Early Modern Britain, 1485-1745

This class is about what some historians call a “transition to modernity:” the transformation of medieval Britain at the end of the fifteenth century to a society on the cusp of industrial modernity by the middle of the eighteenth century, which is why I prefer to the title “Early Modern Britain” to the official title “Britain in the Age of Discovery and Revolution.” The major theme we will be exploring is the challenge of governing a rapidly changing society, a challenge that frequently proved too much for Britain’s rulers to handle during this period.

Objectives

As graduate students, it is ultimately up to you to figure out how this class fits into your course of study. I encourage each of you to meet with me to talk about what you hope to get out of the class and how to tailor your experience accordingly, especially regarding the selection of a topic for your final project. There are, however, three general objectives that are appropriate for all students. First, although this is not a survey course, you will gain a basic understanding of the significant developments of early modern British history. Second, the course will introduce you to key historiographical debates in early modern British scholarship and enable you to interrogate these using primary sources and to apply them to other fields. Third, you will hone your research skills and be introduced to doing research in the early modern period by executing an independent research project.

Requirements

There are four requirements for this class that will determine your final grade. I will exercise some flexibility to account for the strengths of each student, but as a baseline Participation and the Précis will count for 20% each, the Book Reviews will count for 15% each, and the Final Project will count for 30%.

Participation: I expect 100% attendance and participation from everyone. This means not only coming to class, but that have done all the assigned readings and are prepared to ask questions, make comments, and engage is discussion of them. If you do have to miss a class, please let me know as soon as you are aware of the conflict.
**Book Review and Presentation (2):** Each student will select two of the “additional readings” listed below, give a brief (5 minute) presentation on it to the class, and submit a short (2-3 page) review of it. You will sign up for your books on the first day of class. The review should discuss the book’s thesis, briefly summarize the structure of the argument, describe how the author situates the argument in the broader literature, and discuss the sources and methods of the book. You presentation can include all of these things, but should focus on a summary of the argument and your assessment of how it relates to the topic and other readings for the day.

**Précis:** This is a short essay (about 5 pages) summing up your understanding of one of the three main periods of the course: the Tudors and the Reformation (27 January through 17 February), the Civil War and Revolution (17 February through 3 March), or the Restoration and Glorious Revolution (3 March through 7 April). The précis should answer the question How would I present this period to a class of high schoolers or freshmen undergraduates? In other words, you should take the information we've discussed, identify the most important elements, and use them to create a coherent narrative. The précis is due the class meeting after we wrap up the period you select. So, if you chose the Tudors and Reformation it is due 24 February, if you chose the Civil War and Revolution it is due 17 March, and if you chose the Restoration and Glorious Revolution it is due 14 April.

**Final Project:** this is a research project on a topic of your choice relating to early modern Britain. The project should be based on at least some original research, meaning that it should include primary sources and not just secondary sources. You should also place your project in historiographical context by addressing how your argument relates to books we have discussed in this class or by identifying additional works related to your topic. There are two options for how you present your research: a short presentation and a long paper or a long presentation and short paper.

- **Long Presentation:** if you choose this option, you will lead the class for an hour on your topic. You will also write a short (7-10 page) paper summarizing your research. This paper will be due at the time you give your presentation.

- **Long Paper:** if you choose this option, you will submit a longer (15-20 page) paper on the final day of class, 5 May. You will also present a short (10 minute) summary of your findings to the class.

**Academic Honesty**

Academic honesty is an integral part of historical research, and I will be strictly enforcing ESU’s policies on academic misconduct (pp. 48-49 of the Student Handbook). Plagiarism – the use of someone else’s words or ideas without proper citation – will result in failure for the course and referral to the Office of Student Conduct for possible administrative sanctions. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me or visit the American Historical Association’s website on the subject, [http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/ProfessionalStandards.cfm#Plagiari](http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/ProfessionalStandards.cfm#Plagiari)
Meeting the Professor

Each of you have your own level of preparation for this class and expectations for it, so I hope you will talk one-on-one with me about the class. I encourage everyone to meet with me as often as you’d like during the semester and I expect each of you to meet with me at least once to talk about your final project. I have set aside an office hour for this class on Tuesday evenings, but you are welcome to come to my other office hours. I’m also available to meet at other times, including evenings. Send me an email or see me before or after class to set up a meeting outside of regular office hours.

Texts

The following books are required for the course and are available at the University bookstore.


The other required readings are available on D2L. Be aware that many of these are scans of the original sixteenth, seventeenth, or eighteenth century publications, complete with the spelling, word usage, and typography of that period. They will take you longer to read than contemporary works of the same length, so plan accordingly.

The Additional Readings that you will be reviewing are available either in Kemp library or through the PALCI interlibrary loan system (EZ-Borrow) as noted. Please be aware that books requested through PALCI take several days to arrive, so be sure to order them ahead of time.

I also recommend that you obtain a textbook to consult during the course for a basic narrative of historical events, especially if you do not have a strong background in early modern European history. Unfortunately, while there are numerous strong surveys of the Tudor and Stuart periods as well as the eighteenth century, there are few single volumes that cover the entire range of this course. If you’re looking for a comprehensive text, I recommend *The Oxford History of Britain*, which has three chapters on our period and sells for about $14 on Amazon.

