WS 2023/2024

**BRITISH CULTURAL HISTORY: AN INTRODUCTION**

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British Literature and Intercultural studies modules

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Office hours: by e-mail appointment Room #110 Credits: 3

THE COURSE IS NOT OPEN TO ERASMUS STUDENTS.

*Aims and objectives*

This unit will introduce students to the changing aspects of British culture through the ages and across a range of genres and styles. Working from a selection of historical and fictional writings, fine art practice and contemporary visual material (feature films and documentaries), the seminars have been planned to reveal relationships (differences and continuities) between key periods from the Anglo-Saxon to the early twentieth century. The aim is always to establish links with the present and to trace the historical roots of the image(s) and make-up of contemporary Britain.

*Material*

Texts for classroom discussion are provided by the teacher in the form of an online reader (see moodle) and hand-outs/scans. They include selections from a variety of literary and non-literary matter, e.g. *The Battle of Maldon*, Pepys’ *Diary,* Ruskin’s essays, Kipling’s poetry, Dickens’ *Dombey and Son*, etc. Further supplementary audio-visual material (esp. PPT presentations and fioms) will be brought in.

*Assessment*

Credit requirements include:

- active participation in discussion,

- at least two successful (out of overall maximum three attempts; no resubmissions are possible) smaller pieces of written work (home assignments), topics and dates specified on a separate sheet. Note that NO late submissions will be accepted (i.e. these assignments must be handed in at the class session AFTER the topic is dicussed; if the student is unable to meet this requirement, s/he must choose a different topic).

Reading schedule

**week 1** 5.10.Introduction

The beginnings I: Anglo-Saxon Britain, *The Battle of Maldon*

**week 2** 12.10.The beginnings II:

a/ Christianity: illuminated manuscripts – Chi Rho page from *The Book of Kells*

b/ The “two nations” – language and the Norman Conquest;

**week 3** 19.10. LECTURE (visiting professor)

Prof. Michael Brown, “The English Empire and the Matter of Britain c. 1250-1300”

(annotation will be distributed)

**week 4** 26.10. Medieval Britain I: the Gothic Style

a/ the Conquest and its aftermath; *The Bayeux Tapestry*

b/ *Looking at a castle* (DVD)

**week 5** 2.11. Medieval Britain II: the Gothic Style (cont.)

The great churches; vocabulary

**week 6** 9.11. Tudors and the Renaissance

a**/** passages from *Henry V*

b/ Shakespeare (from *Troilus and Cressida*)

c/ Bacon and Tillyard on world order

d/ images of Elizabeth - the portraits

**week 7** 16.11. Restoration and Augustan England

a/ the Great Fire, *Fever & Fire* (DVD)

b**/** S.Pepys and J.Evelyn

c/ 18th-century British art; Hogarth (DVD); Wren’s buildings

**week 8** 23.11. 18th and 19th century landscapes

a/ *The Green and Pleasant Land* (DVD)

b/ Constable and the nation; texts

**week 9** 30.11. The Industrial Revolution

a**/** “How it felt to be British”

b**/** Dickens - *Dombey and Son*

c/ Turner

d/ “So close and yet so despised “

**week 10** 7.12.The Aesthetic Movement

a**/** Ruskin, Rossetti, Morris; passages

b/ about The Pre-Raphaelites (text)

**week 11** 14.12.The Rise of the British Empire

a/ from *Plain Tales from the Raj*

b/missionaries and imperialists; Kipling, “White Man’s Burden”;

visual images; “Don’t lock the coffin”; “Nabobs and sahibs”

c/ *A Passage to India* (DVD)

d/the British Commonwealth

**week 12** 21.12. The Great War

a**/**Wilfred Owen, I.Rosenberg, R.Brooke

b/Britten – *War Requiem* (DVD of Jarman’s film)

**week 13**  4.1. 2024 **CLASS IN RESERVE**

**weel 14** 11.1. 2024 **CLASS IN RESERVE**