

Black Britain: Historical Perspectives on Power and Belonging

SEMESTER YEAR



[Faculty Contact Information](#)

Name:

Email:

Office Hour information:

[Course Information](#)

Course Description

This course critically examines the lives, cultural practices and political identities of Black people in Britain from Roman times to the present. Major themes running throughout the course include: imperialism, migration, community self-organization, political movements and representations of Black people and blackness in Britain. Through readings, archival sources, literature, music and film students will explore what it has meant to be Black and British at different historical conjunctures. In doing so, students will also develop an understanding of the ways ideas about race have been reconfigured over time and in relation to concepts of gender, class, nation and empire. The course will introduce students to methodological questions related to the study and writing of Black British history. We will explore questions of best archival practice and the varied sources necessary to producing Black histories. Students will critically engage with the ways histories of race and racism; Black people; empire and migration are narrated within contemporary British heritage and cultural spaces. London will serve as a focal point and students will have the opportunity to engage with key sites of Black history in London of both local and national significance.

Course Goals

Students will achieve a comprehensive historical understanding of the lives and experiences of African, Caribbean, and Black people in Britain. The course aims to equip students with the analytical tools to examine how major forces such as the trans-Atlantic slave trade, imperialism, global migration, and movements for social justice have shaped British life over time. The course cultivates critical engagement with key academic theories and cultural discourses around Blackness in Britain, fostering an understanding of how these intersect with political and social movements. Students will learn how to think historically about race and racism in contemporary Britain.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will:

1. Understand the long relationship between African, Caribbean and Black peoples with Britain.
2. Identify key places, objects and people in Black British history
3. Identify and engage with theories and discussion of race, ethnicity and migration.
4. Be able to examine and evaluate current research and writing on Black British history
5. Understand how studying Black British history changes the way students engage with and understand contemporary British life and global struggles for justice.

Course Assignments, Grading, and Assessment

Assignment	Percentage	Grading Requirements
Attendance and Participation	20%	
Mid-Term Exam	25%	Please see rubric on MyStudy
Group Presentation	20%	Please see rubric on MyStudy
Research Project: Public History Exhibition Proposal	35%	Please see rubric on MyStudy

Brief Assessment Overview

Assessment 1: Mid-Term Exam

Due:

In-class mid-term exam.

Assessment 2: Group Presentation

Due:

Group class presentation and discussion on a key figure in Black British History.

Assessment 3: Research Project: Public History Exhibition Proposal and Presentation

Due:

Students will choose one of the cultural/heritage sites that we have visited during the course and produce a proposal and presentation to either:

- Create a new display/exhibition

OR

- Re-interpret an existing gallery/exhibition

Grading

Alternative formats of the FIE Grading Rubric are available in the Student Resources area of MyStudy@FIE.

	Relevance Questions are interpreted correctly; Argument/thesis is clear and developed throughout; Discussion is focused on topic of the questions; Irrelevant content and discussion are not included	Knowledge and Understanding Recommended literature and/or research guidelines are used and interpreted appropriately; Selection and use of evidence shows understanding and insight; There is evidence of study beyond the recommended literature and that introduced in the module	Analysis, Critical Thinking and Integration of Experiential Learning Approach shows evidence of analysis and independent reasoning; Originality in argument; Evidence of critical insight and reasoned questioning of assumptions; Integration of connections and experiences outside of the formal classroom	Scholarship and Style Conclusions are well justified and complete; Facts reported and statements made are accurate; Writing is clear and fluent; All sources are appropriate, accurately acknowledged and formatted in recognised style; All work is the student's own
A 93-100%	Totally appropriate interpretation and relevant; Excellent and thorough thesis development	Comprehensive understanding and mastery of core evidence and extensive wider reading	Excellent analytical skills, outstanding evaluation of evidence, independent and original critical insight; Meaningfully integrates experiential learning where appropriate	Exceptional fluency and accurate writing using appropriate language, conclusions are well-justified; Accurate and thorough referencing
A- 90-92%	Almost wholly appropriate interpretation and relevant; Very strong thesis	Very strong understanding of evidence and clear evidence of appropriate wider reading	Well-developed analytical skills, excellent evaluation of evidence, shows strong critical insight; Effectively integrates experiential learning where appropriate	Almost wholly accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language, conclusions are full and justified; Accurate referencing

