BRITAIN: FORGING THE NATION?
(GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY WRITING COURSE)
[BRIT 290]
FALL 2025

Instructor	Prof. David Green
E-mail	dgreen@harlaxton.ac.uk
Course Meeting Days and Time	Tu/Thur 11.00-12.15 + library research sessions, peer review activities and individual/small-group tutorials.
Required Experiential Learning Dates	London (5-7 Sept.) and Lincoln (13 Sept.). Highly recommended: 'Celtic Captials or Arnheim – mid-semester trip'.
Office Hours	Tu/Thur: 1.00-2.00pm

Catalog Description:

This course, only available to George Washington University students, links Harlaxton's signature program in British Studies with GW's University Writing Course [GW Course Code: UW 1020]. Alongside an exploration of the history and culture of Britain and Ireland, students will be introduced to the skills and techniques required for research and writing at university level.

British Studies offers students an historical perspective on the emergence of modern Britain. The central theme of the course is the development of a sense of national identity within the British Isles and the problems associated with applying a single 'British' identity to four distinct nations. Students are encouraged to reflect on the issues and stereotypes that emerge out of competing national identities and contested borders in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland.

The course will also inculcate skills in the processes and techniques of academic writing, drawing upon a range of topics concerned with the development of Britain over a *longue durée*. Students will be encouraged to frame important questions (especially concerned with issues of national identity in the four nations), construct arguments through identifying and discussing both supportive and contradictory evidence, accommodate a variety of purposes and audiences, and use the ideas of other writers appropriately. Dedicated workshops concerned with research, writing, citation practices etc. are required elements of the course and students will be encouraged to undertake peer review processes throughout the semester.

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Course Learning Objectives:

In addition to gaining an understanding of the historical processes which led to the development of contemporary Britain. Students who complete this course successfully will develop skills in:

- Research: the ability to explore information resources — through both traditional library and emerging technological sources — to use them effectively and to acknowledge them correctly.
- Critical reading and analytical thinking: to examine assumptions and evidence, in both scholarly texts and informed public commentary.
- Written and oral communication: 1) Students will develop a functional grasp of rhetorical principles including: the purpose or genre of different forms of writing, the expectations of various audiences and the use of formats, evidence, tones, lengths and levels of formality appropriate to a range of contexts. 2) Practice in the tasks of framing sound questions or hypotheses, analyzing and synthesizing information that can be brought to bear on the chosen question, preparing and revising drafts to achieve clarity and coherence of argument, and citing others' work with integrity. 3) The habit and discipline of careful editing and proofreading to ensure that final drafts are essentially free of errors in grammar, syntax, usage, paragraphing, punctuation and spelling.

Credit Hour Policy Statement:

Standard lecture: "This class meets the federal credit hour policy of 1 hour of class with an expected 2 hours of additional student work outside of class each week for approximately 15 weeks for each hour of credit, or a total of 45-75 total hours for each credit."
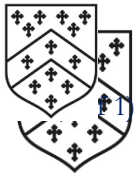
Methods of Instruction:

Combination of lectures, seminars, workshops, individual tutorials, and field trips.

Students will be encouraged to read widely among primary and secondary sources and will have considerable latitude in choosing research topics.

Key Texts (British and Irish History):

- Cunliffe, B., Briggs, A., Bourke, J., Morrill, J., Bartlett, R., eds., *The Penguin Illustrated History of Britain and Ireland: From Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London, 2004) [copies held on reserve in the Harlaxton library].

- Kearney, Hugh, *The British Isles: A History of Four Nations* (Cambridge, 2nd ed. 2012) [available online through UE library].

Key Resource (Academic writing):

- Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL): https://owl.purdue.edu/

