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# Writing the City: London

**COURSE DESIGNATOR** LNDN 3217

**LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION** English

**NUMBER OF CREDITS** 3

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course looks at the impact of the city on the craft of creative writing. It explores how various subjects like the river, urban spaces, solitude, ethnicity or particular districts function in London narratives, and examines the role of memory and experience in literary psychogeographic accounts of the metropolis.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course aims to provide a theoretical and practical platform to enable you to develop your understanding of London, and utilize the city as a character in your own creative writing. Through extensive reading and writing practice including rewriting, and an overview of various styles and narrative devices, you will develop your grasp of literary technique and explore and improve your own writing. The course seeks to enable students to 'write the city' for themselves.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course you should be able to:

- Identify and utilize various writing styles and narrative devices;
- Locate and critically evaluate various types of writing about the city of London;
- Communicate effectively about your own writing and provide constructive feedback to others in the class about their writing;
- Gain a deeper understanding of the diversity of London;
- Improve your creative writing skills.

## DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES

Students should demonstrate: responsibility & accountability, independence & interdependence, goal orientation, self-confidence, resilience, appreciation of differences.

## METHODOLOGY

Lecture, workshop, discussion, groupwork, fieldwork, class exercises, weekly writing assignments and analysis of published London authors' work.

The course includes field visits to select London institutions and encourages the use of various archives, theatres, galleries and cultural institutions as well as some religious institutions. Please dress with respect.

## MY EDUCATION

1. Field trip to the Thames (LESSON 3) Details will be given in class
2. Two Interviews with Londoners to be carried out in students own time. Details will be given in class.

## REQUIRED READING AND RESOURCES

A Literary Guide to London, Penguin 2000. A guide book, with walks.

Granta no. 65 (Spring 1999) [this issue, edited by Ian Jack, is devoted to London and is a kind of mini-anthology of contemporary writing about the city

Nick Rennison, Waterstone's Guide to London Writing, 1999

Raymond Williams *The Country and the City* esp. chapters 15, 19, 20, 23, 24, 25 (1973)

James Donald 'Metropolis: the City as Text' in R. Bocoock & K. Thompson (eds) *Social and Cultural Forms of Modernity* (1992)

Burton Pike 'The city as image' in *The Image of the City in Modern Literature* (1981)

Christine Sizemore *A Female Vision of the City : London in the Novels of Five British Women* (1989)

Adams, Anna (ed.) (2003) *London in Poetry and Prose* (London: Enitharmon)

Dickens, C. (1999 edition) *Little Dorrit* (London: Penguin Classics)

Ali, Monica (2003) *Brick Lane* (London: Black Swan Books)

Sinclair, Iain (ed.) (2007) *London, City Disappearances* (London: Penguin)

Waters, S. (2000) *Affinity* (London: Virago)

Sandhu, Sukdev (2007) *Night Haunts-A journey through the London night* (London: Verso)

Brunsdon, Charlotte (2007) *London in Cinema, the Cinematic City since 1945* (London: BFI)

Brande, D. (1981, first published in 1934) *Becoming a Writer*. USA: Penguin Putnam

Cameron, J. (1997) *The Artist's Way*. London: Macmillan

#### ONLINE RESOURCES

Electronic journal, Literary London HYPERLINK "<http://www.literarylondon.org>" [www.literarylondon.org](http://www.literarylondon.org).

London Journal (History of London journal) home page  
<http://ihr.sas.ac.uk/cmh/londonjournal/>

Museum of London - wide-range of resources and links on London history  
<http://www.museum-london.org.uk>

LSE Urban and Metropolitan Research Unit - mainly concerned with contemporary political and economic issues in the city.  
<http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/london/>

Mayor of London and the GLA  
<http://www.london.gov.uk/>

City of London (Includes results of comparative study on London and New York as World Cities and report on the possibilities for a 24 hour city.)  
<http://www.corpoflondon.gov.uk>

BBC London Live: Web site for the BBC local radio station for London - particularly good on London politics and ethnic diversity in the city.  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/londonlive/>

London First: Business-led group promoting London as a sustainable city.  
<http://www.london-first.co.uk>

Southall community web site

<http://www.southall.co.uk>

Pages for annual Black History Month

<http://www.blackbritain.co.uk/documentaries/bhm/>

Official Carnival site - page on history of Carnival

<http://www.nottinghillcarnival.net.uk/>

Ethnic Communities Oral History Project sit

<http://www.hfusc.org.uk/ecohp/info.html/>

## GRADING

### CAPA PROGRAM AND INSTRUCTOR POLICY

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic course depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work and class behavior. This means to gain full attendance you must attend all classes, you must not be late (unless with a valid reason) and you must be respectful of the professor and of other students by not talking/whispering in class when others are talking or presenting. Persistent lateness or lack of attention in class, i.e., reading materials other than the work assigned, may result in a low or zero grade for participation, and possible referral to the CAO. **No electronic equipment will be used in class**, including laptops, phones, ipods, cell phones, etc, unless you have written permission from the Chief Academic Officer prior to the course. If you are caught using any electronic equipment, you may receive a zero grade for participation.

