LONDON: SOCIETY AND SPACE 2014

Instructor: Dr. Alastair Owen
Course number: GEOG 110 (also cross-listed as HIST 110 and ANTH 110)

Aims and Objectives
This course focuses on the development of ‘modern’ London (c.1800 to the present day) in order to critically explore a set of wider intellectual issues about the nature of cities and urban ways of life. It takes an interdisciplinary perspective drawing upon a range of ideas and scholarship – including social and cultural history, art history, geography and sociology – central to the broad field of urban studies. Three sets of interrelated themes provide a theoretical focus: modernity and the city; landscapes of power and inequality; and culture, identity and urban space. The three main sections of the course deal with key periods of in the history of modern London:

- ‘London: Capital of Modernity’ examines the ways in which London became a ‘modern’ city in the nineteenth century;
- ‘The Challenge of Modernity: London in the Twentieth Century’ considers London in the turbulent decades that followed the death of Queen Victoria and the creative efforts that metropolitan dwellers employed to deal with the problems of modern cities and seek a better life;
- ‘Postmodern London: Transforming Society and Space’ studies in depth some of the major features of the city in the later-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, focusing on London’s global city characteristics and considers intellectual debates about the so-called transition from modernity to postmodernity and the emergence of postcolonial urbanism.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the course you will have gained a critical understanding of some of the processes that shape cities and experiences of life within them. It is also likely that you will acquire a knowledge and understanding of the history and geography of London that surpasses that of most people who live here! In short, it is hoped this course will significantly enrich your experience of living and studying in one of the world’s most important and exciting cities.

Method of Study
Teaching and learning take place in a number of interconnected ways:

Lectures The ‘backbone’ of the course will comprise of a series of weekly lectures given by Alastair.

Workshops/seminars Most weeks, the lecture will be accompanied by a seminar providing the opportunity to debate the lectures and reading material, and to discuss personal experience of London in a thoughtful and supportive context. Some seminars will involve more active learning, incorporating role play and presentation.

Film viewings We will also watch and discuss several films and television documentaries about the history and geography of London.

Field walks and visits The program will include field walks in central and east London and visits to key museums and archives that relate to the themes of the course.

Private Study Personal success in the course depends upon active engagement with the lectures, seminars and other activities, together with a serious commitment to substantial private study in the form of background reading and involvement in the ongoing experience of life of the city.
Since some learning will take place off site, our schedule will necessarily be more flexible on such occasions (see below). If you have a disability or other impairment that makes it difficult for you to participate in field walks or other visits, please let me know so that I can work out appropriate alternative arrangements or support.

**Instructor Availability**

I am a full time member of faculty in the School of Geography and a deputy dean at Queen Mary University of London and therefore very busy! I’m normally only at the Accent Study Center on Thursdays. I am very happy to meet with students between classes or at lunchtime. Occasionally, it might be possible to organize a meeting with me on a different day of the week. To contact me outside of class times please email a.j.owens@qmul.ac.uk, ensuring that ‘UC 2014’ appears in the email subject field along with the subject of your communication. When we’re out and about doing things in the city – our walks, or visits to museums and archives – you may need to contact me by cell phone: 0776 560 1782. This is my personal cell phone number; please respect this!

**Reading Materials**

*Course Reader*

The literature on London is voluminous. A selection has been made to support your studies from a range of articles, chapters and extracts that relate to the themes of course. These are available on the Lore site

Many of the extracts will be essential reading for seminars and evidence of familiarity with, and critical understanding of, core text readings will be looked for in assessments. Summary lecture notes, additional reference lists and other course related materials will be made available on Lore. In addition to the materials in the reader, it is also anticipated that you will use the resources available in Accent’s own small library. You’ll find a number of key books and films that relate to the course, though the supply is limited. There are also plenty of resources available on-line and you should make use of the University of California Digital Library for downloading journal articles. Further suggestions for reading will be made throughout the course. I can also recommend other libraries where you can find London-related reading and resources (useful for coursework)

*Other recommended reading*

Students seeking a good overview of the history of London may optionally consider purchasing any of the following (often available for less than £5, second hand online):


The following text provides an excellent resource for parts A and B of the course (see below). Although not only focused on London, it integrates theoretical ideas and approaches central to our course with a good range of examples:


The notes in the course reader along with the brief outlines of weekly sessions suggest other reading that would support your learning. Ask me if you want further suggestions or help.
Attendance Policy
It is expected that students will attend all scheduled learning activities including field walks and museum visits. Attendance will be monitored. Under the program rules only 2 absences per course will be permitted.