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HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES 1: CHRONOLOGY AND CONCEPTIONS OF NATIONAL IDENTITY	LIBRARY RESEARCH AND PEER REVIEW SESSIONS	FIELD TRIPS
Week 1: Roman and Early Medieval Britain (to c.500)		
Introductions		
Ancient, Roman and Early Medieval Britain	Research	London: Perspectives on the Past: the National Gallery and National Portrait Gallery
Week 2: Medieval Britain (c.500-c.1200)		
Invasion, Migration and Settlement		
The Angevin Empire		Lincoln: Roman & Medieval Lincoln
Week 3: Later Medieval Britain (c.1200-c.1500)		
The First English Empire	Citation Practices	
The Hundred Years War and the Wars of the Roses		
Week 4: The Renaissance and the Reformation (c.1500-c.1600)		
Renaissance		
Reformation		
Week 5: The Bloody Union (c.1600-c.1707)		
The Stuarts and the Civil War	Writing workshop	
The Glorious Revolution and the New Union		
Week 6: Revolutions (c.1700-c.1900)		
The Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions		
Victorian Britain		
Week 7: Britain at War (c.1900-c.1945)		
The First World War		'Celtic Capitals' or Arnheim
The Second World War		
Week 8: Post-War and Contemporary Britain		
A New Consensus, 1945-c.2000		
Britain Today: Brexit, Popular Culture and a Disunited Kingdom		
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES 2: THEMES AND ISSUES IN BRITAIN PAST AND PRESENT		
Weeks 9-13: Themes: student-led sessions, topics chosen from one of the following: Art and Architecture	Peer Review	

Aspects of Irish, Scottish &/or Welsh history Borders, Borderlands & Frontiers Empires & Imperialism Food & Drink Gender Heritage Industry Heroes & Villains Landscape, Ecology & the Natural World Languages Law Literary Manners, Etiquette, Behaviour & Courtesy Medicine and Health Medievalism – the mis/representation and mis/use of the idea of the middle ages by later people Migration, Immigration & Travel Military Campaigns Monarchy/The Royal Family Music and Cultural Representations Parliament & Representation Perceptions of the Past Poverty & Protest Race and Ethnicity Relations with Europe/other European countries/the USA Science and Engineering Sport and Leisure Transport		

Week 14: Conclusions

Grading Criteria:

Students will deliver <u>one presentation</u> and complete <u>three essays</u> for this course (two shorter papers: one dealing with the period pre-1650, the other on the period post-1650; as well as a research paper based on their presentation).

In addition, credit will be awarded for contributions to class discussions throughout the semester.

<u>Part 1: Two essays (one covering the period pre-1650; one post-1650)</u>
- 6-7 pages each (min. of five secondary sources and one primary source)

<u>Part 2: Research paper + linked Presentation (10-15 minutes)</u>
- 10-12 pages (min. of five secondary sources and three primary sources)

N.B. Plagiarism is the unattributed use of another person's work. This constitutes cheating. If you are quoting another person's words or directly using their ideas, they must be cited. Whether deliberate or not, plagiarism constitutes a serious violation of the Honor Code.

Summary of Assignments

Assignment	Value	Submission Date
Essay 1	20% of the final grade	25 Sept.
Essay 2	20%	16 Oct.
Presentation	15%	To be delivered in weeks 9-13
Essay 3	35%	8 Dec.
Class contributions	10%	

RESEARCH PAPER GRADING RUBRIC

Criteria	Excellent A	Good B	Fair C	Poor D	Fail F
1. Thesis/line of argument	Original, compelling argument sustained throughout the paper.	Effective argument sustained throughout the paper.	Argument made but not sustained throughout the paper.	Poor or patchy argument (i.e. limited engagement with key issues).	Very ineffective argument showing no awareness of important issues.
2. Research **a) use of appropriate primary & secondary sources** **b) correct use of citations & bibliographical references**	Excellent research: integration of a wide range of primary & secondary sources, cited correctly.	Thorough research: use of a good range of primary & secondary sources. Minor errors in referencing.	Fair research (but some use of inappropriate / non- academic sources). Some errors in referencing.	Limited research leading to superficial coverage of subject. Incorrect means of referencing sources.	Inadequate research (i.e. use of inappropriate / non- scholarly sources)
3. Contextual awareness	Detailed knowledge of historical &/or cultural context (awareness of primary & secondary issues).	Clear understanding of primary issues, some grasp of secondary issues.	Uneven coverage of primary issues (some inaccuracies & omissions), little awareness of secondary issues.	Limited awareness of primary issues (numerous inaccuracies & omissions).	No contextual awareness or major inaccuracies and omissions.
4. Presentation (structure and writing style, incl. grammar and spelling)	Exceptional presentation: well written, highly coherent, & logically organised paper which includes a clear introduction / thesis statement & very effective concluding remarks.	Clearly written, effectively structured essay that incorporates a clear thesis statement & useful concluding remarks.	Reasonable paper but with some grammatical & stylistic problems &/or lacking structural clarity (e.g. limited introductory or concluding statements).	Poorly written & ineffectively structured essays: illogical organisation of material, poor grammatical structures & use of colloquialisms).	Very poorly written or very brief answers with extensive grammatical, organisational & presentational errors.

