



Course Title: British Life and Visual Media	
Instructor:	
Instructor Contact Details Email: Contact phone number: Office hours/office location:	
Course Description: This multidisciplinary course serves as the anchor of the study programme in London, offering students an opportunity to place what they are learning in their other courses into a larger, contemporary context, with an emphasis on visual practises and materials. It also enables students to appreciate more of what they observe during their stay in Britain in regard to the underlying history, themes, and institutions of the UK.	
Course Objectives: The course provides a comprehensive examination of British life and multiculturalism past, present, and future. Students learn what makes Britain a nation via a range of topics on politics and monarchy, media and arts, and society. These aims are achieved through engagement with visual media of various kinds, as well as increasing understanding of the power and implications of visual literacy in both conceptual and practical terms.	
Course Learning Outcomes: At the end of this course, students will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have an understanding of British sociology and the cultures of "Britishness"• Understand the "peoples of the United Kingdom" as an integrated whole i.e. more than the sum of the parts• Acknowledge the differences between US, British, and European cultures, and the collective relationships that individuals have with their own societies• Understand the importance of sustainability for an island nation• Be familiar with the concept of visual literacy and able to apply it to various kinds of visual material	
Charting the Course: FIE's Values and the curriculum: The following FIE articulated values are addressed in this course:	
Knowledge and Inclusivity <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A recognition of the social, cultural and historical context of knowledge, and of knowledge as socially and culturally constructed and maintained• An understanding of the potential for contribution of non-dominant groups and recognition of their role, power and privilege, within fields of study	✓
Ethics and Human Rights <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognition of issues of social justice at global and national levels• Awareness of ethical implications of personal choice and governmental action	

Social and Cultural Reflection and Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A heightened awareness of civic and social responsibilities at local and global levels • Developing our understanding, appreciation of and empathy towards diverse cultures and identities • A continued engagement in cross-cultural and multicultural communication 	✓
Commitment to the Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active engagement with environmental impact • Addressing issues of sustainability and applying initiatives 	✓
Required Text(s): Upham, Martin (2017). <i>Britain Explained</i> . John Harper Publishing. Students access a reading pack of contemporary articles on MyStudy@FIE that will be used throughout the course Read <i>Metro</i> and/or <i>Evening Standard</i> each day during the work week. (Both available free from Gloucester Road Tube Station) In addition, students need access to an MP3 player (via a smartphone is acceptable)	
Additional/Recommended Readings: Klein, R (2006). <i>The New Politics of the NHS: from creation to reinvention</i> . Radcliff Marr, A. (2009). <i>The Making of Modern Britain</i> . Macmillan Oakland, J. (2010). <i>British Civilization: An Introduction</i> . (7 th Ed.). Routledge Rojek, C. (2007). <i>Brit Myth: Who do the British think they are?</i> Reaktion Books Sawyer, M. (2005). <i>The UK economy</i> . Oxford University Press	
Instructional Methods: Lectures, visual media exercises, videos, discussions and set fieldwork	
Topics: The Multiculturalism of the United Kingdom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues related to nationality and identity. England, Britain, UK. Is Britain a nation? • Peoples of the United Kingdom • Diversity and equality – gender, ethnicity and sexuality • Sociology and cultures of “Britishness” British Politics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The devolved politics of the UK. How Parliament works • The party system • Class and power structure. Social justice, enfranchisement and meritocracy • Education, the NHS, and other core elements in contemporary politics The Monarchy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queen Elizabeth • Totemic symbols - UK / USA cultural similarities and differences, e.g. patriotism • Monarchy vs. Republic. The future? Britain and International Relations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of British Empire and Commonwealth, wars, decolonisation and immigration • London as a “global city” • The “special relationship” with Washington, D.C. • The European Union: The consequences of BREXIT and the UK post BREXIT 	

Artistic Britain:

