Class Description

This course will study a variety of texts written at particular times in the history of London. The aims of the course are to encourage the student to think historically, in terms of the way London and representations of the city have changed and developed over time; and theoretically, in terms of the way the city is mediated through different forms and genres (e.g. poetry, novels, essays, film; satire, detective and crime fiction), and the interrelationship of literary and material spaces. We will also examine the significance of gender, the definition of the modern metropolis as a labyrinthine city of Babylon, the influence of metropolitan culture on Modernism and Modernity, assimilation versus multiculturalism, immigration, and the effects of new modern spaces on individuals.

The course will be conducted mainly as a seminar, in which students will participate through oral presentations and class discussion, with introductory lectures when appropriate. Please note that this course includes several novels of varying lengths, and you are advised to start reading them ahead of time.

Desired Outcomes

The goal is to bring a body of significant literary works in close relation to the urban environment, the architectural transformation, the metropolitan politics, and the extra-literary cultural life of the city. We will try to understand why London authors often conceived this city as text and how the task of living up to London and of finding a form of representation adequate to its radical social heterogeneity has become a defining measure of imaginative ambition.

Assessment Components

Class participation counting 10% of total marks

One paper 1000-1500 words counting 30% of total marks (3-4 pages)

One final research paper 2000-3000 words counting 45% of total marks (6-8 pages)

Class Presentation counting 15% of total marks (10-15 minutes)

Failure to submit or fulfil any required course component results in failure of the class.

Assessment Expectations

Grade A: Demonstration of detailed familiarity with the text under review; ability to establish and argue an independent line of thought; ability to engage critically with secondary reading material; fluent and articulate expression of ideas. Positive participation in the classroom is essential.

Grade B: Demonstration of familiarity with text under review; support for argument from secondary critical material; clear expression. Positive participation in the classroom is essential.

Grade C: Basic understanding of text under review; ideas in paper may lack organization and appear
random and disconnected at times; occasionally deviating from main theme and title of paper; writing lacks clear expression. Positive participation in the classroom is important.

**Grade D:** Little reference to the text other than what could be gleaned from an outline or summary of the plot; advancing ideas that have insufficient relevance to the title; being simplistic (writing in a way that does not do justice to the complexity of the text); careless expression.

**Grade F:** Little or no reference to the text under review; deviation from or ignoring the title/subject of the paper; clear indication that the student has not read, or has clearly failed to understand, the text under review; poor and ungrammatical expression.

**Required Text(s)**
- Edgar Allan Poe, ‘*The Man of the Crowd*’ (handout to be provided)
- T. S. Eliot, *Selected Poems* (handouts will be provided)
- Virginia Woolf, ‘*Street Haunting: A London Adventure*’ (handout will be provided)
- Sam Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners* (Penguin, 0141188413)

**Supplemental Texts(s) (not required to purchase as copies are in NYU-L Library)**
- Malcolm Cross & Michael Keith, eds., *Racism, the City and the State* (1992)
- D. Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (1994)
- Deborah L. Parsons, *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City and Modernity* (2000)
- Georg Simmel, ‘*The Metropolis and Mental Life*’ (1903)

**Internet Research Guidelines**
Use of online resources for written work and oral presentations is encouraged alongside library books and periodicals. However, students should be able to discriminate between academic resources such as online scholarly journal articles and Wikipedia-style websites; the latter should be used cautiously and not be regarded as substitutes for, or equivalent to, more reliable sources.

**Additional Required**
Depending on classroom, use of laptop for class presentation. You may use your own laptop or NYUL classroom equipment
Session 1
Introduction to the course. SET TEXT: Selected poems and passages from William Blake, William Wordsworth, Joseph Conrad, Ian McEwan; selected passages from urban theorists Georg Simmel, Michel de Certeau and others (these are all handouts). No prior reading required.

Session 2

Session 3
London Nightmares: SET TEXT: Thomas De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1822); Edgar Allan Poe, ‘The Man in the Crowd’ (1840) (handout provided)

Session 4
Charles Dickens and Victorian London: SET TEXT: Charles Dickens, selections from *Sketches by Boz* (1836); excerpts from *Bleak House* (1852-3); ‘People of the City’ in Williams, *The Country and the City* (handout provided)

Session 5
Tour of Dickens’s London. Meet outside Temple tube station at 2pm

Session 6
Dickens and Crime, SET TEXT: Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (1837-8)

**ESSAY 1 DUE**

Session 7
Fin de siècle London: SET TEXT: Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886)

Session 8
Unreal City: SET TEXT: T. S. Eliot, ‘The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock’ (1917) (handout provided); ‘Preludes’ (1917) (handout provided); excerpts from *The Waste Land* (1922) (handout provided)

Session 9
Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury: SET TEXT: Virginia Woolf, ‘Street-Haunting: a London Adventure’ (1927) (handout provided); excerpts from *The London Scene* (handout provided)

Session 10

Session 11
Session 13


Session 14


Handing in of Final Assignments. **ESSAY 2 DUE**

Session 15

Concluding *Writing London*. Showing of Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis* (1927)

Classroom Etiquette

Laptops may be used for classwork only. Cell phones must be put away for the duration of the class.

Required Co-curricular Activities

Information about current London-related literary and cultural events and places to visit will be communicated and circulated throughout the semester.

Your Instructor

Dr Leya Landau’s main research interests lie in the 18th century and the city in literature. She has taught for many years in the University of London. She is currently writing a book on women and 18th-century London and her publications include work on Frances Burney, women and 18th-century literature, city writing, and opera.

NYU GLOBAL ACADEMIC POLICIES

Policies and procedures for Global Academic Centres, including policies on academic integrity and the Study Away Standard, can be found here: [https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/student-services.html](https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/student-services.html)

**Absences:** Key information on NYU London’s absence policy, how to report absences, and what kinds of absences can be excused can be found here: [http://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/attendance-policy.html](http://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/attendance-policy.html)

**NYU London work submission policies** can be found here: [http://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/academic-policies.html](http://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/academic-policies.html)

**Classroom conduct:** Academic communities exist to facilitate the process of acquiring and exchanging knowledge and understanding, to enhance the personal and intellectual development of its members, and to advance the interests of society. Essential to this mission is that all members of the University Community are safe and free to engage in a civil process of teaching and learning through their experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Accordingly, no student should engage in any form of behavior that interferes with the academic or educational process, compromises the personal safety or well-being of another, or disrupts the administration of University programs or services.

Please refer to the **NYU London Disruptive Student Behaviour Policy** at [https://goo.gl/Nvt5Vu](https://goo.gl/Nvt5Vu) for examples of disruptive behaviour and guidelines for response and enforcement.