Finally, in addition to general reference works such as a good dictionary that can help you with the meaning of archaic words, you may wish to consult the *Dictionary of National Biography* for information on unfamiliar individuals. It is available in Kemp Reference at 920.042 Ox202.
Class Schedule

20 January: Introduction and Basic Frameworks

27 January: English Society and Government at the End of the Middle Ages
The Petition of Edmund Dudley (1509)
Keith Wrightson, Earthly Necessities Ch. 1, 3, and 4
Additional Reading
    G. R. Elton, The Tudor Revolution in Government (PALCI)

3 February: The Reformation
Act in Restraint of Appeals to Rome (1533)
Anne Askew, The First Examination of Anne Askew (1546)
An Exhortation Concerning Good Order and Obedience to Rulers and Magistrates (1547)
Act of Uniformity (1552)
John Foxe, Acts and Monuments aka Foxe’s Book of Martyrs (1563)
Additional Reading
    A. G. Dickens, The English Reformation (Kemp)
    Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic (Kemp)

10 February: Traditional Resistance
Kesselring, The Northern Rebellion of 1569
Additional Reading
    Eamon Duffy, The Stripping on the Altars (PALCI)
    Peter Lake, The Antichrist’s Lewd Hat (PALCI)

17 February: The Elizabethan Settlement and Its Failure
The Thirty-Nine Articles (1571)
John Field and Thomas Wilcox, Admonition to Parliament (1572)
Elizabeth I, Armada Speech to the Troops at Tilbury (1588)
Elizabeth I, Golden Speech (1601)
James VI/I, The Trew Law of Free Monarchies (1598)
Thomas Mun, England’s Treasure by Forraign Trade (written c. 1620, published 1664)
Thomas Scott, Vox Populi (1624)
The Petition of Right (1628)
Additional Reading
    Patrick Collinson, The Elizabethan Puritan Movement (Kemp)
    Nicholas Tyacke, Anti-Calvinists (PALCI)
24 February: Civil War and Revolution
The Grand Remonstrance (1641)
The Solemn League and Covenant (1643)
The Putney Debates and The Agreement of the People (1647)
John Milton, Tenure of Kings and Magistrates (1649)
Lucy Hutchinson, Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson (written between 1664 and 1671)
Additional Reading
S. R. Gardiner, The First Two Stuarts and the Puritan Revolution (Kemp)
Christopher Hill, The English Revolution of 1640 (PALCI, also online at marxists.org)
David Underdown, Revel, Riot, and Rebellion (Kemp)

3 March: The Restoration
John Fell, The Interest of England Stated (1659)
Rose, Godly Kingship in Restoration England
Additional Reading
Ronald Hutton, The Restoration (PALCI)
John Spurr, The Restoration Church of England (Kemp)

10 March Spring Break

17 March: Empire, Overseas Trade, and Commercial Society
Edward Randolph, Condemnation of the Massachusetts Bay Company (1683)
Orders and Instructions regarding Sir Edmund Andros (1686-1689)
The Character of a Coffee-House, with the Symptomes of a Town Wit (1673)
Charles II, Proclamation for the Suppression of Coffee Houses (1675)
Slingsby Bethel, The Interest of Princes and States (1680)
Additional Reading
D. C. Coleman, The Economy of England 1450-1750 (Kemp)
Stephen Saunders Webb, 1676: The End of American Independence (Kemp)

24 March: Rhetoric of Moderation
John Locke, A Letter Concerning Toleration (1689)
Shagan, The Rule of Moderation
Additional Reading
C. B. Macpherson, The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism (Kemp)
John Marshall, John Locke, Toleration, and Early Enlightenment Culture (PALCI)

31 March: Exclusion Crisis and Glorious Revolution
Andrew Marvell, Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government (1677)
Sir Roger L’Estrange, Observator in Dialogue (1681-83)
John Locke, Second Treatise on Government (written c. 1682, published 1689)
James II, Declaration of Indulgence (1687)
The Invitation of the Seven (1688) and The Declaration of Right (1689)
Additional Reading
G. M. Trevelyan, The English Revolution 1688-1689 (Kemp)
Steve Pincus, 1688: The First Modern Revolution (Kemp/EBSCO)
7 April: Revolutionary Politics
Weil, *A Plague of Informers*
Additional Reading
   Geoffrey Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne* (Kemp)
   G. V. Bennett, *The Tory Crisis in Church and State 1688-1730* (Kemp)

14 April: War and the Fiscal-Military State
*The Dutch Design Anatomized* (1688)
*An Address Agreed Upon at the Committee for the French War* (1689)
*Considerations Requiring Greater Care for Trade in England* (1695)
Additional Reading
   P. G. M. Dickson, *The Financial Revolution* (Kemp)
   John Brewer, *Sinews of Power* (Kemp)

21 April: Whig Government
Benjamin Hoadly, *The Nature of the Kingdom, or Church, of Christ* (1717)
Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees* (1723)
James Erskine, “Account of the Highlanders & Highlands of Scotland” (1724)
Excerpts from *The London Journal* (1728-1732)
Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, *A Dissertation upon Parties* (1734)
Additional Reading
   Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People* (Kemp)

28 April and 5 May: Student Presentations