ENL 163

Literary Studies in the British Isles: British Life and Culture

UC Davis in London Spring 2014

Instructor: Dr Gráinne O’Connell    Email: go28@sussex.ac.uk

Biography of Instructor: Gráinne completed her Dphil in English Literature and critical theory at the University of Sussex, England. Her research interests focus on the debates surrounding transnationalism in Anglophone Caribbean and South African literature and culture. More specifically she is interested in how the relationship between the local and the global is constantly reworked in transnational and global spaces. She has taught Anthropology, Communication Studies, English literature, History, and Sociology at CAPA International Education, Humboldt University, Berlin, Sussex University, England and Ruskin College, Oxford over the last seven years.

Course Description
The course is designed to introduce American undergraduate students to the history of London, from the Romans to the modern day, through experiential learning, lectures and class visits, and reflection. This interdisciplinary course examines the diversity and dynamism of British society and culture today but a particular focus is given to literature and literary representations.

We consider topics such as different conceptions of Britishness and identity in the past and present; how ideas about British national identity have been negotiated and understood; the interplay between tradition and heritage in contemporary Britain and the current transformations of British culture and identity in the context of globalisation. We will be looking at the complexity of London’s past through the lenses of immigration and invasion, culture, especially art and theatre, monarchy, trade and empire, multiculturalism, and architecture. Classes are 3 hours long, and meet on Wednesdays from 10:45-13:45, unless there is notice of an alternate time.

Course aims

- To introduce students to the concepts and structures of social and cultural history in Britain and to define the relationships between England, the UK, and London.
- Students will appreciate the diversity of British culture and society and the interaction of social, economic, political, and cultural changes in reshaping British identities.
• To encourage students to think critically about issues and to develop and defend their ideas.
• To provide students with the opportunity to discuss and express their views and findings through discussion, research and writing.

Course objectives

• By the end of the course to have enabled students to have reached an in-depth level of understanding of the subject.
• Students should be able to demonstrate their understanding through oral and written presentation.
• To have given students a critical and comparative framework with which to understand and analyse the history, politics and culture of Britain.

Methodology

A combination of lectures, walking tours and extra-curricular visits.

My Education events

My Education events will inform your presentations in class and reflections on these experiences may be incorporated into your written work or final exam where appropriate for credit. For example, the ME visits to Brick Lane www.visitbricklane.com, the Neasden Hindu Temple www.mandir.org and the visit to the Southall Gurdwara http://www.sgsss.org are all relevant for the theme of multiculturalism and ‘Britishness’.

Class participation and attendance

We value your participation in this course, and we trust there will be a supportive and friendly atmosphere. We expect everyone to think carefully about the assigned readings, to contribute fully to class discussions, and to respond thoughtfully to the field trips.

CAPA has a mandatory attendance policy. Students are expected to come in on time, to have completed required readings in advance of class and to participate actively and critically in an informed manner. The participation portion of the class will be graded accordingly. Silent attendance of class is not enough for a good participation grade. Persistent lateness or lack of attention in class may result in a low or zero grade for participation, and possible referral to the Chief Academic Officer (CAO).

If you need to miss class for medical reasons or for a family emergency, please let the Chief Academic Officer know in advance of meetings on excused.absence@capa.org, so plans can be made accordingly. You will need to provide evidence of the reason for your absence. If you miss any meetings without an excused absence from the CAO, your final grade will be dropped accordingly. Students are responsible for making up any missed assignments or other
classwork. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have been marked as present on the register especially on field trips.

**CAPA Program and Instructor Policies**

CAPA expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic course depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student, it is imperative that a student demonstrates an outstanding standard of individual honour in his or her scholastic work and class behaviour. This means to gain full attendance you must attend all classes, you must not be late (unless with a valid reason) and you must be respectful by not talking or whispering in class when others are talking or presenting.

**PLEASE NOTE:** No electronic equipment will be used in class apart from laptops for notetaking only, not for surfing the web; phones, ipods, cell phones, etc, are not allowed. If you use such electronic equipment, you may receive a zero grade for participation.

**Plagiarism** will be dealt with very seriously, and will be referred automatically to the Chief Academic Officer in London. You may receive an F for the course. If all work is not submitted by the end of the program, you will receive an F for the course.

