

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
Department of History

History 124      Semester II, 2007-2008  
British History since 1688      Mr. Donnelly

COURSE DESCRIPTION

History 124 is the second half of a two-semester sequence surveying the history of England and the British empire. The course extends from the “Bloodless Revolution” of 1688 to the “Welfare State” and the collapse or abandonment of empire in the aftermath of World War II.

History 124 is concerned with the transformation of England from a thinly settled, mainly rural, economically underdeveloped, and politically unstable nation in the late seventeenth century into a thickly peopled and heavily urbanized country renowned for political stability in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. One major objective of the course will be to illuminate the process by which England achieved stable constitutional monarchy, based on a powerful elite of landed and monied families, and the ways in which this form of government peacefully evolved into a parliamentary democracy controlled by the masses. A second goal will be to explain how England harnessed its modest economic resources in such a way as to give birth to the epoch-making Industrial Revolution, and how the new industrial society moved from private enterprise and *laissez-faire* to socialism and the welfare state. A third objective will be to draw meaning from Britain's great extension and exploitation of empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as well as from the collapse of the imperial edifice in the twentieth.

LECTURES

Lectures three days per week (MWF, 11-11:50), supplemented by weekly discussion meetings and audio-visual presentations.

EXAMS

Besides a final exam, there will be either one or two hour exams, depending upon the decision of the students during the first week of class.

GRADING SYSTEM

If the students decide to have only one hour exam plus the final, the grade for the course will be determined on the following basis: active interest and regular participation in discussion, 15 percent; hour exam, 35 percent; final exam, 50 percent. If, on the other hand, the students decide to have two hour exams, plus the final, a number of grading options will be offered, allowing students to determine, within broad limits, how they wish their grade for the course to be determined. How the options work will be discussed on the first day of class.

## REQUIRED READINGS

Cannadine, David, The Rise and Fall of Class in Britain (Columbia University Press paperback)

Heyck, Thomas William, The Peoples of the British Isles: A New History, Vol. 2: From 1688 to 1870, and Vol. 3: From 1870 to the Present (Lyceum Books paperbacks).

Hobsbawm, E. J., Industry and Empire. Pelican Economic History of England, Vol. 3 (W.W. Norton paperback).

Miller, John, James II (Yale University Press paperback).

Porter, Bernard, The Lion's Share (Longman paperback).

## GENERAL COURSE OUTLINE

Week

Topic

1/22-1/25	Crown and Parliament under the Later Stuarts, 1660-88
1/28-2/1	The Bloodless Revolution: Defended and Confirmed, 1688-1714
2/4-2/8	Early Eighteenth-Century England, 1714-42
2/11-2/15	Scotland, Ireland, and the Empire
2/18-2/22	The New Religion and the New Politics, 1770-89
2/25-2/29	The Economic Revolution, 1780-1840
3/3-3/7	Britain and the French Revolution, 1789-1815
3/10-3/14	The Growth of Liberalism and the Triumph of Reform, 1815-47
3/24-3/28	Social Discord and Liberal Consensus, 1830-67
3/31-4/4	The Claims of Democracy and Nationality, 1867-1900
4/7-4/11	Imperialism, 1870-1914
4/14-4/18	Social Reform, 1870-1914
4/21-4/25	Britain and World War I
4/28-5/2	The Interwar Years, 1918-39
5/5-5/9	Great Challenges since 1939: War, Welfare, and Disimperialism