

## **BRITISH CULTURE AND SOCIETY**

**Course Code SS1801**

Dr Philip Woods tel: 07922046578

[p.woods@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:p.woods@kingston.ac.uk)

Elly Bavidge tel: 07842894726

[e.bavidge@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:e.bavidge@kingston.ac.uk)

**SUMMER 2012**

**GROUP B**

### **AIMS**

- i. To provide the opportunity for students to develop an understanding and appreciation of key aspects of contemporary British culture and society and their historical contexts
- ii. To introduce students to some major cultural and historical sites in London and southern England and to encourage students to visit additional sites independently and to view such places in an informed and critical way.
- iii. To encourage students to make informed, critical comparisons between what they observe and learn of British culture and their own home cultures

### **Learning outcomes**

#### **On completion of the course students should:**

- iv. Know and understand some of the main historical antecedents of key aspects in British culture and society;
- v. be familiar with some of the major social, political, economic and cultural issues in contemporary Britain;
- vi. be able to compare and contrast their home culture with British culture and society.
- vii. Research cultural institutions independently and write findings clearly, interestingly and critically, using basic academic referencing

### **Teaching and learning strategies**

The course is delivered through a multidisciplinary programme consisting of:

- i. Formal lectures/workshop sessions - sometimes integrated with field activities;
- ii. Excursions/tours led by members of the Kingston Faculty or contracted professionals
- iii. Self-guided visits to other sites of historic and cultural interest in the London area.

### **Classes**

Classes will start promptly at the times shown in the schedule.

For the fieldtrips to, Greenwich, independent London visits and returning from Hampton Court Palace you will travel on public transport using your travelcards. Full details will be given to you in class.

On days where there is a fieldtrip by coach, it will leave from Clayhill at times shown in schedule. Please be on time!

**N.B. The University reserves the right to vary or revise the content at its discretion.**

**Appendix 3** Class Schedule- GROUP B (provisional)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Lecture</b>	<b>Lecturer</b>
<b>Friday 29 June</b>	1400 1430  1530- 1600	JG2002	Introduction What is Britain? British National Identity The Monarchy	Elly Bavidge  EB
<b>Tuesday 3 July</b>	0900  1000  1430 1630	Parr Boats Landing Hampton Court Palace  JG2002	<b>HAMPTON COURT PALACE</b> Fieldtrip The Magnificence of the British Monarchy- Henry VIII and his Court Discussion : The Monarchy & British System of Government	Irene Luna  EB
<b>Thurs 5 July</b>	0930- 1030 10.30- 11.15 1130- 1330 1400	JG2002	Class & Education in Britain  The Media- a tabloid society?  Theatre Lecture  Independent London Visit (1)	EB  Patsy Trench
<b>Tues. 10 July</b>	0845	Clayhill	<b>OXFORD</b> Fieldtrip <b>Coach leaves at 0900</b>	
<b>Thursday 12 July</b>	1000- 1200  1400	JG2002	Discussion Session  Independent London visit (3)	EB
<b>Tues 17 July</b>	AM  1400  1930	Greenwich Visitor centre <b>Globe Theatre</b>	<b>Independent London visit (2)</b>  <b>GREENWICH</b> Fieldtrip  <b>Richard III</b>	
<b>Thurs. 19 July</b>	0815	Clayhill	<b>STONEHENGE &amp; BATH</b> Fieldtrip <b>Coach leaves at 0830</b>	EB
<b>Tues 24 July</b>	0945  1400- 1600	JG2002	<b>SOUTHALL GURDWARA fieldtrip</b> <b>Coach leaves at 1000</b> Multi-cultural Britain Britain and the World: from Empire to European Union	EB
<b>Thursday 26 July</b>	1000- 1000 1130- 1300-	JG2002 JG2002	Summary and Revision- Cinema & National Identity Final test & feedback	EB

## Preliminary Reading

no prior reading is required, though you may find it useful to read some background history, e.g. Paul Ward, *Britishness Since 1870*, Routledge: 2004 (0-415-22017-3) And to consider the way in which images of Britain have been formed, e.g. as seen in websites such as: <http://www.britannia.com/>; [www.visitbritain.com/](http://www.visitbritain.com/); <http://www.thisengland.co.uk/>

### Fieldtrips

*Kingston and Surbiton town centres:* Walking tours to familiarise the students with their local environment, amenities and transport system.

<http://www.kingston.gov.uk/leisure/tourism.htm>

*Hampton Court Palace:* One of Henry VIII's favourite palaces, which clearly demonstrates the magnificence of his reign.

