



COURSE OUTLINE

THE EMERGENCE OF MODERN BRITAIN

This course examines the transformation of Britain in the century after the Napoleonic wars from an essentially rural society ruled by a narrow elite to one that was predominantly urban and democratic. The course begins with a brief introduction, outlining the significance of the origins of industrialisation from the 1760s onwards, and of the French Revolution and the wars which followed it.

Industrialisation, radicalism and the rise of the middle classes 1815 - 1832

We consider the importance of the growth of industry in the early nineteenth century, together with the associated issues of a rapidly rising population, and of towns and cities that were expanding at a hitherto unimaginable rate. In a European environment dominated by revolution and war for more than two decades, the situation was potentially explosive. The pressures that were consequently brought to bear on the old aristocratic order, and the accompanying demands for political change from the emerging middle and industrial working classes, are assessed.

Essay topic: "The principle of my reform is to prevent the necessity of Revolution" (Earl Grey, November 1830). Discuss with reference to the passing of the Reform Act of 1832.

Whigs, Tories and Chartists 1832 - 1850

We examine the nature and development of the major political parties and pressure groups at this time. The contributions of the Whigs to factory and Poor Law reform are critically considered, as are Peel's attempts to broaden the appeal of Toryism in the new Conservative Party. The Chartists' campaign for universal male suffrage, set against a background of economic instability at home and the return of revolution across much of Europe, provides an alternative perspective, and a critique of the stance taken by the political parties at the time.

Essay topic: "Peel offered a better set of solutions to Britain's social and economic problems than did the Chartists; that is why he was popular and they were not." Discuss.

“Ireland, Ireland, that cloud in the west...” c1820 – 1893

Gladstone detected a storm brewing when he made this observation in 1845, but our survey begins earlier with the problems following the passing of the Act of Union in 1800. Specific consideration is given to the issue of Catholic Emancipation in the 1820s, to the famine of the 1840s, and to the increasingly militant and nationalist approach adopted by Irishmen from the 1870s onwards. Gladstone’s various attempts in each of his four ministries to solve the problem are critically examined against a background of direct action and violence in Ireland, and of increasing divisions within the Liberal party at Westminster.

Essay topic: “My mission is to pacify Ireland” (W E Gladstone, December 1868). Why did he fail?

The advent of democracy 1865 – 1918

We examine the reasons for successive further extensions of the franchise after the 1832 Reform Act, which had been regarded as a “final measure” at the time it was passed. Each of the Reform Acts of 1867, 1884-5, and 1918 is analysed within the context of its own times. We consider the impact of continuing social change on politics, and of the varying stances of the Conservatives and Liberals, as well as of the emerging Labour Party, across the period. The course concludes with a survey of attitudes to gender, and of developing contemporary perceptions of the “proper” place of women in both society and politics.

Essay topic: Why did the issue of “votes for women” prove so contentious before the First World War and so uncontroversial after it?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Christopher Harvie, Colin Matthew Nineteenth Century Britain: A Very Short Introduction (2000) *ISBN: 0192853988*
- Derrick Murphy et al, Britain 1783 – 1918 (2003) *ISBN: 0007150784*
- Stephen J Lee, Aspects of British Political History: 1815 - 1914 (1994) I *ISBN: 0415090075*
- Michael Byrne et al, Years of Expansion: British History 1815 - 1914 (2002) *ISBN: 0340790814*
- Martin Pugh, A History of Britain 1789 – 2000 (2003) *ISBN 0952358379*
- Norman McCord, British History 1815 – 1906 (1991) *ISBN: 0198228589*
- Sean Lang, Parliamentary Reform 1785 – 1928 (1998) *ISBN: 0415183995*
- Eric J Evans, The Great Reform Act of 1832 (1990) *ISBN: 0198228589*
- Eric J Evans, Sir Robert Peel (2006) *ISBN: 041536616X*

Eric J Evans <i>The Forging of the Modern State</i> (2001)	<i>ISBN: 0582472679</i>
Richard Brown, <i>Chartism</i> (1998)	<i>ISBN: 0521586178</i>
Stephen J Lee, <i>Gladstone and Disraeli</i> (2005)	<i>ISBN: 0415323576</i>
Paul Adelman, <i>Great Britain and the Irish Question 1800 – 1922</i> (1996)	<i>ISBN: 0340889012</i>
Paula Bartley, <i>Votes for Women</i> (1998)	<i>ISBN: 0340857919</i>

Those unfamiliar with the history of this period should try to read an introductory text such as Harvie & Matthew (2000) before the start of the course. Derrick Murphy et al (2003) is the best all-round textbook covering the whole period, and is particularly recommended for purchase. Additional recommendations for reading, including articles from periodicals and guidance in the use of relevant websites, will be given as the course progresses. Students will also receive a series of extracts from primary sources.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Students complete at least one paper, typically of about 1,500 words in length, on each of the four themes. Students for whom improving their academic writing is a major objective will be encouraged to produce papers more frequently, completing perhaps ten papers during a term. Papers will address specific questions agreed by the tutor on issues chosen by the student. Examples of typical questions are given above. Papers must include a full bibliography and proper acknowledgement of the intellectual property of other historians.

Objectives

- Students will gain a good knowledge and understanding of the period studied, especially of its major political and social developments.
- To enable the student to develop a critical and constructive approach to understanding these developments, and to engage in debates regarding the various possible explanations for them, in a rational and scholarly fashion.
- To foster increased skills in comprehension, interpretation, analysis and evaluation with which to formulate independent opinions supported by viable evidence.

Outcomes

- To demonstrate, orally and in written form, knowledge of a range of issues arising in the themes selected for study.
- To show knowledge and understanding of some important positions developed within historical debates on these themes, and the arguments employed.
- To have acquired knowledge and understanding of the major developments in British politics and society in the period.

Assessment criteria

DISTINCTION Grade A	Excellent knowledge and understanding of the key issues, and the ability to appreciate their significance. Shows independent judgement and original thinking, together with a sophisticated understanding of relevant historical debates. Persuasive use of evidence in support of arguments.
CREDIT Grade B	Good knowledge and understanding of the key issues, and the ability to appreciate much of their significance. Shows some independent judgement, together with an understanding of relevant historical debates. Good use of evidence in support of arguments.
MERIT Grade C	Reasonable knowledge and understanding of the key issues, and the ability to appreciate some of their significance. Shows some understanding of relevant historical debates. Uses evidence in support of arguments, but not consistently.
PASS Grade D	Some knowledge and understanding but this is clearly incomplete. Shows limited ability to analyse and use evidence. Some attempt to construct an argument. However, lacks ability to argue meaningfully or make significant connections.
FAIL	None of the criteria listed above met.

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<http://www.bookshop.blackwell.co.uk> or www.amazon.co.uk