

“This enormous Babel of a place” is how Scottish writer Thomas Carlyle described London to his brother in 1824, and today about one-third of the UK’s 9 million migrants reside there. This course invites students to engage virtually with multicultural London as a literary mecca for migrants and immigrants, especially those who came from former imperial colonies to seek a new life in the metropolitan capital. Each student will be trained to use the archivist’s digital tools—mapping, timelines, annotation, etc.-- to compile an online archive/portfolio on a research topic of their interest. We will be visited frequently by guest speakers involved with immigrant writers and populations in London, and look forward to discussing with them their scholarship and practice.

We will start in the early 19th century, in the course of which the population of London increased from one million to seven million, largely due to migration from rural areas. We’ll follow displaced persons into the Victorian period by reading E. Barrett-Browning’s verse-novel *Aurora Leigh* and Dickens’ *Oliver Twist*, as well as “condition-of-England” writing by Mayhew and Booth. In the 1920s, writers such as T. S. Eliot and Virginia Woolf assessed the traumatic impact of world war on the erstwhile imperial capital, and the course will conclude by reading poetry, fiction and films by immigrants (and their descendants) from former colonial territories in South Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa, and--mostly recently – EU countries such as Poland. This London-focused course is designed for students seeking to explore the global dimensions of literary London.

SYLLABUS: [Required Course books available at [Labyrinth Books](#)]

Week 1

2/2/21 Tuesday. Introduction. “Welcome to London”: What is a migrant? What is an immigrant?

2/4 Thursday. Baillie: “London,” (1790); Wordsworth: “Composed Upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802,” “Written in London” (1807); Blake, “The Little Black Boy,” “The Chimney-Sweeper,” “Holy Thursday,” from *Songs of Innocence* (1789); and “Holy Thursday,” “The Chimney-Sweeper,” “London,” from *Songs of Experience* (1794)

Week 2

2/9 Tuesday. Wordsworth: “Tintern Abbey,” (1798); *The Prelude*, Book VII, “Residence in London” (1805)

2/11 Thursday. Barbauld, “Eighteen Hundred and Eleven” (1812); Keats, “To One Who has Been Long in City Pent,” (1816); Byron, *Don Juan* XI-XII (1823)

Week 3

2/16 Tuesday. Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (1838). Bk 1: pp 3-183

2/18 Thursday. Dickens, *Oliver Twist*. Bk 2 + Bk 3, chs 1-4: pp 184-348

Week 4

2/23 Tuesday. Dickens, *Oliver Twist*. Bk 3, chs 5-15 and App. A: pp 348-460

2/25 Thursday. Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor* (1856—excerpts); Charles Booth’s London: <https://booth.lse.ac.uk/>

Week 5

- 3/1 Monday. PROJECT #1A or #1B: all posts must be up on blog by 6pm (in your time zone).**
 3/2 Tuesday. Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh* (1856). Bks 1-V: pp. 5-184
 3/4 Thursday. Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh*. Bks VI-IX: pp. 185-325

Week 6

- 3/9 Tuesday. Zangwill, [Children of the Ghetto](#) (1892). Proem, Chs 1-12 (Glossary follows ch 25)
 3/11 Thursday. Zangwill, [Children of the Ghetto](#). Chs. 13-25
 Visit from [Dr. Nadia Valman](#), Prof. of Urban Literature, Queen Mary, Univ. of London

Week 7

3/16 NO CLASS

- 3/18 Thursday. Eliot, *The Waste Land* (1922)

Week 8

- 3/23 Tuesday. Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) pp. 1-93 (to “dissolved in the air.”)
 3/25 Thursday. Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* pp. 93-194 (from “Indeed it was—”)
 Visit from [Mr. Kolbassia Haoussou](#), Activist and Filmmaker

Week 9

- 3/30 Tuesday. Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners* (1956)
 4/1 Thursday. McQueen, *Small Axe* (2020)

Week 10

- 4/5 Monday. PROJECT #2—Text and Context. Post by 6pm (in your time zone).**
 4/6 Tuesday. Evaristo, *The Emperor’s Babe* (2001) pp.1-127
 4/8 Thursday. Evaristo, *The Emperor’s Babe* pp.128-253
 Visit from Ms. Zrinka Bralo, [Migrants Organise](#)

Week 11

- 4/13 Tuesday. Ali, *Brick Lane* (2004)
 Visit from Ms. Julie Begum, Community Activist
 4/15 Thursday. Ali, *Brick Lane*

Week 12

- 4/20 Tuesday. Smith, *NW* (2012)
 Visit from Mr. Nimesh Shukla, novelist, screenwriter, podcaster
 4/22 Thursday. Smith, *NW*

Week 13

- Monday 4/23 PROJECT #3 – Author Portfolio, Components 1-4.
 Post by 6pm (in your time zone).**
 4/27 Presentations and Reflections
**May 5 (DEAN’S DATE): Project #3—Author Portfolio, Component 5.
 Post on course blog by 6pm EASTERN TIME.**

Course Requirements:

There are 3 graded PROJECTS, and you will also be assessed on the basis of class participation. ***NB: Please post them to the course blog on or before the deadline. (Detailed project guidelines will be provided.)*** Except for the Dean's Date deadline (6pm ET), all deadline times apply to your time zone.

PROJECT #1. Mapping London. (25%)

Please choose EITHER 1A or 1B. Write three (3) posts of 350-500 words each for the course blog. You may post any time up to and including the due date.

1A. **Romantic London**. Due 3/1/21 by 6pm.

OR 1B. **London Low Life**. Due 3/1/21 by 6pm.

PROJECT #2. Text and Context. (25%)

Due 4/5/21 by 6pm. 750-1000 words, in addition to the text analyzed.

PROJECT #3. Author Portfolio. (40%)

Components 1-4 can be posted any time up to and including 4/23/21 by 6pm.

Component 5—the essay (1500-2000 words)—must be posted by Weds. May 5 (Dean's Date) by 6pm EASTERN TIME.

Seminar Participation (10%), including occasional posts and comments.

Background reading (optional):

Stephen Inwood, *A History of London* (1998)

Peter Ackroyd, *London: the Biography* (2003)

Roy Porter, *London, A Social History* (1994)

Clair Wills, *Lovers and Strangers: An Immigrant History of Post-war Britain* (2018)

Panikos Panayi, *An Immigration History of Britain: Multicultural Racism since 1800* (2016)