

History 721: Modern British History

Theme for Fall 2017: Public, Private, and Permissive in 20th Century Britain

Monday 1:30-4:20 pm

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Office hours: Tuesdays 10:30-12:00 and by appointment.

Course Description:

The theme for this year's iteration of History 721 is "public, private, and permissive in 20th Century Britain." The reading for the course thus considers, in varying ways, how British people came to understand themselves and their families within public culture. The importance of familial secrecy, the changing meaning of privacy, the relationship of the family to war and to empire, the acceptance of and resistance to social surveillance, and the growth of permissive attitudes towards the private activities of others, are all topics that will be covered in the course reading. While the themes of the books and other readings for the course are therefore interlinked by theme, they are also very diverse in method and style, and thus provide some examples of the variety of cultural and social history recently being researched and written on Britain.

A separate syllabus will be provided to PhD students in the course.

Note:

This course uses an Avenue2Learn page which includes key resources for the course (including links to bibliographies and online primary sources) and a dropbox for assignments.

Participation – Reading and Discussion:

Together we will read a variety of core readings: this is the minimum expected reading. It is the student's responsibility to read further in textbooks, suggested supplementary reading (or search for other titles on the topic using the online bibliography linked to the Avenue page) as necessary to help debate/contextualize the main issues, themes and events covered in the required core readings. Special attention ought to be paid to the methods and approaches used by the authors, and to what sources are used and how. Students need to think about the key arguments presented in each reading; how those arguments are advanced or defended; and examples of the detail/evidence that is used to support each argument. 30% of the course mark is assigned to participation. In addition, all MA students will present at least one reading to the class in a formal presentation taken from a collection of synthetic readings on the 20th C. For these presentations, students are expected to read beyond the supplied reading and research and read some relevant historiography and use that in their presentation to explain the state of the field (for more details, see below).

Core Reading Books Recommended For Purchase:

Jordanna Baikin, *Afterlife of Empire* (California, 2012)

Francesca Carnevali, *et al.*, (ed.), *20th Century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change* (Pearson, 2007)
Deborah Cohen, *Family Secrets: Living with Shame from the Victorians to the Present* (Viking, 2013)
Susan Grayzel, *At Home and Under Fire: Air Raids and Culture in Britain from the Great War to the Blitz* (CUP, 2012)
James Hinton, *The Mass Observers: A History, 1937-1949* (OUP, 2013)
Kenneth Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Britain: A very short introduction* (OUP, latest edition)
Frank Mort, *Capital Affairs: London and the Making of Permissive Society* (Yale, 2010)

The book list is, unfortunately, expensive: students may wish to share books or order online/used to reduce costs. Not having purchased a book (or having ordered it too late to read it for class), however, does not qualify as an excuse for not doing the required reading. **Unexcused absence and coming to class unprepared to discuss the readings are the two cardinal sins in this course and will be penalized by a reduction in your participation mark.** Articles on the syllabus will be found either in the Library (in hard copy) and/or on JSTOR and other online journal storage sites.

The following are also suggested for context for those with limited background in modern British history.

Stephanie Barczewski, John Elgin, Stephen Heathorn, Michael Silvestri, Michelle Tusan, *Britain Since 1688: A Nation in the World* (Routledge, 2015).
Thomas W. Heyck, *The Peoples of the British Isles, Vol. III, From 1870 to the Present* (Lyceum, 2002 or later edition).

Seminar Presentations:

Every student will present a reading to the seminar and will be graded on their presentation. Each presentation should be no longer than 30 minutes and is worth 15% of the course mark. The basis of the presentation is reading listed in the syllabus, but the expectation is that the student will use the reading to research the existing and recent historiography in this area/subfield and talk about the state of the historiography – what themes or issues are currently (or at least recently) been debated by British historians; are there major divisions or consensus in the subfield? Who are the acknowledged major players in the subfield? etc. More details on this will be provided in class.

Written Assignments:

All students will write a 1200 word (4-5 double-spaced pages) book review on one of the books listed for review (I'll provide this list once I have a sense of student interests). Students should choose a book to review that is broadly in the area of the research area they wish to work on. The review should succinctly outline the book's arguments and nature of its evidence, and provide a critical commentary on its strengths and weaknesses. Further details of this assignment will be discussed in seminar. **Deadline: Friday midnight 27 October 2017.** Worth 10% of course mark, upload finished review to the Avenue Dropbox.

All students will also write a research paper, due midnight **Wednesday 20 December, 2017**, based predominantly on secondary sources, but some primary material use is also **required**. The topic of the research paper should be discussed with the instructor in advance of undertaking it. The paper must be on some aspect of DOMESTIC British history in the 20th Century (political, social, cultural, economic, etc). This means that international relations, military history as it relates to events

outside of Britain, and the Empire/commonwealth are NOT appropriate subject areas. The research paper for **MA students** should be around 20 pages (5,500-6,000 words) of text *plus* notes and bibliography, but should in no case be longer than 30 pages in total length. Further details of this assignment will be discussed in seminar. **PhD students** will have up to 8,000 words (30 pages). The research paper is worth 45% of the course mark. Upload finished essay to the Avenue dropbox.