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PRESENTATION GRADING RUBRIC

Criteria	Excellent A	Good B	Fair C	Poor D	Fail F
Length	13-17 mins	>17 mins or 10-13 mins	8-9 mins	6-7 mins	<5 mins
1. Response to question/s posed	Focused and nuanced responses to all questions.	Clear responses to questions posed; few errors or omissions.	Fair response to questions but lacking sustained focus; some factual errors.	Limited engagement with key question/s; several errors of fact and/or interpretation.	No engagement with key questions / major inaccuracies and omissions.
2. Research	Extensive range of high-quality sources used (primary and secondary).	Thorough research: a good range of appropriate sources used.	Some reliance on non-academic / inappropriate sources.	Heavy reliance on inappropriate / non-academic sources.	Very poor choice of sources (e.g. all popular or non- academic works).
3. Handout/ PowerPoint	Informative, clear & imaginative design. Covers key points addressed & sources used. Excellent use of images (where appropriate).	Well structured, informative and clear. Good use of images (where appropriate).	Reasonably structured. Fair use of images (where appropriate).	Poorly structured, disorganised and/or overly brief. Poor use of images.	No supporting materials.
4. Delivery	Extremely coherent, distinctive and imaginative presentation of material.	Engaging and effective presentation of material.	Clear & reasonably assured delivered.	Poor &/or disorganised delivery indicating a lack of preparation.	Very poorly delivered & organised; no effort to engage the audience.
5. Connections made with the course	Effectively links issues under discussion to course themes.	Makes a number of helpful links to course themes.	Occasional connections to course themes	Very limited connections to course themes.	No engagement with wider course themes.
6. Response to class questions	Clear, confident, accurate and articulate responses to questions.	Good responses to questions; shows a clear understanding of important issues.	Fair responses but showing a limited grasp of wider themes or specific issues.	Poor responses showing only a very limited grasp of major issues.	Answers indicate no understanding of key issues.

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CLASS PARTICIPATION RUBRIC

Grade	Assessment Criteria
A	Consistently excellent contributions to seminar discussion throughout the semester, showing evidence of extensive preparatory reading, a high level of curiosity, engagement with a wide range of subjects, and an excellent understanding of the historical/cultural context of the topics under review.
B	Consistent engagement with seminar discussions throughout the semester displaying a fair level of preparatory reading, a clear interest in the subjects, and a solid grasp of key themes and the historical/cultural context of the topics under review.
C	Inconsistent contributions to seminar discussion over the course of the semester. Limited engagement with the subjects based on cursory preparation. Simplistic understanding of key themes and the historical/ cultural context of the topics under discussion.
D	Very limited engagement with seminar discussions. Poor understanding of key themes and a lack of knowledge of the historical/cultural context of the topics under discussion.
F	No positive engagement with seminar discussion, no evidence of preparatory reading.

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Withdrawal and Attendance policies:

Harlaxton College expects regular class attendance by all students. Students are considered sufficiently mature to appreciate the necessity of regular and punctual attendance, to accept this personal responsibility and to accept the consequences of failure to attend. When absences occur due to emergency or medical reasons, students are expected to notify their instructors of the absence prior to class or to seek the assistance of the College nurse or a member of the Student Experience Team for help in notifying instructors.

Instructors have the authority to grant excused absences for medical, psychological, or personal reasons upon review of appropriate documentation and professional recommendation supporting such a request. In the event of long-term illness, reasonable accommodations will be made to allow a student to complete a course. In these cases, the Dean will need to approve the long term nature of the accommodation.

The Dean of Harlaxton College has the authority to grant excused absences for medical, psychological, or personal reasons.

Each instructor is expected to maintain an attendance policy in keeping with the nature of the Harlaxton program and may consider it in evaluating performance in their courses.

Policy Governing Unexcused Absences:

Harlaxton College operates an attendance policy that is binding on all faculty and students. The number of unexcused absences that are allowed before incurring a penalty is related to the number of times a class meets each week. For courses which meet three times a week, students are allowed a maximum of three unexcused absences during the semester without attracting penalty points. For courses meeting twice a week two such absences are permitted, and for courses meeting once a week a single absence is allowed. Additional unexcused absences will attract a grade penalty.

Policy Governing Excused Absences.

- Excused absences are not given to facilitate student travel independent of College-sponsored travel.
- Students may be permitted to miss class because of participation in academic field trips.
- Instructors must co-ordinate and confirm academic fieldtrips with the Dean, prior to the commencement of the Semester to ensure their inclusion in the Semester timetable.

