



Boston University Study Abroad London

Class, Politics and the Making of British Identity CAS HI 252 (Elective A)

Course Description

This course offers an historical understanding of the evolving politics of the state in England – and later Britain – between Henry VIII’s break with Catholic Europe in 1534 (‘the first Brexit’) and Britain’s 2016 referendum vote to leave the European Union (a ‘second Brexit’). The economic, social and cultural developments connected with these shifts in power will also be assessed, with students using two field trips (one to Whitehall and Westminster and the other to St Paul’s Cathedral) to explore how a ‘national story’ has been deliberately ‘invented’ by the state. In addition, the connection between the British imperial project and national identity at home will be evaluated. Attention will be paid to the scholarly views that the British empire was far less powerful than is often thought but nevertheless had a hugely significant impact. By examining the evolution of British identity in the midst of historically significant events (the aforementioned ‘second Brexit’), students will be encouraged to use this ‘study abroad’ course to think about the wider applicability of how the triangular relationship between state, territoriality and peoples is a process that can be reversed. Student learning will also be furthered via the consideration of four television documentaries (on Winston Churchill and George Orwell’s Britishness; the politics of evensong; the industrial revolution; and empire), resulting in reflections on the epistemological status of history presented in this medium. Above all, this course seeks to hone the key transferable skill in studying history, namely critical thinking. To this end, students will be required to make a class presentation wherein they interpret a portrait painting as a ‘primary source’, situating both the artist and the sitter in their historical context; they will write a 2000-word paper which aims at constructing a logical historical argument, using persuasive evidence gleaned from a range of ‘secondary sources’; and they will sit an end-of-session exam which tests their ability to deploy historical learning in a mentally flexible and intellectually independent way.

Course Objectives and Hub Outcomes

These course objectives fulfil the academic requirements for two Hub Capacities:

Philosophical, Aesthetic, and Historical Interpretation Area: 'Historical Consciousness'

Diversity, Civic Engagement, and Global Citizenship Area: 'Global Citizenship and Intercultural Literacy'

1. Students will demonstrate a knowledge of when and why power shifted in the evolution of Britain's political system over a 500-year period, and the impact these shifts had culturally within the British Isles and in the 'formal' and 'informal' parts of the British empire. [Historical Consciousness Learning Outcome 1]
2. Students will construct historical arguments concerning the modern history of Britain, domestically and externally, based on evaluative interpretations of secondary source scholarly materials. [Historical Consciousness Learning Outcome 1]
3. Students will demonstrate an ability to interpret a portrait painting as a primary source, situating both the artist and the sitter in their historical and cultural context e.g. the extent to which what is being projected in the painting accurately reflects the power and social structures of the day. [Historical Consciousness Learning Outcome 2]
4. Students will demonstrate an ability to interpret St Paul's Cathedral and the public spaces which link Trafalgar Square to Whitehall as historically-important spaces which are used today in Britain's national life to tell a contemporary version of Britain's 'Island Story'. [Historical Consciousness Learning Outcome 2]
5. Students will demonstrate, through comparative analysis of the roles played by the commercial empire of the city of London, the white dominions, and the sub-imperialism of a greater India, a knowledge of historical arguments concerning the nature of the British empire. [Global Citizenship and Intercultural Literacy Learning Outcome 1]
6. Students will demonstrate, through comparative analysis, the role of rival 'national stories' within the British Isles in seeking to create a connection between a set of governing institutions, a 'national' territory, and the people living in a 'national' homeland. [Global Citizenship and Intercultural Literacy Learning Outcome 1]

Additional Course Objectives

7. To encourage students to reflect on the wider applicability of how the triangular relationship between state, territoriality, and peoples is a process that can be reversed.
8. To make students historically aware that 'progress' is not inevitable and that rights acquired by individuals often followed a prolonged struggle, and that constant vigilance is needed to protect acquired rights.
9. To prompt students to use the 'source criticism' mindset of the historian in everyday life.

Grading

The following Boston University table explains the grading system that is used by most faculty members on Boston University's Study Abroad London Programmes.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Honour Points</u>	<u>Usual %</u>
A	4.0	93-100
A-	3.7	89-92
B+	3.3	85-88
B	3.0	81-84
B-	2.7	77-80
C+	2.3	73-76
C	2.0	69-72
C-	1.7	65-68
D	1.0	60-64
F	0.0	Unmarked

Grading Criteria

'Incomplete' or **I** grades are not permitted because of the obvious difficulty in making up missed work once the student has left the country. All work must be completed on time. We also do not allow **'Audits'** (AU), **'Withdrawals'** (W), or **'Pass/Fail'** (P) grades.

The grades reflect the quality of the work. Lecturers and students should use the following criteria for an understanding of what each grade means.