[http://www.hrp.org.uk/webcode/hampton\\_home.asp](http://www.hrp.org.uk/webcode/hampton_home.asp)

*Greenwich:* Includes a visit to the Old Royal Observatory, the location of zero longitude, and addresses the role of Britain in the development of accurate time keeping and navigation in the 17th and 18th centuries. The Royal Naval College and the Queen's House designed by Christopher Wren and Inigo Jones respectively are also visited. <http://www.greenwichwhs.org.uk/places/index.asp>

*Globe Theatre:* A visit to watch a play performed in the round in the replica of Shakespeare's original theatre. You will be a "groundling". <http://shakespeares-globe.org/navigation/frameset.htm>

*Southall Gurdwara:*

This fieldtrip allows us to see the largest and newest Sikh temples outside India. It gives a real insight into the religion of one of the most important South Asian communities in Britain, and we will also have a chance to see the town of Southall, described by some as 'Little India'

<http://www.sgsss.org/>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gurdwara\\_Sri\\_Guru\\_Singh\\_Sabha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gurdwara_Sri_Guru_Singh_Sabha)

*Stonehenge & Bath:* A visit to Stonehenge, a world heritage site, and then a visit to Bath where the Roman Baths and outstanding Georgian architecture will be seen.

<http://exn.ca/mysticplaces/stonehenge.asp>

<http://www.romanbaths.co.uk/>

*Oxford:* Oxford, with a walking tour of the ancient heart of the city, giving an introduction to the architecture, history and way of life in Britain's oldest university.

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/>; <http://www.ox.ac.uk/>

## Assessment

### **1. Field-trip essays ( 20% each =40%) - Two write-ups each of approximately 700 words (two sides A4) each.**

You are encouraged to be creative in your approach to the essay and its presentation. You should write about an **aspect of the visit** that impressed you and developed your understanding of British life and culture. It is best not to try and cover the whole trip or even a whole building that we toured but rather to choose some smaller and maybe unusual aspect that you can research a bit more and come up with your own angle on the visit and what you learned from it about British culture. The article may be illustrated and laid out as you wish, although illustration must take up no more than half the space.

You should write the article as if it were for a University magazine or equivalent: therefore, readers will want to be informed about the visit and what you learnt about British history and culture from the visit, not just how much you enjoyed it. The best articles will blend some personal response with researched information. You need to do some research for the article, perhaps from guide books, the Library, or probably best of all, the word wide web. Illustrations can come from postcards or publicity leaflets etc. Hopefully you should find the articles a good record of your trips and useful to send back to the States to keep people informed of what you are doing.

Sources, including internet sources, should be listed in a bibliography at the end, and any direct quotations should also be referenced.

**Due date: Essays should be presented in class on the following dates:**

Hampton Court Palace	Tuesday 10 July (all dates to be confirmed)
Oxford	Tuesday 17 July
Bath or Stonehenge	Thursday 19 July
Southall Gurdwara	Tuesday 24 July
Greenwich or Globe Theatre	Tuesday 24 July

N.B. If the hand-in date coincides with a fieldtrip you should hand the essay to me on the fieldtrip or email it, if necessary, on the same day.

### **2. Independent visit essay. (30%) One essay of up to 850 words should be given in during class (this may mean on fieldtrips).**

As for the field-trip essays you should write on a British place or institution that you have visited /experienced whilst here. You should write an account of how your visit contributed to your understanding of British society culture and national culture. You may focus on a museum or art gallery, a sports event, building, cultural event, social institution, e.g. public houses, sports meetings etc.

You may write about a theatre, for instance, its history, significance but you **may not do a theatre review**.

In writing on any topic you should consider its context, for instance if you write about an art gallery, you should consider its history, its strengths and weaknesses, its

audience, and the way it chooses to display its paintings, e.g. chronologically or thematically. It should be obvious that you have actually been to the place and have engaged with it, i.e. not just a straight factual description. You may not write on any topic which you are writing on for another course you are taking in Summer School. If in doubt please ask Philip Woods.

**Due date: Essays should be handed in during class on the following date:  
Thursday 19 July**

**Paper 3 (30%) In-class Final Test. One and a half hours Thursday 26 July 1400 to 1530**

This test will consist of two parts:

**A) Multiple Choice test.** (10%) This is to test how well you have followed the course and understood topics we have covered.

The first section will be on aspects of the group field-trips we have undertaken and you should prepare by re-reading the handouts we have given you for each field-trip. The second section will be on the lecture topics we have covered in class and you should look at any handouts and notes you have taken.

