



SYLLABUS

ENGLAND AND ENGLISHNESS

Instructor: Dr Bernard Gowers and Dr Emma Salgård Cunha

Language of Instruction: English

UO Credits: 2

Contact Hours: 26

OXFORD, UNITED KINGDOM

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Goal: to read texts (including images and buildings) related to Englishness, with sensitivity to historical context and relevant conceptual tools.

Challenge: to understand cultural attitudes and social practices associated with notions of Englishness from the Middle Ages to contemporary society.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Improved reading skills of primary texts: having read and understood primary texts through close reading, discussion, and challenge

Improved reading skills of secondary texts: understanding of, sensitivity to, modern scholarship on Englishness and identity.

Improved writing skills via the production of independent written work

Improved presentation skills via the seminar presentation

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Seminar presentation** (15% of total grade): You will work in pairs or threes to produce a 10-minute presentation (including Powerpoint or other visual material) to initiate discussion, in the weeks when the seminar does not include a guest lecturer.
2. **Class contribution** (15% of total grade): this comes from engaged participation in colloquium discussion, drawing on relevant reading.
3. **Term paper** (4000 words) (70% of total grade), exploring in depth any aspect of Englishness, based on texts/images/field trip site assigned for the seminar. The topic for the paper will be developed in individual discussion with the course convenors.

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

The colloquium presentation constitutes 15% of your grade; class contribution 15%; and the term paper 70%. *N.B.: there is no final exam in the class.* Please note the University of Oregon's "grade point value" system effective 9/90, which will be used to grade your work:

A+ = 4.3	B+ = 3.3	C+ = 2.3	D+ = 1.3
A = 4.0	B = 3.0	C = 2.0	D = 1.0
A- = 3.7	B- = 2.7	C- = 1.7	D- = 0.7

Note that a grade of "C" is, according to academic regulations, "satisfactory," while a "B" is "good." That means that a "B" is better than average, better than satisfactory, better than adequate. The average grade, then, is a "C"; a grade of "B" requires effort and accomplishment.

COURSE OUTLINE

This course explores cultural and historical expressions of Englishness from the early middle ages to the twenty-first century. Notions of Englishness are always embedded in specific contexts: there is no ahistorical core to English identity. Yet some themes have been remarkably pervasive through the centuries, even while being reiterated in new circumstances: we will return again and again to questions of language, gender, and relations with non-English communities in the British Isles and beyond. Core texts will range from classics such as *Beowulf* and Shakespeare, to the products of daily life and popular culture, such as diaries and films. The final session will explore contemporary debates, encapsulated in the London 2012 Olympics, and the 2016 referendum on membership in the European Union.

Our location in Oxford is itself a resource for the seminar. The first settlement at Oxford formed part of the English conversion to Christianity; it became an urban centre under the first kings of a united England, and from the twelfth century onwards the university has been at the centre of cultural and intellectual developments. Oxford also has an industrial story as a centre for auto manufacturing.

The course will be taught by a medieval historian (Dr Bernard Gowers, Senior Tutor at Middlebury-CMRS) and a scholar of modern English literature (Dr Emma Salgård Cunha, Assistant Senior Tutor at Middlebury-CMRS), supplemented by guest lectures from other Oxford academics. Field trips to Bath and Arundel will broaden our experiential learning.

Classes:

1. Conquests and identities (5th to 13th centuries)
2. Oxford & England 1: Three Oxfords
3. Oxford & England 2: Keble College & the Oxford Movement
4. Chaucer and Shakespeare
5. Reformation and revolution
6. Tolerance and corruption
7. Landscape and industry
8. Writing the nation(s)
9. Empire and World Wars
10. London 2012 / Brexit

Field trips:

1. Architectural tour of Oxford
2. Bath (Roman Baths, Bath Abbey, eighteenth-century area)
3. Arundel Castle and town

COURSE READINGS

Core texts will be available in a course pack distributed electronically to all students.