- Where authorization for an academic fieldtrip is requested after the commencement of the semester, the request must be submitted to the Dean.

The following information is required:
• Purpose and brief description of the official Harlaxton event or academic fieldtrip.
• Dates, location, and times (as applicable).
• Alphabetical list of students involved [Last Name/First Name] along with their student identification number.
If approval is granted:
• Instructors affected will be notified at least one week prior to the class period during which absence is anticipated, or as soon as possible.
• Missed class time due to student participation is to be considered an excused absence.
• The grade of a student may not be lowered in any class due to excused absences.
• It is the student's responsibility - to take the initiative by consulting with their instructors before the absence occurs, and - to do what is required by the instructor to make up all missed assignments and/or examinations.
• Instructors are required to assist students in these occasional situations of excused absences.

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Honor Code:

All students at the University of Evansville agree to the University honor code: *I will neither give nor receive unauthorized aid, nor will I tolerate an environment that condones the use of unauthorized aid.*

AI may be used only with prior permission or direction by the instructor.

• All work submitted in this course must be your own.
• The use of generative AI composition tools, such as those offered by ChatGPT, Google Bard etc. is prohibited in this course except for specific assignments and subject to the instructor's guidelines.
• Work generated by such tools without proper attribution is plagiarism and, thereby, a breach of the University's Plagiarism and Academic Honesty policy.

Disability Policy:

It is the policy and practice of the University of Evansville to make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. Students should contact Disability Services within the Office of Counseling Services by calling 812-488-2663 to seek services or accommodations for disabilities. Written notification to faculty from Disability Services is required for academic accommodations.

The University of Evansville Disability Services office will share the request for academic accommodations with the Academic Support team at Harlaxton College. Staff members at Harlaxton will meet individually with students to discuss needs and provide additional information related to examinations or other assessments.

Students from partner institutions should provide the appropriate letter of accommodation from their institution to the Academic Support team at Harlaxton College.

Non-Discrimination Statement

The University of Evansville expects all members of its community to treat each other with respect and civility. Harassing behaviors directed towards any member of our community will not be tolerated. As part of its commitment to non-discrimination, the University specifically prohibits harassment based on any other characteristics set forth in its nondiscrimination statement as follows: including race, color, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, creed or religion, national origin, age, disability, veteran status and all federally protected groups/classes. Any form of harassment undermines the mission of the University and negatively impacts the University community as a whole.

Prohibited Conduct and Confidentiality

The University of Evansville is committed to fostering an atmosphere free from harassment and discrimination. This commitment includes identifying problems that may lead to sexual harassment and misconduct, as well as other forms of harassment and discrimination, by creating an atmosphere in which the entire University community is sensitive to preventing prohibited conduct. Additionally, the University is committed to providing support and resources to individuals who have experienced prohibited conduct. This commitment includes effectively responding when a student, visitor, guest or program participant is the victim of prohibited conduct.

All campus employees, students, and guests are required to abide by the Title IX and Other Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Policy, the Harassment and Discrimination Policy, and the Consensual Sexual or Romantic Relationships Between Employees and Students Policy. Violation of these policies could result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion for students and termination for employees.

Faculty members at the University of Evansville are considered "Responsible Employees" under the applicable federal guidelines and the University's policies. This means that I am unable to offer you confidentiality if you report any incidence of prohibited conduct to me as defined by Title IX statute. If I am made aware of a violation, I am required to report any known information to the Office of Institutional Equity.

You may choose to report the violation yourself the following ways:
Email: · Annie Sills, Assistant Director of Institutional Equity and Title IX Coordinator: cs175@evansville.edu ·
Keith Gehlhausen, Executive Director of HR and Institutional Equity: kg77@evansville.edu ·
Title IX: titleix@evansville.edu
Phone: 812-288-5261
Online: https://www.evansville.edu/safety/report.cfm

You may also choose to speak with a Confidential Resource. Confidential Resources are required to maintain confidentiality and cannot report violations to the Office of Institutional Equity:

University of Evansville

- Counseling Services: counselingservices@evansville.edu, 812-488-2633
- Health Center Professionals: healthcenter@evansville.edu, 812-488-2033
- University Chaplain: chaplain@evansville.edu, 812-488-5262

Harlaxton College

- College Nurse: Lesley Selby, RGN, +44 01476 403027, lselby@harlaxton.ac.uk
- Counselling Services: counselling@harlaxton.ac.uk