INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Andrew Kennedy (ak62@soas.ac.uk)
CREDITS: 4

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Examining London as a visual text, we will look at stories about the city told via buildings, public spaces, sculpture, paintings, maps, documents and institutions such as museums. We focus not only on historical ‘facts’, but on how narratives of London’s history are continually reshaped in the light of economic, political and cultural change. We will see how history is never simply about a ‘dead’ past, but is always about the stories we tell ourselves now.

For long periods of its history, London has seen itself as a centre of rule, of wealth and power, but its inhabitants have also voiced their opposition to central government, to royal or parliamentary power. Londoners have historically also been divided (and joined) by class, nationality and ethnicity. Key to London’s development and identity have been Britain’s empire and the city’s consequent global role.

Each week there will be visits to at least two sites. There will also be one classroom session (usually on Monday mornings) to discuss the issues raised on the visits. See separate schedule for more detailed timings.

There will usually be 3-4 readings each week, including Porter, London: A Social History, which is a key text for historical background.

COURSE OBJECTIVE
Aims of the Course:
- To enable students to explore and reflect on a city as a visual text, as a set of representations, narrations, expressions of identity, rather than simply as a collection of buildings, dates, or picturesque views.
- To enable students to develop skills of visual analysis which will allow them to explore the potential meanings of architecture, spaces and images in an urban environment.
- To enable students to develop a broad knowledge of London’s cultural history, in tandem with knowledge of wider shifts in British and European social and cultural history.
- To give students the tools to analyse and reflect on the layout and uses of a city as it is affected by social forces and by political power.
- To enable students to develop their research, oral and written skills in order to give expression to cultural and historical analysis and reflection.

Course Outcomes:
By the end of the course, it is envisaged that students will have:
- explored and reflected on London as visual text;
- developed skills of visual analysis of key buildings and objects;
- developed a wider knowledge of London, British and European cultural and social history;
- acquired some analytical tools for thinking about how a city may be affected by social and political forces;
- produced coursework which shows developing powers of cultural and historical analysis and reflection.

REQUIRED TEXTS


See others in course content below

Further reading:
Books are published in London unless stated otherwise.


Some online resources:

http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/crace/index.html (for old maps and city views)
http://www.georgianlondon.com
http://www.annaminton.com/Ground_Control.htm

COURSE CONTENT
Weekly Classes, Visits and Readings:
Please note: there may occasionally be changes to the schedule; additional readings may also be provided.

Week 1 – Introduction and Roman London
The Roman occupation is seen as marking the foundation of London, but what real links are there between contemporary London and Roman Londinium? What ideas about the city’s and the nation’s identities have been pasted onto the historical and archaeological record?

**Week 2 - Medieval London**
After the collapse of Roman power, the economy of London was rebuilt under Saxon, Danish and Norman kings. What picture are tourists given of medieval London? Was the domination of State and Church as central to the period as the focus on two famous monuments suggests?


**Week 3 - Tudor London**
This week, we examine the art and architecture of the Tudor monarchs. Under Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, the foundations were laid of the early modern English state, based on ruthlessly centralised power and an adroit use of visual propaganda. Both monarchs are still celebrated in school history courses and in popular myth.


**Week 4 – Stuart London**
The confident classical style of both this week’s buildings suggests a kingdom that was at last entering the European cultural mainstream, and, in the case of St Paul’s, a city that was reviving after the Great Fire. But separating these two buildings in time is the short-lived Republic, founded upon the death of King Charles I, who was executed next to his own Banqueting House. How do histories of London deal with, or deny, this event?

Readings: Summerson, *Inigo Jones*; Burman, *St Paul’s Cathedral*; Porter, ch. 4;

**Week 5: Georgian London**
Under the four Georges (I-IV), the newly founded British state carved out a world empire. We examine the innovative art of William Hogarth as a response to London’s dynamic and problematic commercial modernity. What does the layout of Bloomsbury tell us about the economy and culture of the 18th and early 19th century city?


**Week 6 - Victorian London**
How did the architectural style of the new Houses of Lords and Commons contribute to imperial myth concerning the ‘Mother of Parliaments’? What messages are conveyed by the route from Trafalgar Square to Parliament Square? How did the creators of the Victoria and Albert Museum attempt to make London’s working population feel part of this imperial supremacy?

Week 7 – Modern (and Postmodern) London
This week, two different Londons: the city’s ‘skyscrapers’, emphasizing the role of private enterprise in maintaining London as a player in the global marketplace; and an exhibition examining migrant London – how generations of migrants have built their lives and identities in a metropolis which can be both exciting or cruel.