**B) Seen essays.** (20%) You are given a list of questions below which you can prepare for whilst you are studying on the course. You are expected to write short (approximately 2 sides on each) essays on **two** of the questions of your choice. You may not use any notes in the test. You should be collecting data and drafting plans for these essays throughout the course.

1. Is there such a thing as a British national identity?
2. **EITHER**
  - (a) Should the monarchy be abolished if Britain is to modernise itself?**OR**
  - (b) Can Britain be truly democratic without a written constitution?
3. **EITHER**
  - (a) What are the legacies you see today of the fact that Britain had an empire?**OR**
  - (b) Is Britain truly multi-cultural?
4. 'Every nation gets the newspaper industry it deserves'. Is the success of the tabloid press in Britain a reflection of the low standards of popular taste?
5. **EITHER**
  - (a) Is Britain really European or not?**OR**
  - (b) Is Britain too dependent on the United States in foreign policy?
6. Is Britain still a society dominated by class divisions?

7. Can Britain be said to have a distinctive cinema of its own today?

**C) Attendance** Up to a maximum of 20% will be deducted from the final overall grade for non-attendance of lectures and fieldtrips.

## Topics and Readings

### General Texts:

There is no recommended up-to-date text for this course. However, any of the first three books are suitable for those wanting a general text. O' Driscoll has recently been updated and therefore might be the best choice. The last two are better for reference, using particular articles as needed.

You will be given handouts in class (where these are readings they are asterisked\* for each session below). The reading lists are designed to help you find supporting material to follow up on sessions and to prepare for the final test.

McDowall, David      *Britain in Close-Up: An In-depth Study of Contemporary Britain*, Longman 1999

O'Driscoll, James \*      *Britain*, 2<sup>nd</sup> revised edn., Oxford University Press 2009 [0194306445]

Oakland, John      *British Civilization* (Routledge, 4<sup>th</sup> edn, 1998)

Christopher, David P.      *British Culture: An Introduction* (Routledge, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. 2006)

Johnson, Paul (ed.),      *20<sup>th</sup> Century Britain, Economic, Social and Cultural Change*, Longman, 1996

Addison, Paul & Jones, Harriet      *A Companion to Contemporary Britain* (Blackwell, 2005)

### **Friday 29 June**

- a. **Introduction:** An overview of the course format, lecture and fieldtrip schedule and an explanation of how you will be assessed.
  
- b. **What is Britain? British National Identity:** Does Britain, which comprises four separate nations, have a united national identity? How has this identity been formed historically, especially in the world wars of the twentieth century, and how has this identity been fractured since 1945?

**Discussion:** *What characteristics do you associate with Britain and Britons? Where did your images come from? Do they match up to reality? Is there a united national identity?*

James O'Driscoll      *Britain*, ch. 1 'Country and People'  
Richards, Jeffrey.      *Films and British National Identity: From Dickens to*

Colley, Linda  
Calder, Angus

*Dad's Army*. (Manchester University Press, 1997)  
ch. 1 'National Identity'  
*Britons. Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (Yale, 1992)  
*The Myth of the Blitz* (1991) [on myth-making and  
National identity as a result of the Second World War]  
Introduction and Conclusion

**Films:**

Humphrey Jennings                      *Listening to Britain* (Video) (IWM, 1991)

- c. ***The Monarchy for and against:*** An overview of the development of the institution of constitutional monarchy and its reception by the British people

**Discussion:** *What are the powers of the monarch? What are the arguments for and against the British monarchy?*

Norton, Philip\*                              'The Crown' in Jones, Bill, et al. ed., *Politics in the UK*  
(London: Prentice Hall, 3rd edn. 1998)  
Coxall, Bill et al.                              *Contemporary British Politics*, Macmillan 4<sup>th</sup> edn. 2003

**Websites:**

[www.royal.gov.uk](http://www.royal.gov.uk) the monarchy's site is excellent and gives lots of information

**Tuesday 3 July**

***The British System of Government:*** Addresses the historical processes by which Britain arrived at its current democratic system; questions how democratic the present system is in practice, the nature of the main political parties, and pressures for reform.

