



Study abroad.

SYLLABUS

Britain Today: Issues and Perspectives

Instructor: Martin Upham

Spring Semester 2012

Contact Hours: 40

Language of Instruction: English

LONDON, ENGLAND (ILACA)

email: martin@ahalondon.org.uk

Monday: 1.00 – 3.00pm

Tuesday: 10.30 – 11.30pm

Britain Today London Semester Spring 2012

EXPECTATIONS AND OBJECTS

Britain Today is the core course of the AHA London semester. It provides a context for your study options; equips you with tools to make sense of Britain's past, its politics, culture and society; and offers you a broader canvass against which you may evaluate your British experience. There are two blocks: the British Present and the British Past. Topics within the blocks are handled via class meetings and visits. We will try to exploit London's matchless resources as a world city which is also a centre of government.

While there is a formal structure to the course we will not live in isolation from the world outside. There will certainly be events - for example the May elections for the Mayor of London - which illustrate *or contradict* what has been discussed in class: you are encouraged to bring your thoughts on these into class discussions. If you put your energy into this class and follow, systematically, the course of study and reading you can expect to go back home with a good general understanding of Britain, its character, the paramount influences upon it, even a better sense of the extent to which its history is also United States history.

CLASS TIMETABLE

We normally meet on Mondays from 1.00pm to 3.00 pm and Tuesdays from 10.30 am till 11.30 am, and occasionally for longer. Sometimes the class will meet on other days: keep an eye on *What's Coming Up*. If there is an excursion the class may meet on site: make sure you know in advance if this is to be the case. Every class is mandatory. *Failure to attend without good reason will affect your grade.*

Date	Activity
BLOCK ONE	British Historical turning-points
Monday 13 February 1.00-3.00 pm	Introduction to course Britain and its island status Class meeting followed by Study Visit to British Museum: Rooms 41, 49, 50 (Iron Age, Romano-British, Saxon, Viking objects) <u>Take a notebook</u>
Tuesday 14 February 10.30 – 11.30 am	The English Reformation Class meeting
Monday 20 February 1.00-3.00 pm	The English Reformation: Study Visit to local churches
Tuesday 21 February 10.30 – 11.30 am	The Crisis of the 17th century: Monarchy versus Parliament Class meeting
Monday 27 February 1.00-3.00 pm	The Crisis of the 17th century: Monarchy versus Parliament DVD: The British Wars
Tuesday 28 February 10.30 – 11.30 am	Nationality: Scotland – handouts Class meeting
Wednesday 29 – Friday 1 March	Nationality: Scotland study weekend. Edinburgh site visits include the Castle, New Town, National Galleries, St Giles Cathedral, Writers' House, Museum of Scotland, Holyrood House and the Scottish Parliament.
Monday 5 March 1.00-3.00 pm	Nationality: Scotland - debrief
Tuesday 6 March 10.30 – 11.30 am Assignment 1 in	World Wars worksheets and grid Class meeting
Tuesday 13 March 10.00 – 12.00 noon (note change of time)	Study visit to the Imperial War Museum
Wednesday 14 March (note change of day)	Study visit to London Mayor's Question Time
Monday 19 March 1.00 - 3.00 pm	Study visit to the Cabinet War Rooms /Churchill Museum
Tuesday 20 March 10.30 –11.30 am Assignment 2 in	Churchill and 20th century Britain Class meeting
	Mid-term
BLOCK TWO	British Politics
Monday 2 April 1.00 – 3.00 pm	British government and constitution I: parliamentary sovereignty Class meeting
Tuesday 3 April 10.30 – 11.30 am	British government and constitution II: the prime minister Class meeting
Monday 9 April 1.00 – 3.00 pm	Easter Monday: no classes
Tuesday 10 April 10.30 – 11.30 am	British government and constitution III: Unitary Government
Monday 16 April 1.00 - 3.00 pm Assignment 2 in	Study visit to House of Commons chamber for a live debate (subject to be announced).
Tuesday 17 April 10.30 – 11.30 am	British government and constitution IV: Parties and voting