Classroom Etiquette
Please help me make the class a success by arriving punctually, participating fully and responding enthusiastically! I am happy for you to use laptops, tablets, smartphones etc. in class so long as you are using them for course-related activities. I am also happy for you to make audio recordings of lectures.

Assessment is in three parts:

PART 1: SHORT PAPER (20% OF FINAL GRADE)
Due: 10pm Monday 29 September 2014, Word limit: 800 words
Please submit your paper online via Lore
This first paper will be based on the course field walk ‘City of Pleasure: Gender Commerce and the Making of the West End’ and related lectures on Victorian London. Your answer should address the following prompt:
Examine the impact of the commercial development of nineteenth-century London’s West End on Victorian class and gender identities.

What the Examiner is Looking for:
In grading the essays the examiner will be looking for a response that:
• is well structured and addresses the prompt directly
• incorporates conceptual ideas discussed in lectures and seminars
• incorporates examples drawn from lectures, reading and field walk observations
• is free from grammatical, spelling and factual errors
• is fully referenced (using whatever referencing system you are familiar with)

The Very Best Answers
The very best answers will be those that demonstrate an enthusiastic and critical engagement with the course, coupled with an original and creative response to the prompt that reveals a good grasp of conceptual ideas as well as substantive Feedback: The papers will be graded by the course convenor. A letter grade and written feedback will be provided within 2-4 weeks of submission. With 95 papers to grade (and a full time job) it will take me a little while to get through all of them!

PART 2: EXTENDED PAPER (40% OF FINAL GRADE)
Due: 10pm Wednesday 10 December 2014, Word limit: 2,000 words
Please submit your paper online via Lore
This paper should provide a scholarly analysis of an issue or problem facing contemporary London. You will devise the exact focus and prompt for the paper. I encourage you to think creatively and write about something that interests you personally. However it is essential that:
• the topic relates to closely to the intellectual content of the course and must focus on London
• that it is framed by academic argument and debate, and based on critical analysis and interpretation
• the exact focus is discussed with the course instructor (ideally no later than 27 November 2014)
I will offer further guidance in class and there will be opportunities to discuss your ideas with me on a number of occasions. Our ‘London summit’ in weeks 12 and 13 (20 and 27 November) will provide opportunities to research and debate issues that could become the focus of your paper.

Please note that the paper must not replicate any assessed work submitted for other courses that form part of
the Fall Program.

What the Examiner is looking for:
In grading the essays the examiner will be looking for a response that:
- is well structured and has a clear argument or thesis
- incorporates intellectual/theoretical ideas discussed in lectures and seminars
- incorporates examples drawn from lectures, academic reading and your own critical reflections on London
- includes appropriate analysis and interpretation
- is free from grammatical, spelling and factual errors
- is fully referenced (using whatever referencing system you are familiar with)

The Very Best Answers
The very best answers will be those that demonstrate an enthusiastic and critical engagement with the course, coupled with original and creative analysis and a good grasp of conceptual ideas.

Feedback: The papers will be graded by the course convenor. A letter grade and written feedback will be provided by the end of the semester or in early January.

PART 3: FINAL EXAMINATION (40% OF FINAL GRADE)
Date: Week of 15 December 2014 (room tbc) Duration: 3 hours

Structure of Final Examination
The Final Examination requires students to write TWO essays from a choice of eight questions. It is strongly advised that candidates take the full time period allowed for the examination, plan their essays and provide full responses to the questions.

Scope of Final Examination
The questions will relate to themes covered in the weekly lectures, seminars and other learning sessions and will assess your understanding of key conceptual themes of the course (explored, in addition through your reading and class discussion) as well as knowledge of the histories and geographies of London.

What the Examiner is Looking for:
In grading the essays the examiner will be looking for responses that:
- are well structured and answer the questions in an analytical fashion
- incorporate theoretical ideas discussed in lectures and seminars
- incorporate examples drawn from lectures, reading and your own critical reflections of living in London
- demonstrate an understanding of key debates in academic scholarship on London
- are free from grammatical, spelling and factual errors

Feedback will be provided on examination performance although, given the timing of the assessment, it is unlikely that this feedback and the final grade for the course will be available prior to your return to the US.

