

Unit 0

Overview



An introduction to the course

Print version of the *Introduction to Culture Studies (UK & Ireland)* presentation on 20.iv.2017

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1^{er} floréal, an CCXXV de la République

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1 General Organization

General Organization

- Contact details
- Starting and finishing time
- Date for exam
- New 'registration' procedure

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1.1 Contact details

Contact details

- my contact details: (Email address, mobile number: see email)
- your contact details: please write your name on the informal registration list in order to be put on the course mailing list please use [culture] in header of messages sent to me.

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1.2 Starting and finishing time

Starting and finishing time

- "c.t." (cum tempore) vs "s.t." (sine tempore)
- default would be: start at 10:15, go till 11:45
- PLEASE BE PUNCTUAL!!!

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1.3 Date for exam

Date for exam

- I propose to hold the exam:
- in the last week of lectures (27.7.2017)
- during the normal class time (10–12)
- BUT:
- if students prefer, it could be held a week later!

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1.4 REGISTRATION FOR EXAM

REGISTRATION FOR EXAM

- BA students should make sure that they understand the new ‘just turn up’ registration procedure
- all students: please send me an email to let me know whether you are going to be writing the exam, so that I can prepare enough copies of the exam paper

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2 Plan of course

Plan of course (1)

- Wk yyyy-mm-dd Unit Topic
- 01 2017-04-20 00 Organization; theoretical introduction
- 02 2017-04-27 01 Geology
- 03 2017-05-04 02 Geography, climate, settlement
- 04 2017-05-11 03 C1-C5 Roman period
- 05 2017-05-18 04 C5-C10 Anglo-Saxons, Vikings
- 06 2017-05-25 — NO CLASS
- 07 2017-06-01 05 C11-C15 Middle Ages

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Plan of course (2)

- Wk yyyy-mm-dd Unit Topic
- 08 2017-06-08 06 C16 Absolutism and Reformation
- 09 2017-06-15 — NO CLASS
- 10 2017-06-22 07 C17 Parliamentaryism
- 11 2017-06-29 08 C18 Industrial Revolution (1)
- 12 2017-07-06 09 C18 Industrial Revolution (2)
- 13 2017-07-13 09 C19 Imperial Britain
- 14 2017-07-20 10 C20 Post-Imperial Britain
- 15 2017-07-27 — EXAM

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3 Brief theoretical overview

Brief theoretical overview

- Historical or topical orientation
- Central guiding questions
- Main theoretical tools

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3.1 Historical or topical orientation

Historical or topical orientation

- How to organize the material? Historically? Topically?
- Historical orientation better for less advanced courses
- Topical orientation better for more advanced courses
- What kind of course is this one?
- Historical orientation will take precedence; but we’ll be revisiting certain topics from session to session
- cf. the timeline-based tables found at the back of most introductory books on UK / Irish history: topic areas arranged horizontally (in columns), time portrayed vertically
- How many columns? how labelled?
- Look for possible (diagonal) cause-and-effect chains – e.g. social consequences of the Great Plague
- Some “gaps” in the table...e.g.: Britain somewhat deficient in musicians and metaphysicians, but better-endowed with historians and epistemologists.

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3.2 Central guiding questions

Central guiding questions

- What is “special” or “different” about Britain and Ireland compared to the rest of the world?
- How did that specialness or differentness arise, historically?
- Why on earth did evolution (after taking 4 billion years to get there) first become fully conscious of itself in 19th century England (of all places)?
- What contribution have scholars from this part of the world made to the development of materialist philosophy, the scientific method, political liberalism, social utilitarianism?

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3.3 Main theoretical tools

Main theoretical tools

- A materialist theory of culture through time:
- Marxian notion of base and superstructure
 - Base: Forces of production, relations of production
 - Superstructure: State institutions, ideology (including science, philosophy, and art)
- Harris (and Diamond) as an alternative to Marx
- Functionalism (Malinowski) from ethnography and linguistics

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4 Initial exercises, homework

Initial exercises, homework in preparation for next week

- Initial exercises (the first of the weekly worksheets)
- Homework in preparation for next week: a very brief assignment

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4.1 Initial exercises: Worksheet

Initial exercises: Worksheet

- You can get the first weekly worksheet at the following address:
- <http://www.spence.saar.de/courses/culture/questions00/index.html>
- You can also find the weekly worksheets in the coursenotes; for the first week, that would be:
- http://www.spence.saar.de/courses/culture/coursenotes201701/fascicles/fascicle_00.pdf
- The exam will consist entirely of questions from the weekly worksheets, so if you have done all the questions you will have no trouble passing the exam!!

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4.2 Homework in preparation for next week

Homework in preparation for next week

- Download and read the first fascicle of the coursenotes:
- http://www.spence.saar.de/courses/culture/coursenotes201701/fascicles/fascicle_00.pdf
- Revise your knowledge of the geological periods (last 500 million years) – what are the geological periods called in English?
- What are the three main types of rocks (based on how they were formed)?

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