B+ 87-89%	Appropriate interpretation and relevant; Good thesis throughout	Strong understanding of evidence and appropriate wider reading	Very good analytical skills, strong evaluation of evidence; Shows critical insight; Acknowledges and compares experiential learning and other perspectives	Largely accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language; conclusions are justified; Accurate referencing
B 83-86%	Largely appropriate interpretation and relevant; Thesis is clear	Good understanding of evidence and some appropriate wider reading	Good analytical skills, good evaluation of evidence; Shows critical insight; Acknowledges and compares experiential learning and other perspectives	Largely accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language; Conclusions are justified; Accurate referencing
B- 80-82%	Mostly appropriate interpretation and relevant; Thesis is underdeveloped but clear	Sound understanding of evidence and some wider reading	Sound analytical skills; Sound evaluation of data; Shows some critical judgement identifies experiential connections	Sound level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language; Conclusions are coherent; Sound use of referencing conventions
C+ 77-79%	Some appropriate interpretation and relevant;	Evidence is largely understood and some wider reading	Sometimes inconsistent analytical skills; Some evaluation of data;	Sound level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language;

	Thesis is underdeveloped and lacks clarity		Shows some critical judgement though often descriptive; Identifies experiential connections	Conclusions are coherent but not fully supported; Sound use of referencing conventions
C 73-76%	May contain some misinterpretation and/or irrelevant material; Thesis lacks clarity	Evidence is largely understood; Limited reading beyond material introduced in module	Mostly inconsistent analytical skills; Some evaluation of data; Scant critical judgement mostly descriptive; Identifies experiential connections	Some level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language; Conclusions are coherent but not fully supported; Sound use of referencing conventions
C- 70-72%	Limited interpretation and relevance; Thesis is inconsistent	Weak understanding of evidence; Limited reading beyond material introduced in module	Mostly inconsistent analytical skills; Some evaluation of data; Lacks critical judgement; Little integration experiential learning	Inconsistent written fluency; Weak use of appropriate language; Weak justification for conclusions; Adequate use of referencing conventions
D 60-69%	Limited interpretation and relevance; Lacks thesis	Weak understanding of evidence and limited, inappropriate wider reading	Inconsistent and weak analytical skills, poor evaluation of evidence, lacks critical insight; Little integration of experiential learning	Inconsistent written fluency; No justification for conclusions; Inaccurate use of referencing
F	Significant misinterpretation	Lacks understanding of evidence and	Lacks analytical skills, lacks	Poorly written with little fluency;

0-59%	and irrelevant material	inappropriate or no wider reading	evaluation of evidence, lacks critical judgement; Lacks integration of experiential learning	No justification for conclusions; Poor referencing; Evidence of plagiarism or inappropriate use of AI
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Policies specific to this course

- **Co-curricular Activities and Field Trips:** Field trips for your FIE courses have been planned to help students achieve the learning objectives of the course and are required. They take place during class time unless otherwise noted. Details about required visits appear on the class by class schedule below. Please note that any make up for missed co-curricular activities are at the personal expense of the student.
- **Late submission of work:** Written work may be submitted later than the due date only with express permission in advance of the due date from the course instructor. Late work will receive a 5% reduction in points for each 24-hour period handed in past the deadline, including each weekend day. Work submitted a week late will be marked at a C or lower. Any extensions made beyond the last class meeting must be requested in writing to the faculty and include any information on the 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.
- **Late arrivals to class or site visit:** Please arrive on time. Lateness, particularly on days with co-curricular visits, results in missed course material. Faculty may use their discretion to mark a student as 'Absent' if they feel the student has arrived too late or left too early to be considered 'Present' for that session.
- **Trigger Warnings:** Some topics covered in class may expose students to past traumas and evoke a negative reaction. Sensitive topics can vary, such as sexual violence, death, racism, or xenophobia. I want this to be an inclusive space where every student feels comfortable; therefore, I will provide content warnings before lectures for sensitive subject matters. Content warnings are meant to give students a forewarning so they can prepare for their emotional safety. It is important to note that anything in the environment could be a trigger for someone's trauma, such as smell, sound, or texture; it is impossible to account for all possible triggers, and ask for grace as I do my best as an educator to warn students of potentially distressing content during lectures, assignments and/or discussions.