Sample examination questions:
1. Illustrating your answer with examples of sites visited on our East End field walk, assess the rationale for and evaluate the success of efforts to address the social and economic problems of Victorian London’s East End.
2. Outline the key economic transformations that occurred in nineteenth-century London and assess whether it is appropriate to label them ‘revolutionary’.
3. Providing examples from different segments of metropolitan society, assess the ways that culture was central to the articulation of class identities in Victorian London.
4. Critically assess how and why nineteenth and early twentieth-century London was shaped by British imperialism.
5. Explain why Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City ideas seemed so attractive to Londoners in the early twentieth century.
6. The changing roles and experiences of metropolitan women provide an insight into London’s modernity in the 1920s and 1930s. Discuss.
7. ‘In spite of the brash commercialism of some parts the West End in the 1960s, the culture of ‘Swinging London’ was both socially inclusive and radical’. Using examples, discuss this statement.
8. Focusing your answer on the past 30 years, critically assess the consequences of London’s development as a ‘global city’ on its class, ethnic and occupational structures.
9. ‘Cultural identity in contemporary London is both hybrid and contested’. Using examples, critically assess this statement.
10. ‘While the culture-led regeneration of London’s South Bank has created an attractive new urban public space for middle-class consumers and tourists, this has been at the expense of poor and working-class residents who have been marginalised and excluded from processes of urban renewal’. Drawing upon examples of sites visited on our South Bank walk, critically assess this view.

Course Outline and Weekly Schedule

PART A. London: Capital of Modernity
The first part of the course, London: Capital of Modernity, considers London in the nineteenth century. It traces some of the complex economic, social and cultural transformations that reshaped the landscapes of London as well as experiences and meanings of metropolitan life. It also introduces some of the key conceptual themes of the course, exploring in particular the idea of ‘modernity’.
In recent years urbanists have become particularly interested in the theme of ‘modernity’ and the ‘modern city’. As Ogborn (1999) notes, the word ‘modern’ can refer to many different things: to something which is new; to ‘progress’; to a destruction of previous ways of life. In short, modernity is about the way in which historical change is experienced. It requires a sense of time - of the past, the present and the future - but equally it involves a transformation of space - places and landscapes undergo change and new geographies replace old ones.
Understanding the ways in which these ‘modern’ transformations have been experienced and represented in London is a major preoccupation of this part of the course. We look at London’s emergence as a modern city in the nineteenth century, and consider the dramatic demographic, social and economic changes of the Victorian era and the divisions and inequalities that they created. We consider the cultural life of the city and how culture became an arena of production for new kinds of identity.
We also examine the relationships between gender and modernity focusing on women’s roles in reshaping an increasingly commercial city. Finally, we look at how modern London was shaped by its connections to other places: through overseas trade and commerce and through its status as heart of the British empire.

Week One, London: Society and Space – An Introduction Thursday 4 September 2014
Lecture (Accent): Modernity and city life
Key topics: Urban ways of life Modernity and the City

Week Two, Monster city: economic and social change in Victorian London Thursday 11 September 2014
Key topics: The growth Victorian London, Victorian London’s economy, Class and inequality, social investigation and the city

Week Three, City of pleasure: gender, commerce and the making of the West End Thursday 18 Sept. 2014
Field walk (off site): City of pleasure: gender, commerce and the making of the West End
Key topics: Gender ideology, space and the built environment, London’s consumer and imperial landscapes;
Part B. The Challenge of Modernity: London in the Twentieth Century

This second part of the course considers London in the turbulent decades that followed the death of Queen Victoria through to the 1970s. It examines London’s continued expansion as well as the impacts of social change, war and technology on the city. At a conceptual level the aim is to consider some of the problems and anxieties that London’s modern condition posed. This period of ‘later modernity’ was characterized on the one hand by a renewed faith in the ‘modern’ and especially the idea of progress, through the application of new technologies and rational forms of knowledge to urban life (such as in the arenas of transport and planning); and on the other, by an anxiety and ambivalence towards the dramatic changes that were taking place. It was arguably in this period that anti-urban sentiment reached its zenith and when alternative ways of life began to be imagined. The poor living conditions and seeming moral disorder of the city, coupled with the horrors of war and the economic and political decline of Britain, tested Londoners’ faith in the modern ‘project’. In this section of the course, as well as exploring London’s continued growth and the transport developments that underpinned it, we examine what Marshall Berman has termed the ‘creative destruction’ of modernity - its potential to unsettle and disrupt all that is familiar. We consider alternatives to modern urban ways of life in the form of the garden city movement. We look at how the metropolis was ravaged by war and then reconstructed and re-envisioned thereafter. A particular focus is on the social and cultural changes that offered alternative ways of life for people living in twentieth-century London, from the changing status of women in the 1920s and 1930s and the concomitant
‘discovery’ of alternative sexualities, to the seemingly hedonistic days of swinging London in the 1960s.

