London in Literature Syllabus

Thursdays: 2-5pm

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Office hours by appointment on Tuesdays after class.

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 relationship between literary and physical spaces. We will also examine the significance of gender, the 19th-century 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. Museum visits and London walks will provide a link between the readings and geography of London.

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.

Required Readings – you will need your books for every class:

Jane Austen, Sense and Sensibility (Penguin, ISBN 0141439661)
Edgar Allan Poe, ‘The Man of the Crowd’ (handout will be provided)
Charles Dickens, Selection of Essays by Boz and ‘Nightwalks’ (handout will be provided)
Robert Louis Stevenson, The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, (Penguin ISBN: 0141439734)
Virginia Woolf, ‘Street Haunting: A London Adventure’ (handout will be provided)
Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway, (Penguin ISBN: 0141182490)
Sam Selvon, The Lonely Londoners (Penguin, 0141188413)
Michaelangelo Antonioni, Blow-Up (screening in class)

General course instruction and classroom etiquette:

- Cell phones are to be put away for the duration of the class
- Use of laptops for classroom work only
- Please bring the appropriate book with you to class; you may not rely on general online versions, like Gutenberg texts, for close readings and class discussion
- Please ensure you are on time; consistent lateness will adversely affect your overall final grade
- Attendance is required. If you are ill, please notify me by email. You will be expected to make up any work you have missed. Unexcused absences will adversely affect your overall final grade
• Museum visits and class walks are mandatory and part of class attendance. Failure to attend will adversely affect your overall final grade. Make sure your Oyster card is topped up before any class involving a walk or visit, and please come prepared for the elements and bring an umbrella!

**Assessment and Grading:**

- Class participation counting **15%** of total marks
- Class Presentation counting **15%** of total marks (10-15 minutes)
- A series of photos (4-6) or short film (4-6 mins) with accompanying text focusing on London by day or night, counting **15%**
- One paper 1000-1500 words counting **20%** of total marks (3-4 pages): a close reading of one work, or part of one work, OR two responses (500-700 words each) connecting sites we have visited to works we have read in class
- One final research paper 2000-2500 word using two or more works we have studied in class, counting **35%** of total marks (6-8 pages)
- Note: attention to correct use of grammar, punctuation and spelling is necessary to achieve a good grade; problems with these elements will adversely affect your grade. Please hand in hard copies of your papers on the dates indicated on the syllabus. Late papers will be graded down on level for each day they are late (e.g., one day late: a B grade becomes a B- etc.), but no papers will be accepted 48 hours after the due time and date.

**Course Objectives and Desired Outcomes:**

- The goal is to bring a body of significant literary works in close relation to the 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.
- To enhance students’ literary, critical and cultural analysis and vocabulary
- To engage in intellectual conversations about the course readings and the excursions.

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

**Syllabus:**

*Read the works for the days that are listed below so that you are prepared for class discussions.*

**Week 1: 30 August: Introduction to the course**
• SET TEXT: Selected poems and passages from William Wordsworth, John Keats, Thomas Hardy, Fleur Adcock; selected passages from urban theorists Georg Simmel, Michel de Certeau and others (these are all handouts). No prior reading required.
• Visit to the British Museum

Week 2: 6 September: From Country to City
• SET TEXT: Jane Austen, Sense and Sensibility (1811) vols 1&2

Week 3: 13 September: Polite London
• SET TEXT: Sense and Sensibility: Vol. 3
• Mayfair Walk

Week 4: 20 September: London Crowds
• SET TEXT: Edgar Allan Poe, “The Man of the Crowd” (1840) (handout provided) & Introduction to Matthew Beaumont’s Night-Walking (handout provided)
• Visit to Museum of London: London Night Exhibition

Week 5: 27 September: Charles Dickens and Victorian London
• SET TEXT: Charles Dickens, selections from Sketches by Boz (1836); “Night Walks” (1852-3) (handouts provided)
• *4-6 photos or short film (4-6 minutes) with accompanying text due in*

4 October: Excursion Week: no class

Week 6: 11 October
• Tour of Dickens Museum: meet outside museum at 9.55am
• Dickensian London Walk: starting from the Dickens Museum, 11am-12:30pm
• *First paper due*

Week 7: 18 October: Fin de siècle London
• Robert Louis Stevenson, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde (1886)

Week 8: 25 October: Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury
• SET TEXT: Virginia Woolf, ‘Street-Haunting: a London Adventure’ (1927) (handout provided)
• Bloomsbury Walk

Week 9: 1 November: Modernist London
• SET TEXT: Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway (1925)

8 November: Mid-semester break: no class

Week 10: 15 November: Immigrant London
• SET TEXT: Sam Selvon, The Lonely Londoners (1956)
Week 11: 22 November: Swinging 60s London

- Screening and discussion of Michaelangelo Antonio’s *Blow-Up* (1966)

Week 12: 29 November: ‘Multicultural London’


Week 13: 6 December: Final Class:

- *Final paper due*
- Visit to Dickens Museum
- Drink and final comments

I reserve the right to modify the course requirements, meeting times, and other related policies as circumstances may dictate, and with sufficient notification of all students. I will consider changing due dates, etc. after the drop/add period when your schedules for the semester are finalized. Students are responsible for finding out information distributed in class from which they were absent.

Grading: 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.

**Honor Pledge:** On my honor, as an Eckerd College student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to tolerate these behaviors in others.

**Title IX (short version):** In accordance with Title IX, faculty who become aware of any incident of sexual violence are required by law to notify Eckerd’s Title IX Coordinator. For more information about your rights and reporting options at Eckerd, including confidential and anonymous reporting options, please visit [TITLE IX Eckerd College](#).

**AES:** Eckerd College complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Students with disabilities who need special accommodations must make their requests by contacting Accessible Education Services (located in Brown Hall) at extension 7724 or via email at aes@eckerd.edu.