- Notions of “high culture” and “pop culture” in music, theatre, visual arts including British humour
- What is distinctive about British Culture
- BBC vs. PSB
- British use of social and digital media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Issues of media ownership, regulation, and influence, as well as bias, and the historic importance of newspapers in determining British news agenda; broadsheets vs. tabloids, impartiality in broadcast news

Sustainability in the UK:

- Climate Crisis and the UK’s challenges
- Action on the Ground: how Britain and its cities (with a focus on London), and communities are responding
- Sustainability beyond the environment - Social Justice and inclusion

Week-by-Week Class Plan:**Assignments and Due Dates:****Attendance and Participation**

In addition to physical presence in class, your class participation score is based on the mastery of assigned course readings as reflected in a consistent, valid contribution to class discussions, in-class exercises, and in asking questions that enrich the on-going discourse. Occasional participation will have a negative impact on your participation score.

Media Critique (750 words):

Base your analysis on direct comparison of the exact SAME news story in two different media sources (i.e. two newspapers, two TV news broadcasts, two photographs, etc.). Look for a breaking news story where the facts are generally agreed but the interpretation is not. The idea is to compare the different coverage and engage in critical thinking, understanding how to identify sources and reading beyond the headlines.

Sustainability Assignment – Independent Group Field Research and Group Presentation submitted one week after the midterm break:

This requires you to research the UK’s governmental as well as local responses to the climate emergency. What is being done to tackle the many challenges that climate change creates for sustainability? Has the UK set significant targets and is it on track to meet these?

In small groups you will conduct field research in a London neighbourhood (to be assigned in class). You will examine how local areas are meeting (or not), the challenges created by the environmental crisis, alongside the wider Sustainability issues of social justice and inclusion. You will choose two areas - Housing / Transport / Green and Recreational Space / Waste and Recycling - to focus your research on, and combine your Field observations with some additional research on your Neighbourhood, and wider London and UK government targets and actions.

Questions to consider are:

Does the UK in general and London in particular (via your Neighbourhood and wider research) appear to be meeting its environmental and sustainability targets?

What examples of good practice did you discover? What challenges are not being met?

How does what you have learned and experienced in the UK and London change or enlarge your own perspective on climate change and sustainability? How might these issues important in your personal and future professional life?

Portfolio of vignettes (3,500 words):

During the term you will produce 7 Vignettes/Journals in response to the themes and ideas studied, you may include scholarly and personal reflections and responses to the issues raised, consider the field trips and make connections with your home country. Each vignette should be 500 words maximum. This assignment requires you to expand and build on your experiential learning. Before your final submission you will compose a 500 word concluding evaluation of all the vignettes in response to 'what you have learned'. There is going to be considerable flexibility on the conclusion both in terms of approach and format. You may wish to consider an overall theme or sense of connection between your pieces – it's important to bear in mind that this concluding vignette will be drawing together both your written work and your experience as a whole. It will be an extension and development of your individual vignettes. You might like to consider how your experiences changed as your knowledge and confidence developed or how your understanding of the UK changed how you experienced the visits.

British Culture Critique:

An illustrated 1500 words / short film (7-10mins) / podcast (7-10 mins) / about your chosen cultural producer.

Choose one contemporary British cultural figure from politics, history, music, film, literature, visual arts, entertainment.

What is it about them that interests you, and why?

What do they offer the public by way of insight / innovation / entertainment / cultural insight / inspiration/ contemporary social relevance

What does their work reflect more generally about British Culture Consider the way their work ties into our class and course themes.

What do they represent in terms of modern Britishness? What is distinctively British about them and their work? Has their work given you any insights into aspects of Britishness?

