



Modern British History

[Faculty Contact Information](#)

Name:

Email:

Office Hour information:

[Course Information](#)

Course Description

During the nineteenth century, Britain emerged as the world's premier imperial, commercial, and maritime superpower. In the twentieth century, Britain transformed into an important – but secondary – nation state in a post-industrial, post-Cold War world. It experienced the transformative upheavals of post-industrial revolution, two devastating world wars, and the loss of empire, yet it re-emerged as an important part of the European Union and with a multi-ethnic and multi-faith society that is a nodal point in the global economic order. This course introduces students to the main events, trends, themes, and debates in British history during these years.

Course Goals

This course provides an overview of the development of British society since the nationalisation of the East India Company, concentrating on a series of key themes including the consequences of industrialisation, New Imperialism, and social and political reform. Particular focus includes the impact of Total War on modern society and the development of the post-WWII Welfare State. During the course, students become aware of the multi-sided and contested nature of Britain's past and how debates about British history relate to contemporary cultural and political discourse.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will:

1. Recall the events in Britain from 1848 to the present and explain Britain's changing place in the world
2. Differentiate the main and evolving frameworks of British society such as class, gender, ethnicity, and nationalism in the formation of modern Britain
3. Interpret the long-term impact of the creation and break-up of the British Empire on contemporary geo-political situations

[Course Assignments, Grading, and Assessment](#)

| Assignment | Percentage | Grading Requirements |
|------------------------------|------------|------------------------------|
| Attendance and Participation | 20% | |
| Mid-Term exam | 30% | Please see rubric on MyStudy |
| Group Presentation | 15% | Please see rubric on MyStudy |
| Research Paper | 35% | Please see rubric on MyStudy |

Brief Assessment Overview

Assessment 1: Group Presentation

Due:

In pairs you will choose a theme/framework we have studied in previous weeks of the semester that has particularly interested you. You will identify two historical figures whose lives / actions / ideas relate to your chosen theme. They can be from any walk of life – political, military, legal, administrative, medical, literary or cultural figures whose ideas and/or actions are relevant to your theme, or ordinary people whose lives were impacted by the events or ideas behind your chosen theme/framework. Explain their significance to your chosen theme/framework, and why you're interested in them.

Your presentation should be accompanied by images. Be prepared. You have just 10 minutes so make sure your presentation is slick, coherent, well-argued, and maintains pace to keep audience interest.

In addition to the in-class presentation each student must submit a brief written summary on MyStudy on the relevance/significance of the two historical figures they have chosen to the theme/framework (500 words in total), plus a bibliography.

Assessment 2: Mid-term Exam

Due:

The Mid-Term Exam will be an essay exam based on materials from the first weeks of the course, including: lectures, readings, field trips and class discussions. You will be asked to respond to an excerpt/quote and discuss its meaning/significance in relation to the themes/historical problems explored over the course. You will be asked to contextualise the quote and think about what major problems in British history it raises? What assumptions about British society does it contain/reveal? What historical changes does it mark/signpost? You will be expected to refer to specific images/galleries/texts/events as evidence in your essay.

Assessment 3: Research Essay and Leading Class Discussion (2,500 words)

Due:

Choose one of the arts and heritage sites that we have visited during this course.

Propose either to:

- Create a new display/exhibition
- OR
- Re-interpret an existing gallery/exhibition

Further details to be shared with students in class and on MyStudy

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 |
|-------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|

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 notes. 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

Vernon, J. (2025). *Modern Britain, 1750 to the Present* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Additional readings for essay questions, presentations, and mid-term test will be available either in printed copy or on Moodle.

Additional Resources and Readings

Brendon, P. (2008). *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire 1781-1997*. Vintage

Colley, L. (2009). *Britons: forging the nation 1707-1837*. (3rd Ed.). Yale University Press

Clarke, J. (Ed.). (2011). *A World by Itself: a history of the British Isles*. Pimlico

Darwin, J. (2011). *The Empire Project; the rise and fall of the British World system, 1830-1970*. Cambridge University Press

Kynaston, D. (2008). *Austerity Britain, 1945-51*. Bloomsbury Publishing

Kynaston, D. (2010). *Family Britain, 1951-1959*. Bloomsbury Publishing

Morgan, K. O. (Ed.). (2010). *The Oxford History of Britain*. Oxford University Press

Royle, E. (1997). *Modern Britain: a social history, 1750-1997*. (2nd Ed.). Bloomsbury

Sandbrook, D. (2009). *White heat*. London: Abacus.

Schama, S. (2009). *A History of Britain – Volume 3: The Fate of Empire 1776-2000*. Bodley Head

Turner, A. W. (2013). *Crisis? What Crisis? Britain in the 1970s*. Aurum Press

[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](#)

- **Introduction and Overview:** The long nineteenth century and the 'Pax Britannica'; The Industrial Revolution and political reform in late Victorian Britain
- **'The White Man's Burden':** British Imperialism at its apogee; The Edwardian Era: social reform and political change; The interwar years (1919-39)
- **'We few, we happy few':** Britain in the age of total war; Creating a World Order: New countries; new governance
- **'Winds of Change':** The retreat from Empire and the remaking of British Society; The Welfare State, consensus politics, and the changing post-war landscape
- **'There is no such thing as Society':** Affluence and Declinism: "never had it so good" and 'that so-called economic miracle we need'; Thatcherism and the de-industrialisation of Britain: a new beginning
- **Britain in the 21st century global context:** Modern society in Britain, and contemporary reflection of the UK's role in Europe, the Commonwealth (former Empire), and the 'Special Relationship'; Consideration of the geo-political/social consequences of the British Nation and Empire

[Possible co-curricular activities](#)

- Visits to locations and artifacts of historical significance, such as London Museum Docklands, the British Museum, the Imperial War Museum, the Cabinet Rooms or the Black Cultural Archives.
- Historical walking tour to a district such as Brixton, East London or Camden
- National Portrait Gallery
- The Cabinet War Rooms
- The Science Museum
- British Library

[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.