Course Description:

Examining London as a visual text, we will look at stories about the city told via buildings, public spaces, sculpture, paintings, maps, documents and institutions such as museums. We will focus on the ways in which narratives of London’s and Britain’s history and identity have developed in relation to continuous economic, political and cultural change.

We will see how history is never simply about a dead past, but is always about the identities we fashion and the stories we tell ourselves now.

Our notions of heritage - both nationally and globally – depend upon these often highly distorting uses of the past for the present. It has been remarked that heritage is history without the guilt. A key focus will be how British, English and London heritage – both tangible and intangible – is produced and marketed to domestic and foreign visitors.

Which London, then, features in heritage narratives? Whose narratives are authorised, whose are subordinated? For centuries, London has been a centre of rule, of wealth and privilege, but its inhabitants have also voiced their opposition to central government, to royal or parliamentary power. Londoners have been divided (and joined) by class, nationality and ethnicity, in a way that intersects with the rise and fall of empire.

Each week there will be visits to at least two sites. There will also usually be one classroom session to discuss the issues raised on the visits.

There will be 2-4 readings each week.

Please email me (ak62@soas.ac.uk) if you have any questions! And store my mobile number in case you get lost or run late on the way to meeting points – 07714 380562

Andrew Kennedy
Aims of the Course:

- To enable students to explore and reflect on a city as a visual text, as a set of representations, narrations, expressions of identity, rather than simply as a collection of buildings, dates, or picturesque views.

- To enable students to develop skills of visual analysis which will allow them to explore the potential meanings of architecture, spaces and images in an urban environment.

- To enable students to develop a broad knowledge of issues in the study of heritage.

- To give students the tools to analyse and reflect on the layout and uses of a city as it is affected by social forces and by political power.

- To enable students to develop their research, oral and written skills in order to give expression to cultural and historical analysis and reflection.

Course Outcomes:

By the end of the course, it is envisaged that students will have:

- explored and reflected on London as a visual text;

- developed skills of visual analysis of key buildings, objects and displays;

- developed skills of analysing how heritage narratives are constructed with reference to case studies in London;

- acquired some analytical tools for thinking about how a city’s culture may be shaped by social and political forces;

- produced coursework which shows developing powers of cultural and historical analysis and reflection.

Assessment and Expectations:

**Participation and class activities (20% of marks):** Credit is awarded for active participation and class work; that is to say, answering and asking questions, doing group work and in-class writing, etc. Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and visits. Missing a class or visit in such an abbreviated schedule will result in losing points.

**7-10 minute classroom presentation (15% of marks):**
Examine a building, image, sculpture or space for what it may tell us about how a heritage narrative is constructed. You could use this as an opportunity to explore ideas for your midterm or final papers.

**Mid-term assignment (1500-1700 word essay – 35% of marks) [due Fri 19 April, midnight]:**
Compare and contrast two of the following, as they relate to London: buildings, displays, public spaces, sculptures, images. Analyse the narratives about civic, national and/or personal identity that they present us with. Please use an appropriate range of written and visual sources. *Do not write fewer than 1500 words, incl. bibliography.*
Final written assignment (1300-1500 word essay – 30% of marks) [due Fri 10 May, midnight]: Discuss a heritage case study or studies around one of the following themes: government and the state; representations of modern and contemporary culture; how early modern history is deployed in heritage representations. Please use an appropriate range of written and visual sources, eg a building/display/exhibition, and, where appropriate, selected objects therein. Do not write fewer than 1300 words, excluding bibliography.

GRADING CRITERIA FOR PAPERS (adapted from Sharon Trotter-Martin, Center for Teaching & Learning, Knox College)

Your paper will be evaluated in terms of content, organisation, style and presentation. You should imagine your reader as a “general reader,” someone with a college education but who is unfamiliar or at best, slightly familiar, with the particular text(s) you are referring to. Try to make your paper insightful and enjoyable to read.

- Content: Each paper must have a clear thesis statement that is fully supported with plenty of specific and concrete examples. Additional credit will be given for originality and depth of thought.

- Organisation of your information includes having one major idea per paragraph, the order of sentences in a paragraph, the order of paragraphs in the paper, as well as the use of smooth transitions.

- Use the appropriate writing style (not too formal or too casual) for an assignment.

- Presentation refers to comma usage, spelling, an avoidance of run-ons and sentence fragments, etc, neat layout, stapling.

Grades: Some students believe they should earn at least a B for writing a paper that adheres, more or less, to the assignment’s basic criteria. However, it takes more than that to earn a superior grade, such as an A or a B.

A – An A essay is outstanding in all four areas: content, organisation, style and presentation. It is exceptionally written, well-developed (displaying originality and depth of thought), well-organized, and nearly free of presentational errors. An essay that earns an A is good enough to be used as a textbook example.

