Britain

- March 18 Labour militancy and feminism
- March 20 Edwardian political crisis
- March 22 **Discussion:** Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women*, Chp. 7 (**on Moodle**)

Week XI: The Irish Crisis and the Great War

- March 25 Ireland
- March 27 The Great War
- March 29 **Easter Recess**

Week XII: Orwell and the 1930s

- April 1 The Great Depression
- April 3 **Discussion:** Orwell, Part One
- April 5 **Discussion:** Orwell, Part Two

Week XIII: Before and after World War Two

- April 8 Politics before the war
- April 10 The People's War and the Welfare State
- April 12 **Discussion:** Donnelly, Chps. 2, 4-6

Optional research essays due April 12, 5:00 p.m.

Week XIV: The Sixties and Beyond

- April 15 **Discussion:** Donnelly, Chps. 7-11
- April 17 Conservative revival (Litzenberger & Lyon, Chp. 16)
- April 19 Postcolonial immigration and racism

Week XV: Multicultural Britain

- April 22 *My Beautiful Laundrette*
- April 24 *My Beautiful Laundrette*
- April 26 **No class: URCAS**

Second essay examination due April 26, 5:00 p.m.