Readings: Harvie, Staging the UK; Porter, chs. 15-17.

ASSESSMENT
Participation and class activities (25% of marks): Credit is awarded for active participation and class work; that is to say, answering and asking questions, doing group work and in-class writing, etc. Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and visits. Missing a class or visit in such an abbreviated schedule will result in losing points.

Short (5-7 minute) classroom presentation (10% of marks): examine a building, image or sculpture for what it may tell us about a moment or moments in London’s history.

Mid-term assignment (1000-1300 word essay – 30% of marks): Compare and contrast two of the following, as they relate to London: buildings, public spaces, sculptures, images. What narratives about civic, national or personal identity do they present us with? Please use an appropriate range of written and visual sources. Do not write less than 1000 words, excluding bibliography.

Final written assignment (1500-1700 word essay – 35% of marks):
Option A: Choosing one museum or historic building we have visited, examine how that institution constructs a historical narrative. Please use an appropriate range of written and visual sources, including the building itself, and, where appropriate, selected objects therein.

Option B: Examine how an architectural style may be used to convey particular meanings at a specific time and place. Refer to one or more buildings we have visited. Please also use an appropriate range of other sources, both written and visual.

GRADING CRITERIA FOR PAPERS (adapted from Sharon Trotter-Martin, Center for Teaching & Learning, Knox College)

Your paper will be evaluated in terms of content, organisation, style and presentation. You should imagine your reader as a “general reader,” someone with a college education but who is unfamiliar or at best, slightly familiar, with the particular text(s) you are referring to. Try to make your paper insightful and enjoyable to read.

- Content: Each paper must have a clear thesis statement that is fully supported with plenty of specific and concrete examples. Additional credit will be given for originality and depth of thought.
- Organisation of your information includes having one major idea per paragraph, the order of sentences in a paragraph, the order of paragraphs in the paper, as well as the use of smooth transitions.

- Use the appropriate writing style (not too formal or too casual) for an assignment.

- Presentation refers to comma usage, spelling, an avoidance of run-ons and sentence fragments, etc, neat layout, stapling.

**Grades:** Some students believe they should earn at least a B for writing a paper that adheres, more or less, to the assignment’s basic criteria. However, it takes more than that to earn a superior grade, such as an A or a B.

**A** – An A essay is outstanding in all four areas: content, organisation, style and presentation. It is exceptionally written, well-developed (displaying originality and depth of thought), well-organized, and nearly free of presentational errors. An essay that earns an A is good enough to be used as a textbook example.

**B** – A paper that earns a B is well-written, well-developed, well-organized, and free of major errors. It has several minor problems and perhaps lacks the originality, depth of thought or complex sentence structure found in an A paper. It demonstrates good writing skills and exceeds the basic requirements of the assignment.

**C** – A paper that earns a C is competent and has adequately met the assignment’s requirements, but it may have a significant problem (such as the lack of supporting examples or a lack of organization) or several minor ones, such as the need for more transitions, recurring problems with presentation, etc.

**D** – This is a paper that falls significantly short in many areas. It has recurring and/or significant problems, such as unclear sentence structure, incomplete or run-on sentences, an overall lack of organization, weak paragraph development, or an unclear thesis. A student may also earn a D (or an F) on a paper if the paper’s topic does not adhere to the assignment.

**F** – An essay that earns an F has serious problems, such as recurring awkward sentence structure that makes it extremely difficult to understand what the writer is saying, significant problems with paragraph development, organisation or presentation, etc. A student may also earn an F if he or she does not properly integrate and cite sources (using MLA Style), constituting plagiarism, or if the paper does not adhere to the assignment itself (e.g., if the assignment calls for a comparison and contrast and the paper simply summarizes the two works).

**Note:** a classroom assignment will also be evaluated in terms of content, organisation, style and presentation. Style will mean clear, interesting delivery; presentation will mean appropriate use of selected visual material. In terms of content and organisation, clear typewritten notes will be sufficient; the notes should be handed in afterwards.

**ACM POLICY ON ACADEMICS**
A complete listing of ACM policies can be found in your student handbook.
Class attendance and participation: You are expected to attend and participate fully in all classroom sessions, site visits, and field trips.

Academic honesty: Actions of dishonesty are destructive to the well-being of the academic community, and ACM staff respond to them vigorously. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic theft will result in a failing grade for that assignment and may result in failure for the course.

**ACM POLICY ON NON-DISCRIMINATION**
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