**Discussion:** *Britain is very proud of its democratic heritage, but does the system need reforming now to make it more modern and more genuinely democratic? In what ways do the two major political parties, Labour and Conservative differ?*

Jones, Bill, et al. ed.,                      *Politics UK* (London: Prentice Hall, 5<sup>th</sup>. edn. 2004)  
Coxall, Bill et al.                              *Contemporary British Politics* (Macmillan 4<sup>th</sup> edn.  
2003)

**Websites:**

<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons/lib/research/key%20issues/Ful1%20doc.pdf> [excellent for the 2010 Parliament]

[www.parliament.uk/hophome.htm](http://www.parliament.uk/hophome.htm) is the site for Parliament and is excellent

[www.charter88.org.uk](http://www.charter88.org.uk) for proposals for a written constitution for Britain

Political parties:

[www.labour.org.uk](http://www.labour.org.uk)

[www.conservative-party.org.uk](http://www.conservative-party.org.uk)

**Thursday 5 July**

**a. Class – a British obsession?**

Adonis, A, & Pollard, S. *A Class Act. The Myth of Britain's Classless Society* (London: Penguin, 1998) esp. Ch.2

*class has traditionally been an obsession of the British, but are we changing and becoming more egalitarian in our attitudes? We will look at the changing roles of the aristocracy, middle and working classes. The themes from this session will re-occur in several other topics, especially the media and education,*

**Discussion: Why is class so important to the British? Are we any different in this respect to other nations?**

Adonis, A, & Pollard, S. *A Class Act. The Myth of Britain's Classless Society* (London: Penguin, 1998) esp. Ch.2

**b. Oxford and the English Education system**

*Why do the British get so worked up about elitism in education and particularly the relative chances of state-educated or indeed working-class children getting into our top universities? Are Oxford and Cambridge, the oldest universities in the English –speaking world, the most guilty of charges of elitism?*

McDowall, D. *Britain in Close-Up*, (Longman 1999) ch. 11  
'Educating the Nation'  
Sanderson, M. 'Education and Social Mobility' ch.21 in Johnson, P. (ed.) *20th Century Britain*, Longman 1994  
Watson, K. 'Education and opportunity' ch. 23 in Carnevali, F & Strange, J-M (eds.) *20<sup>th</sup> Century Britain, Economic, Social and Cultural Change*, Longman, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. 2007  
Adonis, A, & Pollard, S. *A Class Act. The Myth of Britain's Classless Society* (London: Penguin, 1998) esp. Ch.2

**Websites:**

[www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk) = Department of Education and Employment  
[www.hefce.ac.uk](http://www.hefce.ac.uk) = UK higher education system- see  
'The nature of higher education'  
[www.isis.org.uk](http://www.isis.org.uk) = private schools  
<http://www.britishcouncil.org/usa-education-uk-system.htm> = overview

**c. The Media- a tabloid society?** - a look at Britain's national press and television. Particular attention will be paid to the tabloid press and the tradition of public service broadcasting

**Discussion: Is the popularity of tabloids like The Sun a sign of dumbing down of British culture? Is British television 'the least bad television in the world'?**

- Curran, J. and Seaton, J.  
Williams, K. *Power Without Responsibility. The Press and Broadcasting in Britain* (Routledge, 1991)  
*Get me a Murder a Day. A History of Mass Communications in Britain*  
(excellent for both press and broadcasting)
- Sparks, C. 'The Press' in J. Stokes & A. Reading, *The Media in Britain* (1999)
- McNair, B.  
Barnet, S. *News and journalism in the UK* (I 1996)  
'Dumbing Down or Reaching Out: Is it Tabloidisation Wot Done It?', in Seaton J. (ed.) *Politics and the Media: Harlots and Prerogatives at the Turn of the Millennium* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998) pp. 75-90
- Taylor, S.J. *Shock! Horror! The Tabloids in Action* (London: Bantam, 1991)

#### **Websites:**

broadsheet newspapers:

[www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk)

[www.the-times.co.uk](http://www.the-times.co.uk)

[www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk)

[www.telegraph.co.uk](http://www.telegraph.co.uk)

tabloids: [www.thesun.co.uk](http://www.thesun.co.uk)

**d. The English Theatre:** What makes theatre special as an art form? How has English theatre and staging changed from medieval miracle plays to the current West End, state-subsidised theatre and 'fringe' theatres? There will be a particular emphasis on the expansion of theatre in the era of Shakespeare (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries)

**Discussion: What makes theatre a special experience? What is special about British theatre?**

- Simon Trussler, *British Theatre*, Cambridge University Press, 1994  
Michael Billington *State of the Nation. British Theatre since 1945*, Faber, 2007
- Peter Brook, *The Empty Space*, Penguin, 1968  
Michael Kustow, *Theatre @ Risk*, Methuen, 2001  
Dominic Dromgoole, *Will & Me*, Allen Lane, 2006  
David Edgar, *State of Play*, Faber, 1999  
*Shakespeare's Globe Theatre Guidebook*, Spinney Publications

#### **Theatre Websites**

[www.shakespeares-globe.org](http://www.shakespeares-globe.org)

[www.nationaltheatre.org.uk](http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk)

[www.whatsonstage.com](http://www.whatsonstage.com)

[www.fringetheatre.org.uk](http://www.fringetheatre.org.uk)

**Thursday 19 July**

**a. *Multi-cultural Britain:*** The development of twentieth century Britain through a consideration of the patterns of inward migration, economic change and government policy in the years following the Second World War. Race relations: a comparison with the USA.