Week Nine, Fin de Siècle London: modernity, suburbanization and the search for alternatives
Thursday 30 October 2014
Lecture (Accent): Fin de Siècle London: modernity, suburbanization and the search for alternatives
Seminar (Accent): Utopian and dystopian urbanism: Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier
Key topics: Documenting the ‘urban problem’, modernity as ‘creative destruction’, urban utopias

Week Ten, London in the jazz age: a city reinvented Thursday 6 November 2014
Lecture (Accent): The decades that changed London: women and the modern metropolis in the interwar Period
Film viewing followed by coursepaper surgery (Accent): Metroland (Sir John Betjeman, BBC, 1973)
Coursework surgery (sign up slots): 1410-1450; 1510-1550; 1610-1730
Key topics: Social and cultural change in interwar London, a jazz city?, changing gender roles and metropolitan life, suburbanisation

Week Eleven, Swinging London: culture, society and space in the 1960s Thursday 13 November 2014
Lecture (Accent): Swinging London: culture, society and space in the 1960s
Film (Accent): The London Nobody Knows, (Dir James Mason, 1967)
Seminar: Sex(uality) and the City
Key topics: Locating swinging London, social and cultural change in the city, radicalism vs commercialism

C. Postmodern London: Transforming Society and Space
This final section of the course studies in depth some of the major features of the city in the later-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. It focuses on London as a global and postcolonial city and considers intellectual debates about the so-called transition from modernity to postmodernity. We look at the role of the City of London as a global financial centre, and explore some of the consequences of this for patterns of social inequality and the reconstruction of the city’s built environment (including processes of gentrification and the remarkable but contested regeneration of London’s riverside districts).
We consider how successive governments and other institutions have attempted to plan and manage the development of London in this global arena and will critically evaluate the Mayor of London’s current strategic plan for the city. We then explore London as a post-colonial city - a product of imperial connections past and present - by examining the geographies of metropolitan multiculturalism. We will discuss the commodification of the city’s multicultural condition in arenas such as food, fashion and music - this raises wider questions about the nature of identity politics in the post-colonial metropolis.
Throughout this section of the course we will also keep a broader eye on the extent to which recent shifts in metropolitan economy, society and culture can no longer be understood through the idea of modernity. A key concern is to think about how London is a ‘postmodern’ city - a theme that has also been at the heart of the work of urban sociologists working on contemporary Californian cities.

Week Twelve, Postcolonial London Thursday 20 November 2014
Lecture (Accent): Postcolonial London: migration, culture and the spaces of identity
Seminar (Accent): The London summit (Part 1): identifying and researching key issues facing contemporary London
Key topics: Postcolonialism and the city, Migrant London, Hybrid cultures: from curry to Carnival; London’s contemporary social and economic challenges: inequality, housing, low pay, environment, mobility and accessibility etc.

Week Thirteen, London as a global city Thursday 27 November 2014
Lecture (Accent): Sexy/greedy: London as a global city
Seminar (Accent): The London summit (Part 2): debating the issues, finding solutions (role play)
Key topics: Theorizing the global city, going global: economic and social changes in 1980s London, social polarization and the global city, gentrification in London; London’s contemporary social and economic challenges: inequality, housing, low pay, environment, mobility and accessibility etc

**Week Fourteen, Whose city? Consumer cultures and public space in contemporary London**
Thursday 4 December 2014
Field walk (off site): Remaking the Southbank: people, place and politics in contemporary London
Key topics: urban regeneration, the politics of place, gentrification, consumption and the city, social exclusion