Plagiarism will be dealt with very seriously, and will be referred to the Chief Academic Officer in London. You may receive an F for the course. If all work is not submitted by the end of the program, you will receive an F for the course.

### CLASS PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE

Attendance at all classes is mandated by CAPA; students who miss a class without permission from CAPA's Chief Academic Officer will have their grade for the course lowered. Informed participation is expected in every class, so students must have read the full assignment carefully before coming and be ready to discuss it if called upon. At any meeting there may be a brief, pass-fail two-minute quiz on some utterly obvious fact in the assigned reading. Students will also be asked to complete informal in-class writing assignments on a regular basis, which will require them to demonstrate their familiarity with the assigned materials. Students who repeatedly demonstrate unsatisfactory performance on these quizzes and exercises will be penalized in the participation grade.

### CRITERIA FOR GRADING AND GRADING STANDARDS

Grading Rubric		
A	93+	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90-92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87-89	
B	83-86	
B-	80-82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77-79	
C	73-76	
C-	70-72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.
D+	67-69	
D	60-66	
F	<59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

### GRADING FOR ASSIGNMENTS

Homework Assignments	30%
My Education participation	20%
Personal Presentation of London Walk	10%
Short Story/Creative Non-Fictions	20%
Self Reflective Essay	20%
Overall Grade	100%

## SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Course Topics	
Week 1	<p><b>INTRODUCTION</b>            What is the definition of a modern city?            Assignments given. Go through course syllabus.</p>
Week 2	<p><b>ARRIVAL</b>            What are your expectations of London? Grisly murders, gentlemen detectives, tea and crumpets, eccentric ladies, bowler hats and brolylys, fairytale Royal weddings. Does this London exist? How far does the reality of London fit with your idealised perceptions of London?            Screening: My Fair Lady</p>
Week 3	<p><b>RIVER</b>            What is the importance of a river to a city and in London why have writers, poets and painters been so beguiled and inspired by it?            Field Trip: Thames            Meet at 9.30am or 2pm (depending on your class time) Embankment Station</p>
Week 4	<p><b>SPACE</b>            Parks, Markets, Suburbs. We will take a tour of Lavender Hill and Battersea. Public spaces are a big part of London Life.            Field Trip: Lavender Hill            Meet 9.30 / 2pm Clapham Junction overground station. Under the clock by the shops at the front entrance.            Hand in Assignment 1 on The Thames</p>
Week 5	<p><b>CONGESTION</b>            How are you affected by the congestion in London? Is it possible to be alone, to find your place? How does it make you feel? Restless? Confused? Anxious?            Screening of Sherlock Holmes</p>
Week 6	<p><b>TRAVEL</b>            Homework Assignment 2: Tube Travel Guide—refer to Instruction            The London Underground Map is a design classic and easy to understand, but each station has its own personality and history. We will look at some famous tube stations as well as the popular mottos 'Mind the Gap' and the reputations of the various tube lines.            Assignment 1 returned</p>
Week 7	<p><b>PEOPLE</b>            Hand in Tube assignment 2            What makes a city dweller different? What are his/her concerns?            Be a flaneur. Go and sit in a café and people watch. Observe the place, the people, what happens, what you imagine. Describe it on a postcard and bring this back to the class, where you will read it out</p>
Week 8	<p><b>NEIGHBOURHOOD</b>            When setting a story in a city, what atmosphere and sensory detail must the writer have experienced, seen, touched, smelled and felt? London is not one city, it is many worlds.</p>

	Field Trip: Brick Lane Meet Aldgate East (Whitechapel Art Gallery exit) at 9.30 / 2pm Assignment 2 returned
Week 9	SIGHTS March 18th Presentation of your personal walk
Week 10	MARGINS How do we experience those marginalised from society? The homeless guy outside the tube. The old lady who goes unnoticed in a café. The night cleaners. Stories are everywhere, but as writers we need to get to the complex heart of the city, to discover the Why and the How of the ‘invisible’ citizen. Hand in short story/creative non fiction Screening: Dirty Pretty Things
Week 11	NEVERLAND – NOTTING HILL the changing uses of London landscapes Field Trip: Meet at Bayswater Tube 9.30am/ 2pm Short story/Creative non fiction returned
Week 12	Excess Bring in Souvenirs/found objects Screening Kind Hearts and Coronets
Week 13	Each student will read out two pieces. You will be given tips on public reading and be expected to discuss your process of work focusing on the two pieces you have chosen. No Final exam. Hand in Self Reflective Essay

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular attendance and punctuality are mandatory in order to earn full marks. The final grade will take into consideration preparation required for class (i.e. readings) and participation in class discussions. If you miss any meetings without an excused absence from the on-site director, your final grade will be dropped accordingly. In the case of absences, it is the student’s responsibility to find out what information was given in class including any announcements made.

## UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own, can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

### SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an “F” or “N” for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

### STUDENT CONDUCT

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct and student needs. This information can be found on the Learning Abroad Center website.