**Assessment/Grading**

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<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Group discussion/class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Study Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<td>Final Research Paper</td>
<td>50%</td>
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**Students must complete all required components by the established deadlines. Failure to do so will result in a reduction of the course grade and may result in a grade of F.**

**Field Study Paper: 40%**

**Maximum 6 double-spaced pages. Due: end of Week 6**

You may choose to write on one of the following topics for your field study paper:

1. The Museum of London and Roman Londinium
2. The Globe, and Renaissance Entertainments
3. Imperial London: Trafalgar Square & British Museum
4. The National Portrait Gallery and Banqueting House - to Kill a King

The aim of the field study assignment is to ‘read’ the sites you encounter for what they reveal about the ways British identities have been constructed and are currently imagined, and to write analytically about them. You will also find books in the CAPA Resource Centre and the Senate House Library that contain relevant material for this assignment in particular and the course in general. Whilst your main source will be your own observations at the site itself,
your analysis must be supported by a minimum of three secondary sources, which you should cite in a bibliography. Please ensure that you keep a spare copy of all assignments handed in, in case they go astray.

**Final Research Paper: 50%  To be handed in in the final class in Week 10**

Maximum 8 double spaced pages.
Minimum of 5 secondary sources, to be cited in a bibliography. This will be on a topic from British history that you have selected - it may relate to your final presentation. Using your chosen person/theme/event, using the places you have visited and your experiences there, as well as using secondary research to support your debate, you will persuasively argue how contemporary ideas of British identity have been influenced by this person, place or thing.
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<th>Descriptor</th>
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<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>75+</td>
<td>95+</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Shows superior use and understanding of extensive literature beyond the textbook and notes</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>70-74</td>
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<td>Good</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>66-69</td>
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<td>Shows significant use and understanding of extensive literature beyond the textbook and notes</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<td>Average</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>56-59</td>
<td>76-79</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Shows a clear understanding and some insight into the material in the textbook and notes</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>Below Average / Poor</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>50-52</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<td>Fails to show a clear understanding or much insight into the material in the textbook and notes</td>
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<td>&lt;40</td>
<td>&lt;60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Shows little or no understanding of any of the material</td>
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READING

Prior to the course students will have read Kate Fox’s *Watching the English*

A select, annotated bibliography of suggested readings which may support your research for final papers and presentations:

- **Martin Pugh,** *State and Society. British Political and Social History 1870-1992,* Arnold 1994. The best single volume introduction to 20th-Century British History. Up to date in its interpretations, it pays particularly welcome attention to women’s history.
  
  
- **A.J.P. Taylor,** *English History, 1914-45,* Penguin 1965, but reprinted many times. Covering the same period as Beloff but from a leftist perspective. This book is regarded as one of the best written by one of the greatest British historians of the 20th century.
  
- **Alan Sked and Chris Cook,** *Post-War Britain: a Political History,* Penguin 1979, but reprinted many times. A standard text on the last part of the course that is frequently revised and now includes useful coverage of the 1990s.
  

**Other useful books**

- **T.O.Lloyd,** *Empire to Welfare State: English History, 1906-85*
- **Peter Clarke,** *Hope and Glory*
- **John Stevenson,** *British Society, 1914-45*
- **Arthur Marwick,** *British Society since 1945; The Sixties*
- **R.F. Holland,** *The Pursuit of Greatness*
- **A.F. Havighurst,** *Britain in Transition*
- **Peter Hennessy,** *Never Again; Never So Good*
- **Isaac Kramnick,** ed., *Is Britain Dying?*
- **Alan Sked,** *Britain's Decline. Problems and Perspectives.*
- **Nick Tiratsoo ed.,** *From Blitz to Blair: a new history of Britain since 1939*

**Useful Websites:**

- Guardian Newspaper Online: What is Britain? [http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/britishidentity](http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/britishidentity)
- British Political History: [http://bubl.ac.uk/link/b/britishpoliticalhistory.htm](http://bubl.ac.uk/link/b/britishpoliticalhistory.htm)
- Who Do We Think We Are?: [http://www.whodowethinkweare.org.uk/](http://www.whodowethinkweare.org.uk/)
- Uniting the Kingdoms: [http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/utk/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/utk/)
WEEK ONE:  Wednesday, April 2\textsuperscript{nd}

Topic: 'Introducing Literary Studies in the British Isles: British Life and Culture'

Venue: CAPA London Centre

Class focus: In this session, we will discuss the emergence of Britain, Ireland and London as major sites of literary and historical influence and we will consider some of the primary themes on the overall course. These themes include, but are not limited to, modernity versus heritage, London's expansive cultural and literary history, industrialisation and empire, nationalism and globalisation and London as a global city.