**Week Fifteen, How was it for you, dear? Conclusion and course review** Thursday 11 December 2014
Lecture (Accent): Conclusion
Seminar (Accent): Course review and preparation for examination

**Week Sixteen, Final Examination** Commencing Monday 15 December 2014
Examination (Accent): exact time, date and location tbc

**Select Bibliography**

*General Accounts of London*

*Nineteenth-Century London*
**Twentieth-Century and Contemporary London**


London also has its own academic journal *The London Journal* [http://www.maneyonline.com/loi/ldn](http://www.maneyonline.com/loi/ldn)

**General texts on cities and urban studies**

John Allen, Doreen Massey, Michael Pryke (eds), *Unsettling Cities* (London: Routledge/Open University, 1999)


Felix Driver, David Gilbert (eds), *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999/2003)

Brian Graham, Catherine Nash (eds), *Modern Historical Geographies* (London: Longman, 1999)


Doreen Massey, John Allen, Steve Pile (eds), *City Worlds* (London: Routledge/Open University, 1999)


**Use of other Resources**: Students are encouraged to make full use of resources available for studying London. As well as materials that can be accessed via Accent or on-line via the University of California Electronic Library, resources for studying London are freely openly available in several London Libraries, including the Holborn Public Library, The Guildhall Library, The Library of the Bishopsgate Institute and the British Library. As you know, London has many excellent Museums. Two worth knowing about:

The Museum of London, 150 London Wall, London, EC2Y 5HN, 020 7600 3699 (close to St. Paul’s, Liverpool Street or Barbican tube stations or the 25 bus route) has a fabulous collection of material on London. Entrance is FREE! The modern galleries (dealing with the period covered by our course) have recently been redisplayed and are essential viewing for anyone with a passion for London.

The Museum of London, Docklands, No. 1 Warehouse, West India Quay Hertsmere Road E14 4AL, 0870 444 3856, Recorded information 0870 444 3857 info@museumindocklands.org.uk (closest DLR stations are West Ferry or West India Quay). Opened in 2002, this fantastic museum has a great collection of material on the history of London as a port. The nineteenth-century galleries are particularly good, examining the growth and decline of the port and dockland areas as well as emphasising London’s global/imperial connections. We will be visiting this museum during the course. Entrance is FREE! www.museumindocklands.org.uk

**Web:** A stunning and ever growing website on Victorian London, compiled by Lee Jackson @VictorianLondon

- (many pages of contemporary sources): http://www.victorianlondon.org/
- Motco’s fantastic collection of London Maps
  http://www.motco.com/map/
- Charles Booth on-line
  http://booth.lse.ac.uk/
- Living in Victorian London (some preliminary results from my own research project!)
  http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/victorianlondon
- Collage: a database of over 20,000 historical images and artwork of London
  http://collage.nhil.com/categories/history.html
- Full text of Booth’s In Darkest England
  http://digital.library.upenn.edu/webbin/gutbook/lookup?num=475
- Moving here (migration experiences)
  www.movinghere.org.uk/
- Exploring twentieth century London
  http://www.20thcenturylondon.org.uk/

There are many more useful websites! Further suggestions are provided in the course reader.

**Instructor Biography:** The course is led by Dr Alastair Owens who is Reader in Geography in the School of Geography at Queen Mary, University of London. Alastair took his BA degree at King’s College, London, followed by a PhD at Queen Mary University of London. He joined the faculty at Queen Mary in 2001 and won the College’s Drapers’ Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2003. He has been teaching on the UC London Fall Program since it commenced in 2002. Alastair’s research examines families, gender and wealth in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain; the material culture of everyday domestic life in Victorian London (with the Museum of London); and, focusing the contemporary period, the ways that people engage with the history of their home (with the Geffrye Museum, London). His research has been supported by grants from a range of funding bodies including the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the Economic and Social Research Council, the British Academy and the Association of Commonwealth Universities. His most recent books include *Gender Inequalities, Households and the Production of Well-Being in Modern Europe* (co-ed, 2010) and *Men, Women and Money: Perspectives on Gender, Wealth and Investment, 1850–1930* (co-ed, 2011). He is one of the editors of the *Journal of Victorian Culture* and the Editor of the *Historical Geography Research Series* for the Historical Geography Research Group of the Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers. Alastair lives in Hackney (in the ‘East End’ of London) with his partner and three children.

See www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/staff/owensa.html @AlastairHackney