London Calling: A Creative Writing Seminar

NY DEPARTURE & RETURN DATES:
JULY 10–AUGUST 8, 2014
LONDON, ENGLAND
Professor Morgan Schulz, ENGL 395
(3 Credits)

“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 frequent haunts. We also will delve into some of the significant films and 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 and Blur, Elvis Costello and Robyn Hitchcock, and, most recently, Adele, Amy Winehouse, and P.J. Harvey. Other writers considered in this course include Samuel Pepys, Karl Marx, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Virginia Woolf, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, George Orwell, Somerset Maugham, Dylan Thomas, Graham Greene, Doris Lessing, China Mieville, and Zadie Smith. Ultimately, through our study, experience, and imagining, each student will write his/her own sense of London, its place, its mystery, its secrets, its nightmares and dreams.

To enrich both the personal and writing experience, students will volunteer with Unseen Tours, a nonprofit organization that trains London homeless to be walking tour guides. Students will first go on the Brick Lane Tour, then accompany and assist one of the guides for a day-in-the-life of one of these tours. For the capstone creative experience of the course, students must integrate reportage about and reflection on their experiences, the tour guide, the tourists, the characters they meet, and, of course, themselves. Students also will attend readings supporting local writers and any special events we can organize through libraries, booksellers, and so on.

The culture program includes a welcome and farewell gathering, entrance to the Dickens House and Tower of London, a cruise on the Thames, and entrance to the birthplace of time (Greenwich Median Time, to be exact).

FIND OUT MORE AT OUR INFORMATION SESSIONS ON THESE DATES:

Wednesday, February 19
Wednesday, March 5
Monday, March 24

All sessions will be held during free hour (12:15–1:30 pm) in Kiely Hall, Room 270.

Scholarships are available!

Visit www.qc.cuny.edu/studyabroad for complete program information.