A This exceptional grade is assigned only to work that has persistently outstanding quality in both substance and presentation. The student must demonstrate a sustained capacity for independent thought and extensive study, producing rigorous and convincing analyses in well-ordered prose.

A- Awarded to work that is clearly focused and analytical, and based on wide reading. The student must cover all the principal points of a question and systematically develop a persuasive overall thesis, allowing for one or two venial omissions or inapt expressions.

B+, B, B- This range of grades indicates that the student has shown some evidence of original thought and intellectual initiative. The student has cited sources beyond the class materials, and shown a degree of originality in perception and/or approach to the subject. The work will show thoughtful management of material, and a good grasp of the issues. The differences between a B+, a straight B and a B- may reflect poor presentation of the material, or mistakes in punctuation, spelling and grammar.

C+, C, C- Work in this grade range is satisfactory, but uninspiring. If the work is simply a recitation of the class materials or discussions, and shows no sign of genuine intellectual engagement with the issues, it cannot deserve a higher grade. Should an essay fail to provide a clear answer to the question as set, or argue a position coherently, the grade will fall within this range.

Quality of presentation can lift such work into the upper levels of this grade range. Work of this quality which is poorly presented, and riddled with errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation, will fall into the lower end of the range. To earn a C grade, the work must demonstrate that the student is familiar with the primary course material, be written well enough to be readily understood, be relevant to the assignment, and, of course, be the student's own work except where properly cited.

D A marginal pass can be given where some but not all the elements of the course have been completed satisfactorily.

F The failing grade indicates the work is seriously flawed in one or more ways:

- Obvious lack of familiarity with the material
- So poorly written as to defy understanding
- So brief and insubstantial that it fails to properly address the subject
- Material presented is not relevant to the assignment
- Demonstrates evidence of plagiarism (see following section in Academic Conduct Code)

Please refer to the Academic Handbook for detailed grading criteria and policies on plagiarism. This can be accessed via Blackboard Learn: <http://learn.bu.edu>

** Final Grades are subject to deductions by the Academic Affairs Office due to unauthorised absences.*

Attendance Policies

Classes

All Boston University London Programme students are expected to attend every class session, seminar, and field trip to fulfil the required course contact hours and receive course credit. Any student that has been absent from two class sessions (whether authorised or unauthorised) will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their continued participation on the programme.

Authorised Absence:

The Authorised Absence Approval Request Form is available through the Academic Affairs section of the BU London Personal Page: <https://fm.bu-london.co.uk/fmi/webd/>

Please note: Submitting an Authorised Absence Approval Request Form does not guarantee an authorised absence

Students who expect in advance to be absent from any class should notify a member of Academic Affairs and complete an Authorised Absence Approval Request Form ten working days in advance of the class date.

Students may apply for an authorised absence only under the following circumstances:

- **Illness (first day of sickness):** If a student is too ill to attend class, the student must notify Academic Affairs as soon as possible by submitting an Authorised Absence

Approval Request Form in advance of the class. If it is the student's first absence of the semester (from any class) a doctor's note is not required.

- **Illness (multiple days):** If a student is missing more than one class day due to illness, the student must complete an Authorised Absence Approval Request Form and a sick note from a local doctor excusing their absence from class. Once well enough, the student will need to meet with Academic Affairs.
- Important placement event that clashes with a class (verified by internship supervisor).
- Special circumstances which have been approved by the Directors (see note below).

The Directors will only in the most extreme cases allow students to leave the programme early or for a significant break.

Unauthorised Absence:

Any student to miss a class due to an unauthorised absence will receive a **4% grade penalty** to their final grade for the course whose class was missed.

This grade penalty will be applied by the Academic Affairs office to the final grade at the end of the course. As stated above, any student that has missed two classes will need to meet with Academic Affairs to discuss their participation on the programme as excessive absences may result in a 'Fail' in the class and therefore expulsion from the programme.

Religious Holidays

Boston University's Office of the University Registrar states:

'The University, in scheduling classes on religious holidays and observances, intends that students observing those traditions be given ample opportunity to make up work. Faculty members who wish to observe religious holidays will arrange for another faculty member to meet their classes or for cancelled classes to be rescheduled.'

Special Accommodations

Each student will need to contact the Disability & Access Services to request accommodations for the semester they are abroad. Students are advised by BU-DAS not to expect the same accommodations as they receive on campus.

BU London can only uphold special accommodations if we have received the appropriate documentation from the BU-DAS. We cannot accept letters from other universities/centres.

All disabilities need to be known to the DAS in Boston if they are to be used as a reason for requiring a change in conditions, i.e. reduced internship hours or special accommodations for the internship schedule.

Lateness

Students arriving more than 15 minutes after the posted class start time will be marked as late. Any student with irregular class attendance (more than two late arrivals to class) will be required to meet with the Academic Affairs and if the lateness continues, may have their final grade penalised.