A central aim of the course is to critically analyse literary texts and histories in Britain and Ireland via socio-historical themes, cultural representations and experiential learning opportunities. Such as the role of the novel in imagining the milieu of the nineteenth century urban London context, or the influence of Sam Selvon's 1956 classic text, \textit{The Lonely Londoners}, in imagining Caribbean migration as central to London's post World War two development and identity.

We will particularly consider the tension surrounding competing representations of London and the debates which this has fuelled for literary, and broader critical, interpretations of London, Britain and Britishness. We will also examine what counts as literature in Britain and Ireland in 2014 by considering the legacies of British imperialism, particularly for urban contexts such as Dublin, Belfast and London.

Required reading:


- What is Britishness?: \url{http://www.ethnos.co.uk/pdfs/9_what_is_britishness_CRE.pdf}

In-class material:
WEEK TWO: Wednesday, April 9th

Topic: ‘Roman settlement and expansion in Britain and the City of London’ [Field Class 1]

Venue: Meet at the Barbican tube station at 11am

Class focus: For this class, we will focus on the settlement of the Romans in London, or, 'Londinium', via a short walk around St. Paul's Cathedral and the City of London. We will also pay a dedicated visit to the Museum of London nearby. Time-permitting, we will also visit the nearby surviving ruins of a Roman amphitheatre at the Guildhall art gallery.

Students are required to engage with the Museum of London, and the surrounding area, in relation to specific tasks set by the instructor; these will be handed out at the beginning of the class. The influence of the Roman empire on London as a historical and cultural context is a central concern for this session. As the course develops, we will particularly focus on the importance of the Roman Empire for nineteenth century British imperial ideals.

Our visit will be complemented by readings by Peter Ackroyd who portrays London as like a character from a literary text as well as a reading on the London context during the time of Geoffrey Chaucer whose work, *The Canterbury Tales*, played a major role in beginning to formalise middle English.

Required Reading:


WEEK THREE: Wednesday, April 16th

Topic: 'Shakespeare's Globe and London Life: From 'vulgar' playwright to national poet' [Field Class 2]

Venue: Lecture at the CAPA centre at 10.45am and then a visit at 12.15pm to the Globe.

Class focus: For this class, we will examine the rise of William Shakespeare in early modern England and the role which London played in establishing his reputation. We will dedicate attention to how Shakespeare's plays and works were received initially as deserving of censorship and how this contrasts markedly with how Shakespeare is now firmly seen as Britain's and, more specifically, England's, Bard poet. Students will also be asked to consider the recurring debates surrounding how Shakespeare's life and work is often selectively represented. Such as when the bawdy humour of Shakespeare is played down in favour of the more lofty aspects of his broader repertoire.

We will also visit the Globe in the early afternoon where students will be asked to examine the location, and contemporary role, of the Globe as urban geographers.

Required Reading:


Further Suggested Reading:


WEEK FOUR: Wednesday, April 23rd

Topic: 'Jack the Ripper, the East End and Charles Dickens: Industry and the emergence of the London working classes' [Field Class 3]

Venue: 11am at Tower Hill Underground station
**Class focus:** This week's class consists of a walking tour of the East End via the urban myths of ‘Jack the Ripper’. A primary focus for this week is the emergence of the popular press in late nineteenth century London and its role in perpetuating the myths surrounding Jack the Ripper.

Students are also asked to consider extracts from Charles Dickens’ *Great Expectations* which focusses on the plight of those who lived in the nineteenth century London context. How the Victorian elites perceived the urban context of London is a central theme for this week and we will assess these perceptions in light of Dickens' writings and the walking tour on Jack the Ripper.

**Required reading:**


- Extracts from Charles Dickens and Henry Mayhew

**Further Suggested Reading**

- Link to the Charles Booth online archive: [http://booth.lse.ac.uk/cgi-bin/do.pl?sub=view_booth_and_barth&args=531000,180400,6,large,5](http://booth.lse.ac.uk/cgi-bin/do.pl?sub=view_booth_and_barth&args=531000,180400,6,large,5)

[Booth was a Victorian philanthropist who mapped poverty in London]

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**WEEK FIVE: Wednesday, April 30th**

**Topic:** 'Screen adaptations of literature and the neo-Victorian genre in film'

**Venue:** Capa Centre

**Class focus:** In this class, we will consider adaptations of nineteenth century literary texts on screen. We will also consider why the Victorian period has emerged as a big theme in BBC productions over the last ten to fifteen years and we will also watch parts of neo-Victorian productions such as the adaptation of Sarah Waters Tipping the Velvet and the recent BBC series Ripper street.