Please include:

Two (or more) citations that include: reviews / writings / extracts of work/ interviews with them about their work (make sure this is not the majority of your piece)

If you are creating a written version then do include some visual aspects (this will depend on the kind of figure you have chosen)

If you are producing a podcast then include an extract / example of their work / or them discussing their work as part of your piece

If you are producing a film version then include some of your subject's work

(If your file is too large to upload to MyStudy please upload a cover sheet with your name, the title of your Critique and a very short synopsis)

Possible Co-curricular Activities and Tentative Dates:**Parliament Tour:**

Tour of the building and the two Houses (Lords & Commons) when not being used for debates. The building is a Victorian fantasy with extraordinary decorative motifs linked to UK history and government so it has a visual dimension regardless of the commentary.

Brick Lane Tour:

The area is historically associated with the social deprivation of London's East End (garment workers, sex workers, dock workers, charitable missions, and low-quality housing) and has been the

place of entry into British life for waves of foreign immigrants. French Huguenots gave way to Irish, Jewish to Bangladeshi settlers connected with the restaurant and clothing trades. As industry departed Brick Lane became an artistic hub, and in the last decade a global hotspot for street art. More recently – and controversially- the area has been rapidly gentrifying. A good field trip for sampling the sights, smells, cultures and tastes of an area very different from Kensington.

Viewing *Stiff Upper Lip* Episode 3. (BBC 2012)

Viewing the ITV documentary *Our Queen*

Viewing *Saving Britain's Past: The Street*. (BBC 2009)

Assessment Plan:

- Attendance and Participation: 20%
- Sustainability Research Presentation: 15%
- Media Critique: 10%
- Portfolio: 35%
- British Culture Critique: 20%

Academic Integrity:

By enrolling at FIE, you have joined an academic community and you are expected and required to act honestly regarding the work you submit for assessment in your courses. Academic integrity is closely related to the concept of good academic practice.

Any attempts to Cheat; Fabricate; Plagiarise; Collaborate without Authorisation; Participate in Academically Dishonest Activities; and/or Facilitate Academic Dishonesty will be viewed as a breach of this regulation.

Most students do not have any problems understanding the rules and expectations about acting honestly at university. If you have any questions you must talk to your faculty or a member of FIE's Academic Team.

Attendance and Participation:

Regular attendance is essential in order to pass a course. A class constitutes lectures, student presentations, discussions, seminars, co-curricular activities, tests, and examinations. In addition, under UK Home Office regulations class attendance is mandatory.

Class attendance and participation is formally recorded and incorporated into a student's final grade.

In addition to physical presence in class, a student's participation in a class is evaluated on the mastery of assigned course readings as reflected in a consistent, valid contribution to class discussions, in-class exercises, and in asking questions that enrich the on-going discourse. Consistency and validity in participation is expected in every class. Limited participation will have a negative impact on a student's participation score.

When unexpected events cause students to miss a class, it is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with the faculty member to notify them in advance, or as soon as is reasonably possible.

Absence from class does not relieve a student of responsibility for assignments. **Students bear the ultimate responsibility for all missed class material and assessment.**

If a student misses 25% or more of a course, then they may be awarded a failure for the course and/or not permitted to finish the course.

FIE Grading Rubric:

Letter Grades	Knowledge & Content	Methodology & Structure, Language & Style	Understanding, Reflection & Critique	Integrative thinking & demonstration of experiential learning
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A	Interesting topic handled with intelligence, originality, and depth; wealth of supporting material, smoothly integrated into the text; tone is evident and maintained throughout; no factual inaccuracies	Material is unified and well focused; organization is clear, logical and purposeful throughout the essay; well-chosen examples. Uses sophisticated sentences effectively; usually chooses words aptly; observes conventions of written English and manuscript format; makes few minor or technical errors	Well-chosen examples; persuasive reasoning used to develop and support thesis consistently: uses quotations and citations effectively; causal connections between ideas are evident	Gives full insight into the nature of an event, experience, or artifact; achieves complete integration of knowledge from diverse disciplines to interpret an issue. Shows clear understanding of cultural impact through appropriate examples
B	Content is above average; worthwhile topic; satisfactory depth of development; supporting details for the thesis and topic sentences are specific, concrete, and plentiful; has only minor factual inaccuracies	Material is unified and well focused; pattern of organization is clear, logical, and well executed; makes an effort to organize paragraphs topically. Some mechanical difficulties or stylistic problems; may make occasional problematic word choices or awkward syntax errors; a few spelling or punctuation errors or cliché; usually presents quotations effectively	Pursues thesis consistently: develops a main argument with clear major points and appropriate textual evidence and supporting detail; makes an effort to organize paragraphs topically	Gives some insights into the nature of an event, experience, or artifact; achieves partial integration of knowledge from diverse disciplines to interpret an issue; some understanding of cultural impact through appropriate examples
C	Worthwhile topic; supporting material for thesis and topic sentences is general and abstract rather than specific and concrete; most information is correct	Organization is clear, logical, and coherent; some ideas unsupported; fails to integrate quotations appropriately. More frequent wordiness; several unclear or awkward sentences; imprecise use of words or over-reliance on passive voice; one or two major grammatical errors	Only partially develops the argument; shallow analysis; some ideas and generalizations undeveloped or unsupported; makes limited use of textual evidence; fails to integrate quotations appropriately	Able to explain to a limited extent, the quality of a performance, event, or artifact; gives few insights into event, experience; discusses few qualities of an experience; a limited understanding of cultural impact with few examples
D	Trivial subject; very few supporting details for the thesis and topic sentences; has some correct & incorrect information	Not logically organized; digresses from one topic to another; no clear organizational pattern. Some major grammatical or proofreading errors (subject-verb agreement; sentence fragments); language marred by clichés	Frequently only narrates; digresses from one topic to another without developing ideas or terms; makes insufficient or awkward use of textual evidence	Little integration of experience and narrative; limited insight of issues and insufficient understanding of cultural impact
F	Consists of unsupported generalities and/or the repetition of commonplace ideas; lacks originality and insight; information is inaccurate or absent	Does not follow the instructions; rambling, disorganized and incoherent. Numerous grammatical errors	Little or no development; may list incorrect facts or misinformation; uses no quotations or fails to cite sources or plagiarizes	Little or no integration experience and narrative; lack of insight and fails to understand cultural impact

Late Submission of Written Work:

Written work may be submitted later than the due date only with express permission from the faculty. Credit is not given for work received late, except in exceptional circumstances of personal illness or similar (which must be made known to FIE at the time). Documentation of exceptional circumstances from a third party, such as a doctor's note, may be required. Any extensions made beyond the last class meeting must be committed to writing and include information on the exceptional circumstances that require the extension, the nature of work yet to be submitted, and the date by which the work will be received. If said work is not received by the agreed extension date, barring further exceptional circumstances, the work will not be given credit.

Diversity, Inclusivity and Accessibility

FIE regards its housing and classroom facilities as safe spaces to live, study, and work with students, faculty, and staff who are understanding, supportive, and trustworthy. Inappropriate, derogatory comments and/or actions, harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination are not tolerated. Any such behaviour will be investigated and dealt with appropriately. Students must be respectful of diverse opinions and of all class members regardless of personal attribute and use inclusive language in written and oral work.

Students who wish to use academic accommodations at FIE can register to do so via FIE's Administration Team, by providing the appropriate supporting documentation. Students who have approved FIE academic accommodations should discuss them directly with their faculty member(s) within or around the first few class sessions, or via email. Exams are facilitated by FIE faculty and students should give 2 weeks' notice to faculty members if use of approved exam accommodations is required. The Administration team can assist students and faculty with liaison and facilitation as needed.

Writing and Language Support

FIE's Writing Support Tutors are available to assist students of all levels of expertise with all phases of the writing process. Available year-round and to all students. To book an appointment or for more information visit www.fie.org.uk/wst.

Please note that FIE allows the use of a foreign language/English dictionary in exam situations for students where English is not their primary language UNLESS the use of the dictionary would give the student a significant advantage (e.g. where the exam is aimed at getting the students to define terms that might be found in the dictionary).