With the conclusion of the Second World War, the sun began to set on the British Empire, the largest empire in human history in terms of both geography and population. The progressive dissolution of British colonial powers mandated a broad reimagining of the English nation, as longstanding cultural and political institutions, including the imperial economy, were dismantled. In the decades that followed, tensions about race, class, and gender that had been held in check by two world wars were unleashed, definitively changing England’s image of itself.

Looking at key cultural and political changes that emerged in the wake of empire, this course seeks to introduce students to the network of social and political movements that defined post-imperial English culture. We will begin by looking at the rise of multicultural England as a literary and historical phenomenon, examining primary and secondary documents in the legislative history of colonial emigration, as well as novels by George Lamming and Jean Rhys. We will also consider how the new economics of the welfare state influenced gender relations and class dynamics; looking at historical and literary documents, from British feminism to punk rock, we will consider how the influx of new, largely non-white immigrants into England configured the political movements of the post-imperial moment. This course will conclude with a critical examination of English identity and multiculturalism by looking at Salman Rushdie’s *Satanic Verses* and the race riots of the 1980s. Ultimately, this course attempts to map the ways in which the loss of colonial power demanded new aesthetic forms and the reorganization of English national identity.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

**Short papers:** Students will write three short papers over the course of the semester, each running to about two pages. In these papers, students will be asked to perform close readings on literary or cultural texts, trace a footnote back to its source, and put the primary and secondary text we read together in an argumentative fashion. Each of these papers should run to about two pages.

These responses are each worth 5% of your final grade and will be used to help structure conversation during class.

**Essays:** Over the course of the semester, students will write three essays of 6-8 pages, concentrating on specific historical, thematic, and formal aspects of the issues we will explore. I encourage students to craft paper topics that suit their interests, and they are welcome to draw from and expand upon idea they elaborate in their response papers. These essays, however, must take an argumentative position and put literary and historical material into conversation by using close reading techniques.
Engagement with the Intellectual Community: Students will also be evaluated on their overall contribution to the intellectual community of the class. Your reflections on the common reading, your critical responses to your peers’ writing, and your active participation in class discussions will all factor into your grade for the course. I expect you to come to every single meeting ready to speak your mind about the topic of the day.

GRADING

Short papers (2 pages):
5% - Close reading a literary/cultural text
5% - Follow the footnote exercise
5% - Response paper

Essays (6-8 pages):
20% - First essay
20% - Second essay
25% - Third essay

Participation:
20% - Quality of class involvement, including engagement with the work of your peers.

I assign letter grades to essays. If you turn in a late draft for one of the major essays, your grade on that major essay will drop one letter for each day late. (I consider essays a day late as soon as the deadline passes.) I may grant extensions for extenuating circumstances if you request an extension at least 24 hours prior to the due date.

Absentee Policy
The seminar-style nature of this course makes your presence in class imperative. I expect you to attend all scheduled class meetings, but I understand that conflicts inevitably arise. I allow each student two absences without penalty. Each absence after the second will result in a partial-step drop in your final course grade (e.g. an A- becomes a B+, a B becomes a B-, and so on). If severe illness or an emergency causes you to miss more than two class meetings, it is your responsibility to discuss the situation with me. Missing a scheduled meeting with me also counts as an absence.

Policy on Collaboration
Unlike in some courses, collaboration is highly encouraged in this class. This means that you are welcome to assist each other however you see fit, whether by discussing assignments outside of class, peer-reviewing each other’s work, or by sharing information about research. However, all written work should be entirely your own and must use appropriate citation practices to acknowledge the use of books, articles, websites, lectures, discussions, etc., that you have consulted. Information about properly citing sources can be found at the Harvard Guide to Using Sources: http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do.
Required Texts
Please do your best to use the editions listed here.

The 1950s

**September 11: A New England: Beveridge and the Welfare State**
- Bronstein and Harris, *Empire, State, and Society: Britain Since 1830*: 222-258 (“Winds of Change” and “Building a Welfare State”)

**September 18: Civis Britannicus Sum: National Identity & The Empire Windrush**
- George Lamming, *The Emigrants* (1954) [Part 1]

*Close reading response papers, Group A*

**September 25: Riot: “Keep Britain White”**
- George Lamming, *The Emigrants* (1954) [Parts 2 & 3]

*Close reading response papers, Group B*

→ *First essay due (via email): Monday, September 30 by noon*

The 1960s

**October 2: Rivers of Blood**
- Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1968 [~4 pages]
- Amy Whipple. “Revisiting the “Rivers of Blood” Controversy: Letters to Enoch
Powell.” *Journal of British Studies* Vol. 48, No. 3 (July 2009), pp. 717-735

- Trip to Houghton Library to meet with Susan Halpert, 2:00-3:00.

Close reading response papers, Group C

**October 9: The Politics of Race and Gender**

Follow the Footnote response papers, Group A

**The 1970s**

**October 16: Post-imperial Feminism**
- Caryl Churchill, *Cloud Nine* (1979) (~85 pages)

Follow the Footnote response papers, Group B

**October 23: Class, Gender, and the Politics of Youth Culture**
- Peter Clarke: 283-293 (“Youth”)
- Musical Selections

Follow the Footnote response papers, Group C

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October 30: “Ever get the feeling you’ve been cheated?”: Race & Youth Culture
- Film: *This Is England* (2006)
- Musical selections

⇒ Second essay due (via email): Monday, November 4 by noon

The 1980s

**November 6: Multicultural England?**

Response papers, Group A

**November 13: Riot Reprise**

Response papers, Group B

**November 20: The Rushdie Affair**
- BBC documentary, “The Satanic Verses Affair.”  
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2bqmVrajbjk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2bqmVrajbjk)

Response papers, Group C

**December 4: Final Class workshop**

⇒ Third essay due by December 9.