Evaluation: MA:

Participation:	30%
Presentation:	15%
Book Review:	10%
Research Paper:	45%

Evaluation PhD:

Participation:	25%
Presentation:	10%
Book Review:	10%
Research Paper:	40%
Final Exam (scheduled after last class):	15%

The Rules:

I expect all written assignments to be word-processed/typewritten in coherent English. Formal academic style and conventions should be used (students should not use point form; contractions; colloquialism; slang, etc.). Style and format should conform to a standard humanities guide. I suggest Kate Turbian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th ed. (Chicago 1996) or the *Chicago Manual of Style* (14th edition or later). However, take note that when citing authorities, I **insist** on end or footnotes rather than the use of internal citation systems. Ask me if you are unclear on what this means.

Assignments are due on the specified dates: unexcused or excessive lateness will be penalized at a rate of **3%** of the grade per day. I want all assignments submitted to the Avenue dropbox unless an explicit arrangement is made and confirmed by both myself and the individual student.

It is the policy of the McMaster History department that all email communication between students and instructors (including TAs) must originate from their official McMaster University email accounts. This policy protects the confidentiality and sensitivity of information and confirms the identities of both the student and instructor. **I WILL DELETE, UNREAD, MESSAGES THAT DO NOT ORIGINATE FROM McMASTER EMAIL ACCOUNTS.**

Academic Integrity and Dishonesty:

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresenting by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is **your** responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, located at:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>

The following illustrate only three of the various forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Penalties for demonstrated academic dishonesty for graduate students are more severe than for undergraduates.

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Seminar Topics and Reading List:

Monday, 11 Sept. 2017 Course Introduction

No assigned reading – course expectations will be discussed.

18 Sept. General Introduction to Britain's 20th C.

Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Britain: A very short intro*, entire.
Carnevali & Strange, eds., *20th Century Britain*, pp. 5-94.

25 Sept. British Society prior to 1945

Reading for Presentations:

(All readings are from Carnevali & Strange, eds., *20th Century Britain*):

1. Suffrage and Citizenship, pp. 97-110
2. The State and Welfare, c. 1900-1945
3. Leisure, 1900-1945, pp. 197-213.
4. Youth Culture to c. 1945, pp. 214-230.

2 Oct. Privacy, Shame and the Family since the 19th C.

Deborah Cohen, *Family Secrets*, entire.

9 Oct. Midterm recess – no Class

16 Oct. Impact of First World War

Reading for Presentations:

5. The Great Depression, Carnevali & Strange, eds., *20th Century Britain*, pp. 145-161.

6. The Consumer and Consumption, Carnevali & Strange, eds., *20th Century Britain*, pp. 162-179
7. Social impact of First World War, Carnevali & Strange, eds., *20th Century Britain*, Pp. 127-144
8. Historians and the cultural impact of the First World War: S. Heathorn, "The Mnemonic Turn in the Cultural Historiography of Britain's Great War" *Historical Journal*, 48:4 (2005): 1103-1124.

23 Oct. Domesticating War – Public and Private

Susan Grayzel, *At Home and Under Fire: Air Raids and Culture in Britain from the Great War to the Blitz*

27 Oct. Book Review Due. Upload to Avenue drop box by midnight.

30 Oct. Social Observation and Surveillance

James Hinton, *The Mass Observers: A History, 1937-1949.*

6 Nov. British Society and its Management post 1945

Reading for Presentations:

(All readings are from Carnevali & Strange, eds., *20th Century Britain*):

9. The Keynesian Economy, pp. 233-246
10. Labour and Unions, pp. 279-292
11. Immigration, multiculturalism and racism, pp. 247-261
12. Poverty and Social Exclusion, pp. 308-322

13 Nov. Public Welfare and Post-Imperial Britain

Jordanna Baikin, *Afterlife of Empire.*

20 Nov. Late 20th C. British Culture

Reading for Presentations:

(All readings are from Carnevali & Strange, eds., *20th Century Britain*):

13. Sexuality, pp. 293-307
14. Britain and Europe, pp. 339-353
15. Religion and Secularization, pp. 323-338
16. Education and Opportunity, pp. 354-372

27 Nov. The Rise of Permissive Society

Frank Mort, *Capital Affairs: London and the Making of Permissive Society*

4 Dec. Class discussion on paper progress; formal course wrap-up

20 Dec. Research Paper Due. Upload to Avenue drop box by midnight.