British Studies

(Courses at the Paul Mellon Centre in London)

During the spring term, the Yale-in-London program at the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, located in central London, offers four courses in British studies generally including British history, history of art or architecture, literature, and drama. Students take all four courses offered, and courses taught at the Paul Mellon Centre must be taken for a letter grade. Further information is available on the program’s website. Inquiries may also be directed to yaleinlondon@yale.edu. The application deadline for spring term 2019 is Friday, October 5, 2018. Students will be notified of acceptance within one month of the application deadline. Inquiries about the summer program, described in the Undergraduate Curriculum section, should be directed to the same address. Applications for summer 2019 are due Friday, February 15, 2019.

* BRST 157b, Monuments and Memory: Ways of Remembering in Post-Medieval England 1600-2018  
Roger Bowdler
This course looks at the rise of the public statue, the face of royal commemoration, the ways of honoring military and naval losses, and the rise of private memorials. Concentrating on the post-medieval period, it looks backwards to the ancient traditions of remembering, and ahead to the current revival of interest in public monuments. Visits range from ancient places of sepulture in Wessex to the great shrines of Westminster Abbey and St Paul’s Cathedral, the finest depositories of sculpture in Britain. We look at the cult of the churchyards, and visit Stoke Poges, scene of Thomas Gray’s Elegy in a Country Churchyard (1750). Looking at memorials takes you to many of England’s leading designers and sculptors, from Wren to Lutyens, Grinling Gibbons to C.S. Jagger. Through a combination of site visits and classes, including field trips across Southern England, students study a full range of monuments and explore the English way of death—with life, loyalty, and love never far from center-stage. In so doing, students consider the relationship between the past and present, between heritage and contemporary values, and the negotiation of these sometimes competing concepts.  

* BRST 182b, The Tudors and the English Renaissance, 1509–1603  
Staff
English history between the accession of Henry VIII in 1509 and the death of Elizabeth I in 1603. Political culture and the Reformation; personalities, political and religious structures, and ideas as disseminated in print, literature, and art; the conceptualization of politics, including its expression in public ceremonial and the image of the ruler; the political significance of royal buildings, ceremonies, and iconography.  

* BRST 207b / ENGL 309b / THST 209b, Shakespeare In London Today  
Cynthia Zarin
This course focuses on contemporary theatre productions in London, with emphasis on Shakespeare-on-the-stage. Students attend the theatre each week of the term, attending both traditional productions of Shakespeare, re-interpretations, new plays, and revivals; travel to Stratford and to other venues; read and discuss the plays both before and after the performances; and meet with actors and directors to discuss some of the visited productions. Questions to be considered include: What does the theatre mean to us, today? How has the theatre—and theatre-going—changed over time? How are decisions made about what plays to produce? How do current productions—of Shakespeare and other contemporary plays—address political questions, including questions about race, nationalism, gender identity, and class divisions? Students write six essays during the term and each student is responsible for a presentation on one play. Our ‘text books’ are the Arden Shakespeare series and editions of contemporary plays. Once the current roster 2019 of spring productions are announced, concomitant reading is assigned and the is schedule set.  

* BRST 208b / ENGL 310b, Discovering Literary London  
Cynthia Zarin
Students explore London and write a series of guided themes, four days a week, of about 350-400 words. The prompts include visits to historical and architectural sites, among them Shakespeare’s Globe, The Tower of London, The Imperial War Museum, Bloomsbury, and The National Portrait Gallery, as well as streets and places referred to in British literature, such as The Old Curiosity Shop, Baker Street, Charing Cross and Kings’ Cross Stations, and Brick Lane. Readings are drawn from diverse sources and include poetry, novels, plays, and works of non-fiction: the exemplary readings encourage students to experiment with and engage with tone, style, and subject matter. Writers considered include John Keats, Charles Dickens, Conan Doyle, Henry James, Virginia Woolf, P.L. Travers, Monica Ali, Zadie Smith, and Hanif Kureishi. When possible there will be visits from British writers, who will discuss how the city figures in their work.  

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