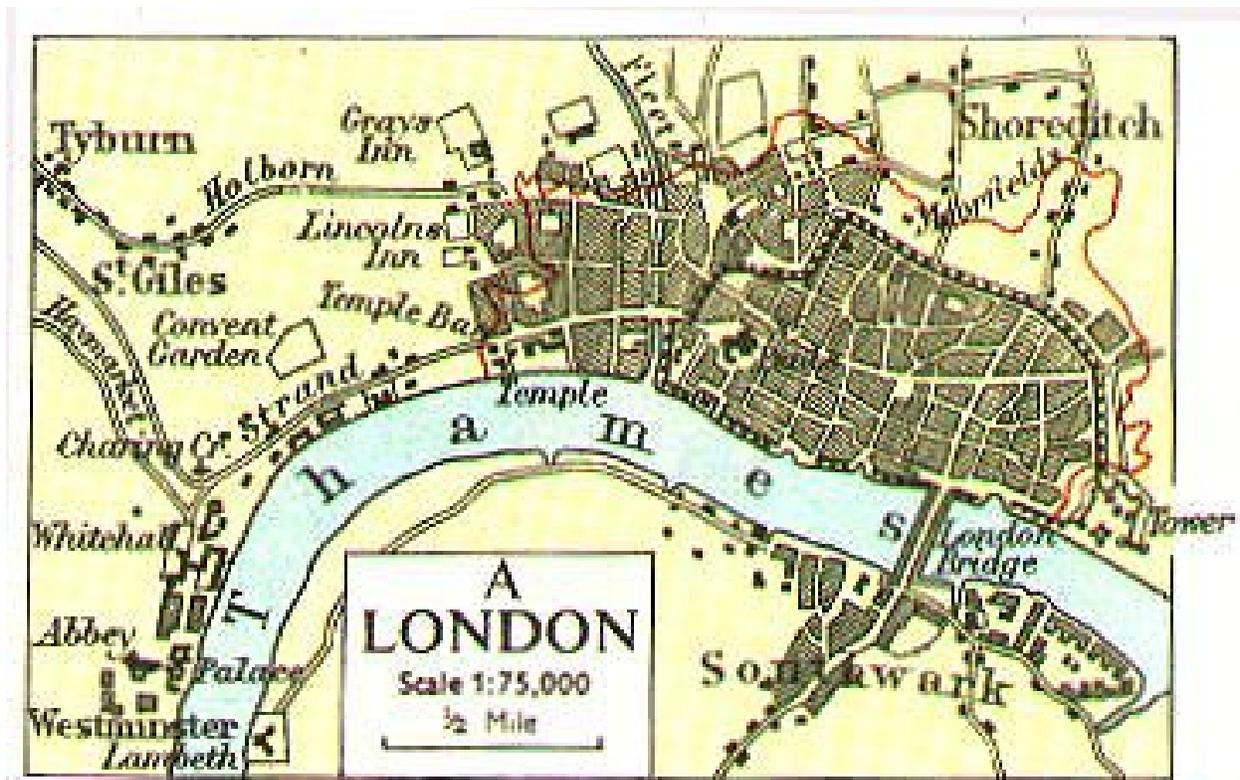


## London and the Traces of Past Lives

Urban historians have drawn upon the image of the palimpsest—vellum repeatedly scraped of previous writing for new inscription, on which the older text leaves traces—to conceptualize cities. London, “destroyed” by the Great Fire of 1666 and “severely damaged” in the Second World War, nonetheless offers material traces of older ways of life. Another model, which works especially well for the oldest parts of London, is sedimentation: excavations for the foundations of modern bridges and high rises have unearthed traces of “pre-history.”

This course will explore the oldest layers of London’s history and in so doing, ask the question, what is history? Class meetings will alternate between discussion in the seminar room and walking the city, learning how to see its history in the material traces of the past.



<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/maps/London.jpg>

## Assignments:

In addition to participating in our collective analysis each week, students will be required to write a number of brief analyses:

- 1) due in class January 25: find in London and identify some trace of Roman settlement. Describe it in 250 words, and then, in another 250 words, tell us what this trace teaches you about life in Roman London.
- 2) due in class February 8: identify one object in the Museum of London; describe it in in 100 words; and then, in another 100 words, tell us what it teaches about the history of London.
- 3) due in class February 22: a 250-word essay on the question: how did religion inscribe the urban landscape of London in the Middle Ages?
- 4) due in class April 4: research one guild's impact on London prior to 1500 and write a 500-word essay on it.
- 5) due in class April 18: write a 500-word essay addressing the question: how do material remains, such as ruins and objects, change our understanding of "history"?

## Useful weblinks:

<http://blog.visitlondon.com/2013/04/visiting-the-past-londons-ancient-city-walls/>

<http://archive.museumoflondon.org.uk/Londinium/>

<http://londonist.com/2014/01/anglo-saxon-london-map-updated#gallery=640937,64093>



## Class Meetings

January 11: What is “History”?

January 18: **The Thames** – meet in seminar room (bring your Oyster card!)

January 25: Roman Britain reports (see Learn@UW for map)

February 1: **Museum of London**

February 6 (Saturday): class visit: **Stonehenge and Bath**

February 8: Historical objects reports

February 15: **Abbeys and Convents (TBA)** – meet in seminar room

February 22: The Spaces of Religion

February 29 – March 4        BREAK

March 7: **The Tower of London**

March 14: Royal London

March 21: **Temple Church & Middle Temple Hall**

March 28: Chaucer’s London



<http://machias.edu/faculty/necastro/chaucer/ct/>



<http://molcat1.bl.uk/treasures/caxton/search.asp>

April 4: Guilds and the Cloth Trade – reports

April 9 (Saturday) class visit: **Brighton**

April 11: **Stationers’ Hall**

April 18: “History” and Its Matter