



## SYLLABUS

### LITERARY LONDON: Walking on the Wild Side

Instructor: Susie Thomas  
[thomassusie@gmail.com](mailto:thomassusie@gmail.com)

Contact Hours: 45

Language of Instruction: English

Class time:

LONDON, ENGLAND

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

For this course we shall become London flâneurs, walking the streets and interpreting the signs of the city. Students will be encouraged to think historically, in terms of the way London and its representations have changed over time; and theoretically, in terms of the way the city is mediated through different forms (e.g. poetry, novels, essays, film). We will examine London as the centre of Empire, the significance of class in the 19th-century, the changing role of women in the city, the influence of metropolitan culture on modernism, and London's development as a contemporary world city. Walking tours will provide a link between the readings and the geography of London.

In addition to historical context, we shall consider literary style (irony, ambiguity, symbolism), narrative technique (1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person, stream-of-consciousness, limited point-of-view) and poetic devices. By paying close attention to both text and context, I hope that we will achieve a lively appreciation of the works in and of themselves and as part of the cultural life of London.

### INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

There will be short introductory lectures throughout the semester in order to provide the social, historical, and literary background to each text. However, this is primarily a seminar course. **It is vital that everyone comes to class fully prepared, with the reading done and ready to share ideas.** Please note that the texts are of varying lengths, and you are advised to start reading the novels ahead of time.

There will be an opportunity for each student to present a paper for discussion to the rest of the group.

## **METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)**

Class participation: 15%

Presentation (10 minutes) on an aspect of one of the writers: 15%

Essay One (1500 words) a close reading of one text: 20%

Essay Two (2500 words) an analysis of two or more texts: 35%

London Journal reflecting on the 4 walking tours. This may take the form of a written journal or a photo journal with accompanying text: 15%

*The final grade will reflect class participation and attendance*

## **SET TEXTS**

William Blake, London poems (Canvas)

William Wordsworth, "On Westminster Bridge" and passages from *The Prelude* (Canvas)

Charles Dickens, "Night Walks" (Canvas)

Mathew Beaumont, "Introduction: Midnight Streets" in *Night Walking* (Canvas)

Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*

Lauren Elkin, "Introduction", *Flâneuse: Women Walk the City* (Canvas)

Windrush Poems (Canvas)

Jean Rhys, "Let Them Call it Jazz" (Canvas)

Alexander Baron, *The Lowlife*

Xiaolu Guo, *A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers*

Stephen Frears, *Dirty Pretty Things* (screening in class)

Zadie Smith, "The Embassy of Cambodia" (Canvas)

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

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 of this city as text and how the task of finding a form of representation adequate to its radical social heterogeneity has become a defining measure of imaginative ambition.

- Students who complete the course will achieve a good understanding of the individual texts, and be able to relate them to their settings and the social and historical context.
- Students will develop their skills in close analysis of literary devices, and demonstrate their ability to construct a coherent argument using evidence from the text and secondary sources.
- Through class participation and presentations students will gain confidence in articulating their thoughts persuasively, exchanging ideas, and will recognise the value of multiple perspectives.

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

Week One	Introduction to the course. Historical background to Literary London; critical terms and approaches. <a href="#">Bloomsbury Walk: Living in Squares and Loving in Triangles</a>
Week Two	Selected poems of Wordsworth and Blake. Charles Dickens, "Night Walks" Mathew Beaumont, "Introduction: Midnight Streets" in <i>Night Walking</i>
Week Three	<a href="#">A Walk on the Wilde Side</a>
Week Four	Oscar Wilde, <i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i>
Week Five	<a href="#">Dalloway Walk: It's better than walking in the country</a>
Week Six	Virginia Woolf, <i>Mrs Dalloway</i>
Week Seven	Jean Rhys, "Let Them Call it Jazz" Windrush Poems
	<b>DUE: Essay 1</b>
	BREAK
Week Nine	Alexander Baron, <i>The Lowlife</i>
Week Ten	<a href="#">East End Walk: The ghosts of the past</a>
Week Eleven	Xialou Guo, <i>A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers</i>
Week Twelve	Zadie Smith, "The Embassy of Cambodia" <b>DUE: London Journal</b>
Week Thirteen	Screening of <i>Dirty Pretty Things</i>
Week Fourteen	Course Review <b>DUE: Essay 2</b>