Literature and Place: London Calling
London, England Study Abroad, Summer 2015

English 162
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Course description:

“When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life.”
-Samuel Johnson

What richer city landscape and culture to inspire writing than London-town? This city where Shakespeare held court. William Blake’s on-again, off-again muse. Dickens’s social burden yet undying love. The city to spawn Sherlock Holmes, Dracula, and James Bond. It is a city of many guises, dominant across many historical eras, but still it remains the city, the place called London. In this writing-based, thematic, course, we will immerse ourselves in the “place” of London as we walk its physical, temporal, and cultural landscape. We’ll dive into relevant writings across genres, exploring the London locales that inspired these works or where the writer lived or his or her frequent haunts. We will also delve into some of the principal music inspired by or situated in the city of London. In the past fifty years, in fact, music more than anything has captured the sense of London in its time and place – songs from the likes of the Beatles to the Clash, the Sex Pistols, Elvis Costello, and, most recently, Adele, Amy Winehouse, and P.J. Harvey. Other writers considered in this course include Sarah Kane, Harold Pinter, Jez Butterworth, and Edward Bond. Ultimately through our study, experience, and imagining, each student will write his or her own sense of London, its place, its mystery, its secrets, its nightmares and dreams.

Weekly blogs:

Each week you will explore the city with the class and on your own. Focusing on the space around you, you will post informal blogs about the city based on brief prompts found on the syllabus. As you explore these new spaces pay attention to the architecture, to the traditional function of the space, to how individuals inhabit the space.

Suggestions: Take photos and/or video of each location. (5%)

Journals:

You will keep a journal of informal writings consisting of random thoughts, sights, sounds, and observations from your day-to-day experiences in London. The specifics of your journaling will help supply you with the foundation for your larger writing assignments. (5%)
Writing assignments:

1) **Creative (first draft):** Based on in class writing, discussion, and your initial experience in London you will produce your own piece of creative writing that attempts to capture the rush, disorientation and anxiety of navigating a new city. This writing may take the form of a short story, series of poems, or a short play. Whatever form the writing takes, it will take place in London, so in order to develop the story you must get to know the city, its landmarks, its streets, its pubs, its people and feature them prominently. How does the city of London affect the characters of your story? (20%)

2) **Personal (first draft):** Building off the specificity of your creative assignment, you will focus on a particular landmark or natural edifice (i.e. view of the Thames, Bloomsbury Group’s favorite watering hole: Lamb on the Lamb, Tower Bridge). In order to effectively write this personal essay, you must do research about the landmark or area on which you focus. The research must then be integrated into your personal narrative, as you attempt to make sense of your place in contemporary London alongside its grand history. (20%)

3) **Reflection:** Nearing the end of your stay in London you will begin to reflect on your time in the city. This reflection should continue as you arrive home and put the finishing touches on a reflective essay that takes into account your initial views of and experience in London. Develop a narrative that speaks to what you ultimately take away from the city. (15%)

4) **Final draft of your choosing:** During the class you and a partner (along with me) will conference about and workshop your writing. Based on the comments and critiques from these sessions you will choose either the creative or personal writing and further expand and develop it to submit as a final draft. (15%)

**Attendance and participation:**

This is an immersive and experiential course. Therefore attendance and participation is vital to the overall experience and your overall grade. In order to succeed in this course you must attend all classes, be on time, and be prepared. Being prepared means that you have done the reading, writing, and any additional assignments due for that day’s class. You must also be fully capable of discussing assigned work and collaborating with others. Not all class meetings will take place in a classroom. Many of our meetings will take place at various locations around London. It is your responsibility to arrive at these locations in a timely manner. (25%)

**Grade breakdown:**

Weekly blogs: 5%
Journal: 5%
Creative assignment: 20%
Personal assignment: 20%
Reflection: 15%
Final draft: 10%
Attendance/Participation: 25%
Tentative Schedule

WEEK ONE: An Introduction
7/6 Departure from New York
7/7 Morning: ARRIVAL in London and check-in
   Afternoon: Orientation and welcome dinner
7/8 Morning: FREE
   Afternoon: Londoners excerpt: John Harber
7/9 All day: Excursion
   WATCH PLAY at The National Theatre
   Blog 1: Focus on a restaurant, landmark, street, event that’s caught your eye since arriving. What was it that caught your eye? Does it remind you of home? Why or why not?