**Required reading:**


In-class screenings:

• Ripper Street

• Sherlock Holmes [Part of first episode of series 1]

• Tipping the Velvet

**WEEK Six  Wednesday, May 7th**

**Topic:** 'Imperial London and Trafalgar Square' [Field Class 4]

**Venue:** Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square at 11aM

**Class focus:** This week begins with a short lecture at Trafalgar Square and will then continue with a short survey of the wider area. Students will be asked to pay attention to the deliberate symbolism of Trafalgar Square and students will be asked to critically represent the aim of the original architects.

We will also visit the National Portrait Gallery and students will be asked to consider some of the recent installations on the fourth plinth. Literary, and wider cultural, representations of Trafalgar Square and British imperialism will be examined for this week in order to analyse how British nationalism influenced a range of nineteenth and twentieth century cultural forms. Students will also read Pat Barker's classic text Regeneration which examines the effects of World war on British soldiers.

**Required reading:**


[Another text on Trafalgar Square as a site of remembrance and protest]

Further suggested reading:


• Wilde, Oscar. The Importance of Being Earnest. [Play]

WEEK SEVEN: Wednesday, May 14th

Topic: ’Postcolonial London: The World in One City’

Venue: CAPA London centre

Class focus: In this class, we will consider how post World War Two London was heavily shaped by the influx of migrants from its colonies. We will particularly focus on Sam Selvon's 1957 novel The Lonely Londoners as well as the Monaica Ali's 2004 novel Brick Lane. Students are asked to attend to the importance of London as an urban context for post-World War two writing and how this is enmeshed with immigrant histories and experiences.

Required Reading:

• Ali, Monica. Brick Lane. [extracts provided by instructor]

• McLeod, John. Postcolonial London: Rewriting the Metropolis. [extracts provided by instructor]

• Selvon, Sam. The Lonely Londoners.

Further Suggested Reading:


• Excerpts from Carnival by Don Letts
WEEK EIGHT: Wednesday, May 21st

Topic: 'Brick Lane and Street Art Tour' [Field class 5]

Venue: Liverpool Street station at 11am; outside Camden food company in the main section of the station. This is directly opposite the National Rail platforms 12-13.

Class focus: In this class, we will go on a walking tour of Street art in the Brick Lane/Shoreditch area. Though Street Art is often equated with graffiti by many people, the Pinder reading for this week, and our Street artist tour guide, present Street Art as a central expression of urban subcultures in London and broader global contexts.

A central focus of this week's theme is the role of London's East End history in creating the conditions for contemporary Street Art. More specifically, we will consider how the East End has become a hub for creativity and the relationship between creative hubs and broader artistic histories in London. We will also compare London to global cities such as Berlin, New York and San Francisco who have also reflected a similar 'hipsterfication'; link to definition of hipster:

Required Reading:

  http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/features/graffiti-street-art-ndash-or-crime-868736.html

- Urban guide to London Street art tour:
  http://www.ravishlondon.com/londonstreetart/


- Ryan, Nick. “Children of the Abyss”, Observer

WEEK NINE: Wednesday May 28th

Irish literature, Scottish literature and colonial history

Venue: Capa Centre

Class focus: This class considers some Scottish and Irish literary texts from the twentieth century. A central focus is the clear connection between Irish literature, Scottish literature and colonial history and the potential critiques, or gaps, which we may uncover through reading about colonial history in literature.
Required reading:

- Duffy, Carol Ann. [Selected poems]
- Heaney, Seamus. *North* [Selected poems from this collection will be provided by the instructor] 1975.
- Joyce, James. *Portrait of the Artist* [selected extracts provided by the instructor]

Further Suggested Reading:

- [A concise reading on Irish and Scottish literature]

**WEEK TEN: Wednesday June 4th**

The London form?

**Venue:** CAPA centre

**Class focus:** This last class will focus on two very distinct London literary voices; Harold Pinter and Benjamin Zephaniah. Students will consider whether it is possible to read this texts primarily in relation to the relatively local context of London. Or if there are much more clear broader discussions at work.

**Required Reading:**

- Pinter, Harold. *The Homecoming*.
- Zephaniah, Benjamin. 'The London Breed'

**Further Suggested Reading:**