

HH3024 – Decolonisation and Democracy: Britain since 1945

Thursdays 12:30-15:30

Room: LHS-TR+30

This course examines the culture, society and politics of Britain after 1945. It is a course that explores the political, economic and intellectual consequences of imperial decline. It analyses the ways in which national life both joyfully and painfully adapted to a new world order, and the ways in which new forms of social expression in Britain variously rubbed against, reached an accommodation with, and sometimes enhanced, much older and more far-reaching ambitions to wield international influence.

The first few weeks of the course look at how people have tried to tell recent British history – we analyse arguments about what the subjects of contemporary British history should be and how such histories might be written. We then go on to look at three structural types of social historical change: demographics, class and culture. The second half of the course drills down into a number of case studies; the spread of new economic liberalism, post-imperial military policies and religion.

You'll be given detailed information about the assessments in good time but broadly the first assessment is a group exercise where you'll be given a general theme to present on, the second assessment is a short guided exercise in writing biographical history. Finally, you'll be encouraged and supported to develop your own essay on post-war British History. Previously students have written on subjects such as female comedians, Chinese takeaways, education policy, socialist theatre and the Falklands War.

The assessment schedule can be found below. Readings will be uploaded to the course site a week in advance.

Overviews

P. Clarke, *Hope & Glory: Britain 1900-2000*

Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonisation, 1918-68*

B. Porter *The Lion's Share: A History of British Imperialism 1850-2011*

G. Bernstein, *The Myth of Decline: The Rise of Britain since 1945*

R. Weight, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain, 1940-2000*

17 August – Week 1

Introduction

24 August – Week 2

Writing post-war British history

Readings: *Modern British Studies: Working Paper No.1* & Others

31 August – Week 3

Dealing with decline

Readings: Jim Tomlinson, 'Thrice denied: 'Declinism' as a Recurrent Theme in British History in the Twentieth Century' & Others

7 September – Week 4

Britannia Overruled: the UK on the world stage

Readings: Extracts from David Edgerton, *Warfare State* & others

14 September – Week 5

First assessment – group project

21 September – Week 6

Race Relations

Readings: Extracts from D. Goodhart, *The British Dream: Successes and Failures of Postwar Immigration* & others

28 September – Week 7

Class

Readings: Extracts from Selina Todd, *The People: The rise and fall of the working class 1910-2010* & others

RECESS

12 October – Week 8

Culture wars

Readings: Zoe Strimpel, 'Computer dating in the 1970s; Dateline and the making of the modern British single' & others

19 October – Week 9

Second assessment – Biographical project

26 October – Week 10

Hong Kong & Thatcherism

Readings: Extracts from Mark Hampton, *Hong Kong and British Culture, 1945-1997* & others

2 November – Week 11

Military activism and secret intelligence

Readings: Andrea Benvenuti, 'The Heath Government and British Defence Policy in Southeast Asia at the End of Empire (1970–71)' & others

9 November – Week 12

Religion and Society in 20th century Britain

Readings: Extracts from Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000* & others

16 November – Week 13

Final essay workshop

Assessment

I. Class presentations (20%)

Topics given 8 September, assessments to be completed on 15 September

II. Biographical history (20%)

Task given in class on 12 October, deadline 25 October 5pm

III. Final essay outline (10%)

Task given 26 October, deadline 1 November 5pm

IV. Final essay, circa 3,000 words (50%)

Deadline: 1 December 5pm

Useful additional works of reference:

The final essay you produce on this course will be very much driven by your interests, many primary sources are available and you will be offered tailored support and guidance in class as you develop your work. Nevertheless, listed below are some general resources that you may find useful and which repay time spent working on.

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (www.oxforddnb.com) - indispensable and searchable through NTU library portal

Office for National Statistics (www.statistics.gov.uk):

Economic Trends (1953-2006) (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/elmr/economic-trends--discontinued-/index.html>), now *Economic and Labour Review* (2007-) (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/elmr/economic-and-labour-market-review/index.html>)

Social Trends (1970-) (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/social-trends-rd/social-trends/index.html>)

General Household Survey (1971-2007) (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/ghs/general-household-survey/index.html>), now *General Lifestyle Survey* (2008-) (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/ghs/general-lifestyle-survey/index.html>)

Select visual and aural sources:

<http://www.screenonline.org.uk/> - UK film and television

<http://www.colonialfilm.org.uk/> - film of imperial life

<http://www.britishpathe.com/> - newsreel, 1896-1976

<http://sounds.bl.uk/> - archival sound recordings