B – A paper that earns a B is well-written, well-developed, well-organized, and free of major errors. It has several minor problems and perhaps lacks the originality, depth of thought or complex sentence structure found in an A paper. It demonstrates good writing skills and exceeds the basic requirements of the assignment.

C – A paper that earns a C is competent and has adequately met the assignment’s requirements, but it may have a significant problem (such as the lack of supporting examples or a lack of organization) or several minor ones, such as the need for more transitions, recurring problems with presentation, etc.

D – This is a paper that falls significantly short in many areas. It has recurring and/or significant problems, such as unclear sentence structure, incomplete or run-on sentences, an overall lack of organization, weak paragraph development, or an unclear thesis. A student may also earn a D (or an F) on a paper if the paper’s topic does not adhere to the assignment.

F – An essay that earns an F has serious problems, such as recurring awkward sentence structure that makes it extremely difficult to understand what the writer is saying, significant problems with paragraph development, organisation or presentation, etc. A student may also earn an F if he or she does not properly integrate and cite sources (using MLA Style), constituting plagiarism, or if the paper does not adhere to the assignment itself (e.g., if the assignment calls for a comparison and contrast and the paper simply summarizes the two works).
Note: a classroom assignment will also be evaluated in terms of content, organisation, style and presentation. ‘Style’ means clear, interesting delivery; ‘presentation’ means appropriate use of selected visual material. In terms of content and organisation, clear typewritten notes will be sufficient; the notes should be handed in afterwards. It can explore aspects of your midterm or final topic, but should not simply be an essay read out.

Weekly Classes, Visits and Readings:

Please note: there may occasionally be changes to the schedule; additional readings may also be provided.

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Week 1: Introduction - Ideas of Heritage

How are stories about city and nation shaped? What is the relation between heritage and notions of Britishness, race and class? How may London be ‘packaged’ for the consumption of visitors, workers and residents?

Reading: Gard’ner, “Heritage Protection and Social Inclusion”; Hall on Heritage; Harrison, “What is Heritage?” [general folder, site]; Anderson, introduction to Imagined Communities [all on site]

Further Reading: Porter, London: A Social History; Johnson, Spirit of London [general folder in site]; German and Rees, People’s History of London [general folder]; Brick Lane readings [site].

- **Mon 25 March: Houses of Parliament All-Day Visit. Meet 10.15 outside Westminster tube (see email for more details).**

How does the interior and exterior of the Houses of Lords and Commons contribute to myths concerning the imperial ‘Mother of Parliaments’? How does the British Parliament present itself to citizens and non-citizens nowadays? What is the relation between nationalism and Brexit?

Reading: Quinault, R., ‘Westminster and the Victorian Constitution’ (site); Anderson, introduction to Imagined Communities, plus email reading on Brexit

- **Tues 26 March: 2-4.30pm, British Museum (meet south entrance, Great Russell St)**

What is the connection between national heritage and imperial power? At the British Museum, which describes itself as ‘a museum of the world, for the world’, we will engage with debates about the repatriation of artefacts such as the Greek Parthenon Marbles or the Nigerian Benin Bronzes.

Reading: for a broader view of museums and 19th c. spectacle, see Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex” [site].

For the BM [British Museum], start with [http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2004/jul/24/heritage.art](http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2004/jul/24/heritage.art) - then read criticism of the then BM Director’s approach by O’Neil and Flynn in articles on our site in the British Museum folder. Kwame Opoku raises interesting questions about the Benin Bronzes: [https://www.pambazuka.org/governance/where-are-400-benin-bronzes](https://www.pambazuka.org/governance/where-are-400-benin-bronzes);
Week 2: Myths of Nationhood

- **Mon 1 April**: Monticello class 10.30am-12pm; 1.30pm: Meet Victoria and Albert Museum Cromwell Road entrance (South Kensington tube) – tour Albertopolis – finish 5pm. [joint class with LVT]

How did the South Kensington museums create an imperial spectacle and a new relation to (inter)national heritage for the Victorian masses? In what ways does the museum nowadays engage with that legacy?

**Readings:** Arieff “Reading the Victoria and Albert Museum”; Adams, “The V&A: Empire to Multiculturalism?”; Barringer “The South Kensington museums” [all articles in Albertopolis folder on site].

- **Tues 2 April 2-4.30 pm. Spitalfields and Brick Lane walk. Meet Tower Hill tube.**

What are the tensions between authorised and unofficial or subaltern versions of heritage? In particular, those concerning narratives of nation and race?

**Readings (one of these):**


- **Fri 5 April: 9.30am-12pm, tour of Ladbroke Grove with Carol John (meet Ladbroke Grove tube 9.50am).**

Builds on Brick Lane tour and material on empire - reflections on race, class, migration and gentrification with a long-time Ladbroke Grove resident and SOAS colleague.