Thursday 19 – Friday 20 April Meet at Marylebone Station	Visit to Stratford upon Avon and Warwick. Site visits include Anne Hathaway's cottage, Shakespeare's birthplace, New Place, Guild Chapel and Holy Trinity parish church; Warwick castle and historic town. We will also see Twelfth Night in the rebuilt Memorial Theatre.
BLOCK THREE	British identity and institutions
Monday 23 April 1.00-3.00 pm Assignment 3 in	The BBC Class meeting
Tuesday 24 April 10.30 – 11.30 am	The NHS Class meeting
Monday 30 April 1.00-3.00 pm	Education Class meeting
Tuesday 1 May 10.30 – 11.30 am	Social classes Class meeting
Thursday 3 May	Elections for the Mayor of London AHA Ballot Box open: 9.30 – 5.30
Friday 4 May	Visit to Burghley House
Monday 7 May 1.00-3.00 pm Assignment 4 in	Topical debate
Tuesday 8 May 10.30 – 11.30 am	Britishness quiz

READING

SOURCES

The recommended reading refers to the two study blocks. General introductions to many topics may be found in **A Visitor's Britain**, but be careful of outdated chapters. The following books, all of which are in your student library, offer more specialised reading. If you are using the internet, always begin with the BBC, which will almost certainly give you the information you need or a link to where it is to be found. Beware random websites.

Block One: British historical turning-points

The BBC (www.bbc.co.uk) has excellent history sources on all the topics below
M Upham and P. Tatspaugh, **A Visitor's Britain** chapter 12

For the English Reformation

S Brigden, **New Worlds, Lost Worlds**

P Collinson (ed.), **The Sixteenth Century 1485-1603**

For the Crisis of the 17th century

M. Kishlansky (ed.), **A Monarchy Transformed**

For nationality in Scotland:

T. Devine, **The Scottish Nation**

N. Ascherson, **Stone Voices**

www.bbc.co.uk; then news/scotland/politics

'Calman Commission', **Serving Scotland Better: Scotland and the United Kingdom in the 21st Century** (June 2009) – executive summary

Scottish government website, <http://home.scotland.gov.uk/home>

Scottish National Party website, <http://www.snp.org/>

For war and the 20th century

P Clarke, **Hope and Glory: Britain in the 20th Century**

Block Two: British Politics

V Bogdanor, **The New British Constitution**

B Jones, **Politics UK**

M Upham and P. Tatspaugh, **A Visitor's Britain**, chapter 7

The British Government, www.direct.gov.uk (a portal through which to find information on any aspect of British society)

The British Parliament, www.parliament.uk (direct information on politics plus links to the political parties)

And for the News

TV news bulletins BBC1 at 6pm, 10pm; Channel 4 at 7pm.

Current affairs Newsnight (BBC2) 10.30 p.m.

Radio The Today Programme, 6.30am-9.00am on BBC Radio 4 (93.5fm).

www.bbc.co.uk

www.channel4.com.

Block Three: Britishness

F.Mount, Mind the Gap

Current affairs – your reading of newspapers and awareness of the news

AND DON'T FORGET THAT EVERY STUDY VISIT GIVES YOU OPPORTUNITIES FIRST TO MAKE YOUR OWN NOTES AND SECOND TO COLLECT MATERIAL

ASSIGNMENTS and QUIZ

You may want to write about some other topic. If so please discuss and agree it with me.

1. Tuesday 6 March Prepare a report to UK prime minister David Cameron which summarises in 1,000 words the state of mind of the Scottish nation, the prospects for an independent Scotland, and your recommendations if he wants to avoid it (20%)
2. Tuesday 20 March Was war the most formative influence on 20th century Britain? (25%)
3. Monday 23 April 'British Government is too centralised'. Discuss in 1,000 words. (25%)
4. Monday 7 May. You appear to be a respectable executive of the Narodny Bank living in a quiet London suburb. In fact you are a spy reporting personally to Russian prime minister Putin. He has a short attention span so you must in 1,000 words fully brief him on the London Mayoral elections, their outcome, the factors which produced the result and its significance for British politics and the coalition government (20%)
5. Tuesday 8 May. A short-answer quiz on Britishness. (10%)

In all cases your sources will be class meetings, the books and websites on this syllabus, your observations on study visits and the news. Don't forget that the study visits are designed to illustrate course topics and thus are sources which can be referred to.

The standards for this course will not be lower than at home. An A will be awarded only for the best quality work; poor work will be appropriately graded. Please conform to the rudiments of scholarship by giving references in the style which is usual at your home school. Include a bibliography. **USE THE RESOURCES WHICH ARE GIVEN TO YOU, ESPECIALLY THE VISITS YOU MAKE; IF IN DOUBT – ASK ME. There is no need to use encyclopaediae.**