**Discussion:** *Is Britain truly multicultural? What does that term mean? How do we compare with your own country in terms of race relations?*

Adonis. A & Pollard, S.\* *A Class Act: the Myth of Britain's Classless Society*, Penguin, 1998

Commission for Racial Equality *Roots of the Future: Ethnic Diversity in the Making of Britain* (CRE, 1997)

Panayi, P. 'Immigration, Multiculturalism and racism' ch. 16 in Carnevali, F & Strange, J-M (eds.) *20<sup>th</sup> Century Britain, Economic, Social and Cultural Change*, Longman, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. 2007

Phillips, Trevor *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-Cultural Britain* (1999)

Solomos, John *Race and Racism in Britain* (3<sup>rd</sup> edn, 2003)

Fisher, Michael et. Al. *A South-Asian History of Britain*, chs. 7 & 8

Spencer, I. *British Immigration Policy Since 1939: The Making of Multi-Cultural Britain* (1997)

**Websites:**

<http://www.ligali.org/statistics.htm> Organisation for African equality

[www.cre.gov.uk](http://www.cre.gov.uk) Commission for Racial Equality

**b. *Britain and the World:*** Exploring Britain's position at the centre of Empire, Commonwealth and Europe.

**Discussion:** *Do you agree with Dean Acheson that Britain has lost an empire and not yet found a role [in the world]?*

Marshall, P.J. (ed.) *Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire*, CUP, 1996

Reynolds, David *Britannia Overruled: British Policy and World Powers in the 20th Century*, Longman, 2000

Addison, Paul & Jones, Harriet (eds.) *A Companion to Contemporary Britain* (2005)

ch. 27 'The End of Empire'

ch. 28 'The Anglo-American Special Relationship'

ch.29 'Britain and Europe'

**Tuesday 24 July**

**British Sports**

*Which sports would you describe as distinctively British? Why did the British play such a leading role in codifying sport in the nineteenth century? What part did public (leading independent) schools such as Eton, Harrow and Rugby play in this. What sporting values were being imparted? How did class contribute to this? How do you account for the decline in amateurism during the second half of the twentieth century particularly?*

Holt, R.

*Sport and the British: A Modern History*, OUP 1999

Holt, R & Mason, T.

*Sport in Britain, 1845-2000*, 2000

**Thursday 26 July**

**Cinema and British National Identity *Is there a distinctive British cinema? Can it avoid being dominated by Hollywood?***

Richards, Jeffrey.

*Films and British National Identity: From Dickens to Dad's Army*. (Manchester University Press, 1997)  
ch. 1 'National Identity'

Thompson, K.  
& Bordwell, D.  
Hill, J.

*Film History, an Introduction*, McGraw Hill (1994)  
'Cinema' in Jane Stokes & Anna Reading (eds.) *The Media in Britain; current debates and developments*, (Macmillan 1999)

Hill, J.

'British Cinema as National Cinema: Production, Audience and Representation' in Turner, G. (ed.) *The Film Cultures Reader* (Routledge: 2002)

Phil Wickham

'Producing the Goods: UK Film Production 1991-2001'

<http://www.bfi.org.uk/filmtvinfo/publications/pub-rep-brief/pdf/prod-goods.pdf>

(accessed 28.4.10)

**Films:**

Humphrey Jennings

*Listening to Britain* (Video) (IWM, 1991)

**Dr Eleanor Bavidge:** BA (Hons) Film Studies and English, Northumbria University MA Film and Cultural Studies, University of Sunderland Ph.D (Cultural Studies), University of Sunderland. Subject Specialism: Cultural Memory, Cultural Geography and the historical film

**Dr Philip Woods** is Academic Advisor in the European & Study Abroad Office at Kingston University, London . He teaches classes on British Life and Culture (Semesters) and British Culture & Society (Summer School) He studied History at the London School of Economics and at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London His doctorate, which was published, was on British-Indian politics after the First World War. His current research is on the British use of film propaganda in India and he has published in a number of academic journals including *Historical Journal of Film Radio and Television*, *South Asia* and *Indian Horizons*.

He teaches courses on 'Britain and Slavery', and on 'Contesting British National Identity' at New York University in London.