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.
- [See the full attendance policy here](#)

Required Readings

Entire texts:

Black and British: A Forgotten History by David Olusoga, London: Pan Macmillan, 2021

Select Excerpts:

Black Britain: A Photographic History, Paul Gilroy, London: Saqi Publishers, 2011.

Black Tudors: The Untold Story. Miranda Kauffman, London: One world Publications, 2017

Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order. Stuart Hall, et. al.. London: Palgrave Macmillan. 2013 (Original work published 1978)

Roots and Culture: Cultural Politics in the Making of Black Britain. Eddie Chambers, London: I.B. Tauris, 2017

The Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain. Bryan, B., Dadzie, S., & Scafe, S. London: Verso Press. 2018

The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano. Equiano, O. (n.d.). (Original work published 1789)

Tribes: How Our Need to Belong Can Make or Break Society by David Lammy, London: Constable, 2020

The Unfinished Politics of Race: Histories of Political Participation, Migration and Multiculturalism, Les Back, Michael Keith, Kalbir Shukra and John Solomos. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022

There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack. Paul Gilroy, London: Routledge. (1987)

We're Here Because You Were There: Immigration and the End of Empire, Ian Sanjay Patel, London: Verso, 2021

[Additional Resources and Readings](#)

Familiar Stranger: A Life Between Two Islands, Stuart Hall. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.

Migrant City: A New History of London, Panikos Panayi. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020.

The Emigrants, George Lamming,. London: Michael Joseph. 1954.

The Good Immigrant, Nikesh Shukla ed. London: Penguin Publishers, 2016.

Pigeon Holed: Creative Freedom as an Act of Resistance Gary Younge London: Faber and Faber, 2025

Small Island, Andrea Levy. London: Headline Review Publishers, 2004.

Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain. Peter Fryer, London: Pluto Press. 2018. (Original work published 1984)

The Lonely Londoners, Sam Selvon. London: Alan Wingate, 1956.

Please see MyStudy for further readings/primary sources/videos/podcasts

[MyStudy@FIE](#)

MyStudy@FIE is FIE's virtual learning environment based on the open-source platform Moodle. Students are required to access MyStudy@FIE for course information, readings, link to resources, assignment submissions and communication with faculty.

[FIE's Values in the Curriculum](#)

A unique aspect to FIE's curriculum is our courses reflect an engagement with values of 1) knowledge and inclusivity, 2) ethics and human rights, 3) social and cultural engagement, and 4) sustainability. For information about each of these values and how each of FIE's courses aligns with them, please see [Our Values](#).

[Topics](#)

- Early Black Presence in Britain: From Romans to Tudors
- Empire, Slavery, and the Fight for Abolition
- Global Black Activism: The League of Coloured Peoples and Pan-Africanism
- War, Migration, and the Changing Face of Britain

- Black intellectual traditions, artistic movements, and media
- Youth Culture, Protest, and Policing in the 20th Century
- Black Women's Organizing and Intersectional Struggles
- Immigration, Citizenship, and the "Windrush Scandal"
- Britain in a Global Context: Identity and Diaspora Today

Possible co-curricular activities

- Black History Walking Tour with Tony Warner
- Visit to Brixton
- Workshop at the Black Cultural Archives
- Visit to London Museum Docklands-London Sugar and Slavery Gallery
- Visit to the Migration Museum
- Workshop at the George Padmore Institute
- Visit to the British Museum
- London's Black Bookshops: New Beacon Books, Jacaranda Books. Black Cultural Archives Bookshop and Round Table Books

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.

[Please see FIE's Academic Integrity Policy in full.](#)

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.

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).

Accommodations for Students

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.

Additional Policies and Resources

Mental Health and Stress Management Support

FIE offers mental health support. If students wish to seek this support, including with FIE's counsellor, simply email studentlife@fie.org.uk. If you have a counsellor from back home that you are seeing, we strongly encourage you to maintain contact with them throughout your time studying abroad with FIE.

Diversity and Inclusivity

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.