[Weekend assignment – visit Migration Museum – present reflections on migration and identity Monday 8 April]

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Week 3: Church and State

**Mon 8 April: 10.30am class, Russell Square; Visit to Tower of London (meet 1.30 Tower Hill tube, visit lasts till 4.30pm).**

**Tues 9 April: Visit to Westminster Abbey (meet 1.30pm west end of Abbey, by giftshop, tour 2pm-4.30pm).**
How are the relationships between Church and State, war and religion, Crown and City manifested in the buildings themselves and in the narratives about them? This week we explore two major medieval sites in the light of these questions. What does it mean to represent Englishness/Britishness through these canonical buildings?


Westminster World Heritage Site Management Plan [site]

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**Week 4: Empire of the Seas: Slavery, Race, Navy and Nationalism**

“If Britain must choose between Europe and the open sea, she must always choose the open sea” (Churchill, whose bust is now reinstated in the Oval Office). How did Britain’s commercial and military domination of the seas shape peoples and identities, the relation between colonizer and colonised, free and enslaved? In what ways might Londoners now live those histories?

**Mon 15 April, Class and Presentations 10.30am-12.30pm Monticello; 2-4.15pm Museum of Docklands**

**Readings:** London, Sugar and Slavery press pack;

**Tues 16 April, 1-4.30pm** Greenwich: Naval Hospital, National Maritime Museum, Queen’s House (Meet Cutty Sark DLR stop, 1pm; visit will last till 4.30 pm)

**Readings:** Old Royal Naval College brochure; Interview with Yinka Shonibare [on googlesite]

*Midterm due Friday 19 April, midnight*

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**Week 5: Power - Political and Military**

**Mon 22 April: 10.30am-12.30pm - Monticello Class and Presentations: Visit: 2-4.30pm – Whitehall and Trafalgar Square [meet Trafalgar Square, in front of National Gallery]**

**Readings:** Matt Leonard, “Whitehall as a Conflict Landscape” – see also Westminster World Heritage Site Management Plan.

**Tues 23 April: 1.30-5pm Imperial War Museum (Lambeth North tube)**

**Reading:** [https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2014/jul/10/imperial-war-museum-reopens-first-world-war](https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2014/jul/10/imperial-war-museum-reopens-first-world-war)

After the past few weeks, how do you view the connections between British heritage narratives and politico-military power?
Week 6: Narratives – can you see the join?

Are the narratives on display this week actually too fragmented to make sense? Can the visitor construct a coherent story out of these juxtaposed times and spaces?

**Mon 29 April: Day Trip to Hampton Court Palace (meet Waterloo, 11am)**

The palace of ‘Enery the 8th and his wives – the ultimate tourist spectacle. But these are essentially two (and a half) palaces, from two (and a half) different periods! How to present them to visitors?

**Readings:** Lipscomb, “Historical Authenticity and Interpretative Strategy at Hampton Court” [site]; Dolman and Thurley articles [site]

**Tues 30 April: 2-4.30pm: Visit to Tate Modern (St Paul’s tube, Central line).**

**Reading:** https://www.ft.com/content/8c961a2c-2192-11e6-9d4d-c11776a5124d

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Week 7: Britain through Art

In the final week, we compare two attempts to make statements about Britishness through art displays.

**Mon 6 May: 10.30am-12.30pm Monticello class; 2-5pm Tate Britain [enter Van Gogh and Britain exhibition 2.30pm]**

**Tues 7 May: 2-4.30pm - The Foundling Museum (near Russell Square)**

**Readings:**

http://www.victorianweb.org/history/orphanages/coram5.html

**[Final paper due: Friday 10 May, midnight]**

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Museum and university resources:

Websites of the Historic Royal Palaces, Museum of London, National Gallery, National Portrait Gallery, Tate and British Museum. Your college library may be able to access Grove Art Online and/or other resources. The Victoria and Albert Museum website has several relevant sections, e.g. on Britain and Africa - http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/v/v-and-a-africa-exploring-hidden-histories/, and on the original foundation of the Museum itself.
http://www.british-history.ac.uk/ “British History Online is the digital library containing some of the core printed primary and secondary sources for the medieval and modern history of the British Isles.”

Women’s History (search also Match Girls; East London Federation of Suffragettes):
http://eastendwomensmuseum.org/
https://historicengland.org.uk/research/inclusive-heritage/womens-history/
http://womenshistorynetwork.org/category/blog/
http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/politics/g8/
http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/blue-plaques/themes/women-pioneers/

LGBTQ History:
http://www.centred.org.uk/content/lgbtq-historical-tour-soho
https://www.york.ac.uk/media/modernstudies/documents/Queer%20is%20here.pdf
https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/exploring-lgbtq-history-at-national-trust-places

Black History:
Keith, “Imagining and engaging difference” [googlesite];
“The Black Cultural Archives” article [googlesite];
http://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/
http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/index.htm

Miscellaneous sites:
http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/crace/index.html (for old maps and city views)
http://www.annaminton.com/Ground_Control.htm

Don’t feel you are limited to these few sources! You are encouraged to develop your own selection of sources. Ask me if you are having difficulties finding material.