WEEK TWO: First Experiences
7/13 Morning: Londoners excerpt: Emily Davis
   Mojo, Jez Butterworth
   Afternoon: Excursion
7/14 Morning: Londoners excerpt: Graig Clark
   Mojo, Jez Butterworth
   Afternoon: LISTEN to and discuss Armed Forces, Elvis Costello
   33 1/3 – Armed Forces excerpt, Franklin Bruno
   Workshop session
   Blog 2: Where did you go this weekend? Focus on one or two particular places. Why did you go there? How did you get there? How did the space of the city influence you physically, mentally and emotionally?
7/15 Morning: Informal discussion at local café or landmark
   Afternoon: Informal discussion at local café or landmark
7/16 All day: Excursion
   WATCH PLAY at The Old Vic
WEEK THREE: Navigating the City

7/20  All day: Excursion

7/21  Morning: Londoners excerpt: Davy Jones
      Blasted, Sarah Kane

      Afternoon: Workshop session

7/22  Morning: Londoners excerpt: Elisabetta de Luca
      Blasted, Sarah Kane

      Afternoon: Londoners excerpt: Smartie
      Workshop session

      Blog 3: It’s been three weeks since you arrived. What has become your favorite place? Is there
      somewhere you have returned to again and again? Why? Describe the physical space for someone
      who has never stood there? What might they hear, smell, feel?

7/23  Morning: Listen to and discuss Back to Black, Amy Winehouse

      Afternoon: Workshop session
      WATCH PLAY at The Royal Court Theatre

WEEK FOUR: Living in London

7/27  Morning: Londoners excerpt: Jo the Geordie and Stacey the Geordie
      Saved, Edward Bond

      Afternoon: Listen to and discuss White Album, The Beatles

7/28  Morning: FREE

      Afternoon: Londoners excerpt: Rinse
      Saved, Edward Bond

      Blog 4: Reflect on your time in London. List the five images that you had in mind of London
      before arriving and five images that come to mind now after nearly a month living in the city.
      What’s changed?

7/29  Morning: Londoners excerpt: Nicola Owen
      Saved, Edward Bond

      Afternoon: Londoners excerpt: Lucy Skilbeck
      Workshop session

7/30  Morning: Informal discussion at local café or landmark

      Afternoon: Informal discussion at local café or landmark
      WATCH PLAY at The Shakespeare Globe
WEEK FIVE: Final Goodbyes

8/3  Londoners excerpt: Ludmila Olszewska
     Final discussions at local café or landmark.

8/4  Londoners excerpt: Kevin Pover
     Final discussions at local café or landmark.

8/5  DEPARTURE
Guidelines for Writing Assignments:

**Format**: All written work, with the exception of in-class writing (which should be neatly handwritten), must be typed, Times New Roman font. Do not use fonts <11 or >12, and do not use fancy or bold fonts. Please use plain, white paper and do double sides whenever possible. Do not place papers in folders; one staple on the upper left-hand corner will do. Do not include a cover/title page. A heading on the top (left justified), which includes your name, the course number, my name, the date, and the assignment (e.g.: Essay #1) is sufficient. The title (**your paper must have one**) follows your heading; it should be centered, but do not **underline**, enclose in “quotation marks,” **italicize**, or **bold** your title. The paper should be double-spaced throughout with 1 inch margins all around. Please number each page (upper right corner) and include your surname (at the upper right corner before the number) of all pages. Print out one copy of your work and take care to save your work to an external drive as you work in case the computer crashes (this is an unacceptable excuse for a late submission).

**Plagiarism** (or academic dishonesty): is to take someone else’s work (published or unpublished, in whole or in part) and submit it as your own. This includes copying ideas found in books, articles, Spark Notes, or on the Internet without giving proper credit (using MLA style parenthetical citations giving author’s name, title, etc), and submitting work which someone else has written for you. It is also unacceptable to submit a paper which you have written for another class without permission from both instructors. Unintentional plagiarism can be avoided by carefully documenting ideas that are not “common knowledge” and by proof reading your work carefully to make sure sources are properly cited. Whether quoting or paraphrasing from sources you must always use MLA style and include a Works Cited page at the end of your paper. All written work, including in-class free writing, must consist of your own ideas and language. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense which will result in the following penalties: **Failure of the given assignment upon first offense and failure of the class upon second offense**. For more information on plagiarism visit www.writingatqueens.com