

CORE-UA 549
SUMMER SESSION I, May 28-July 2
MW 1-4pm

**CULTURES AND CONTEXTS:
MULTINATIONAL BRITAIN**

Professor Ortolano

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Office hours: Tues. 10am-12pm

Office: 53 Washington Square South

Description

This course introduces the peoples, cultures, and histories of the British Isles. Today home to a pair of European states, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland (and perhaps, after a referendum in September, to an independent Scotland as well), this collection of islands off the northwestern coast of Europe has historically been home to an enormous variety of peoples, kingdoms, religions, nations, and states. Rather than collapsing this diversity into a study of the *English* people or the *British* state, we will think about the United Kingdom as a multinational formation, made and remade through centuries of invasions, encounters, and migrations that began before the Romans and continue to this day.

The course is divided into four units, each of which introduces a different way of thinking about Britain as a multinational formation:

I. Invasions, focusing upon the peoples who arrived in the British Isles during ancient and medieval times.

II. Kingdoms, focusing upon the four nations of Wales, England, Scotland, and Ireland, and how they came to form the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

III. Empire, focusing upon the ways in which British society and culture were shaped by the experience of imperialism.

IV. Migrations, focusing upon the experience and consequences of immigration to Britain since the Second World War.

Evaluation

Participation (10%), a combination of regular attendance and thoughtful participation; see under “Attendance” below for details on the attendance policy.

Quiz (20%), including a map quiz and identification questions, at the conclusion of Unit I.

Midterm exam (30%), including identification questions and in-class essays, at the conclusion of Unit II.

Essay (40%), about 10 pages, drawing upon your work throughout the summer to identify and analyze a claim about national identity in British politics today.

Policies

1. Academic honesty: Intellectual integrity is the university's most fundamental commitment. Plagiarism of any kind will be penalized to the fullest extent, without warning or exception. If you have questions about documentation requirements, just ask. For details on university policy see: <http://cas.nyu.edu/page/ug.academicintegrity>

2. Attendance: You are permitted one absence without consultation; a second absence requires advance notice or a valid excuse, and might nevertheless be reflected in your grade; a student with three absences will generally not pass this course. This policy takes effect beginning May 28, regardless of when you personally enroll in the course.

3. Computers: Students are asked to turn off their phones and disable their laptops' wireless during the class period (apart from breaks). A student who engages in electronic communication of any kind during class (email, texting, social media, Wikipedia, etc.) will be regarded as absent.

4. Writing: Papers must be double-spaced, with one-inch margins and numbered pages, following any standard referencing style. Late papers lose 1/3 of a grade per day: e.g. a B paper, submitted the morning after it was due, will receive a B-. Papers more than 72 hours late will receive an F.

5. Students with disabilities: Students requesting accommodations should work through the Moses Center; students must be registered with CSD to receive accommodations. The Moses Center is located at 726 Broadway on the second floor; further information can be found at www.nyu.edu/csd.

6. Religious holidays: NYU accommodates student observances of religious holidays. In order to receive accommodation, notify the instructor during the first week of the semester. Details on NYU's policies may be found at: <http://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/university-calendar-policy-on-religious-holidays.html>

Materials

Most readings, marked with an * on the syllabus below, will be made available through NYU Classes. Two books are required for purchase:

Gerald of Wales, *The Journey through Wales & The Description of Wales* (Penguin, 1978). ISBN 0140443398.

William Shakespeare, *Henry V*, ed. Barbara Mowat (Simon and Schuster, 2004). ISBN 9780743484879.

Your are asked to bring printed copies of all texts to recitation sections.

UNIT I: INVASIONS

Meeting 1 Weds., May 28 The Myths of Nations

No assigned reading.

Meeting 2 Mon., June 2 Celts, Romans, Angles, Saxons, & Vikings

Reading: *Excerpts from *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (C5-C9) and other primary texts (about 20 pages).

Meeting 3 Weds., June 4 The Norman Conquest

Reading: *Excerpts from William of Poitiers, *The Life of William the Conqueror* (1087) and other primary texts (about 20 pages).

➤ **Quiz during class.**

UNIT II: KINGDOMS

Meeting 4 Mon., June 9 Wales

Reading: Excerpts from Gerald of Wales, *The Journey through Wales*.

Meeting 5 Weds., June 11 England

Reading: William Shakespeare, *Henry V*.

Meeting 6 Mon., June 16 Scotland, Ireland, and the Union

Reading: *Linda Colley, *Britons* (excerpt); *Franklin Foer, "How Soccer Explains the Pornography of Sects" (30 pages).

UNIT III: EMPIRE

Meeting 7 Weds., June 18 Slavery and Anti-Slavery

Reading: *Excerpts from Barry Unsworth, *Sacred Hunger*, and Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*.

➤ **Midterm on Unit II at the beginning of class.**

Meeting 8 Mon., June 23 The British Raj

Reading: TBA.

Meeting 9 Weds., June 25 Imperial Culture

Reading: *Philippa Levine, "Ruling an Empire" (19 pages); *George Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant" (8 pages).

UNIT IV: MIGRATIONS

Meeting 10 Mon., June 30 The British Empire at War

Reading: *Andrea Levy, *Small Island* (excerpt).

Meeting 11 Weds., July 2 Post-colonial Britain

Reading: Bring a copy of the (relevant pages from) the political manifesto that you plan to analyze in your final paper.

- **Final papers are due to me via Dropbox by noon on Saturday, July 5.**