

**Black Britain, 1919-2019**  
**HIST GU #####**  
**Undergrad/grad seminar**  
**Fall 2019**

**Sarah Mass**  
[Sm4567@columbia.edu](mailto:Sm4567@columbia.edu)

**4 Points**  
**No prerequisites**

**Catalogue Description:**

This course will explore the past one-hundred years of the black presence in Britain, focusing on the debates around immigration, integration, and resistance in British society. Topics to be covered include Pan-Africanism, gender and sexuality, the Second World War, colonial and post-migration, black radicalism and anti-racism, and the black arts movement. Students will have research opportunities at the Schomburg Center and the Columbia Special Collections. There are no prerequisites for the course, but previous coursework with a focus on modern race, ethnicity, or immigration would be advantageous.

**Full Course Description:**

Does modern Britain have a black history? How do we trace this past, and what does it mean for the future? 2019 marks the centenary of Britain's first urban "race riots"; this course will explore the past one-hundred years of the black presence in Britain, focusing on the debates around immigration, integration, and resistance in British society. Topics to be covered include Pan-Africanism, gender and sexuality, the Second World War, colonial and post-migration, black radicalism and anti-racism, and the black arts movement. Students will have research opportunities at the Schomburg Center and the Columbia Special Collections. There are no prerequisites for the course, but previous coursework with a focus on modern race, ethnicity, or immigration would be advantageous.

The scope of this course is curated, not comprehensive. The assignments, readings, and sets of topics will give students foundational knowledge in a number of debates about the presence of non-white subjects and citizens in modern Britain. Focus will be on higher level academic skills like primary source research and historiographical analysis, all of which will be covered in six "practicums" over the course of the semester: Periodical databases, archives and personal papers; ego documents; ethnographic sources; state documents; and TV and media. Course discussions and writing assignments will lead to a research paper on a topic of the student's choice.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Describe how the black presence in Britain came to be and explain how this diversity influenced debates about identity and belonging over the course of the twentieth century
- Examine why debates about migration and difference intersected with concurrent conversations around gender difference, social citizenship, and colonialism and postcolonialism

- Explore and use different print and online archival sources in modern British history
- Scaffold and produce question-driven historical writing drawn from primary and secondary sources

### **Grading:**

*All written work (except notecards) must be submitted electronically on Courseworks by 11:59pm on the due date. For every day work is late, you will be penalized a third of a letter grade.*

### **Class participation: 20%**

Students are expected to come to every seminar having done the reading, and ready to participate. Participation can take many forms: offering your analysis of the course material, responding to a classmate's comment or question, asking a clarifying question, volunteering to read, or listening actively. I will give you a participation grade halfway through the semester, and then a final grade at the end. If you have any questions about reading for and participating in a humanities class, please talk to me

### **Discussion leading: 10%**

Working alone or in pairs, each student will pre-circulate discussion questions at least once during the semester. This schedule will be finalized the second week of classes

### **Notecards: 15%**

Each week students will turn in a notecard at the beginning of class: on one side, students will write out a passage, detail, or argument from any of the readings that piqued their interest; and on the other, students will write their reaction to this passage/detail/argument (notecards take the place of any reading quizzes)

### **Short writing assignment (primary source response, 1,000-1,500 words): 15%**

After the first unit, students will complete a short analytical essay responding to a primary source of their choice

### **Annotated bibliography (5 secondary sources, 5 primary sources): 15%**

After the third unit, students will conduct a preliminary survey of the sources they will draw on for their final research paper; this survey should describe and evaluate the material in terms of the student's larger research question

### **Research paper (2,800-3,000 words): 25%**

At the end of the semesters, students will complete a substantive paper driven by a question about the narrative and uses of Britain as a nation in "decline" in the twentieth century

### **Readings:**

Kennetta Hammond Perry, *London is the Place for Me: Black Britons, Citizenship, and the Politics of Race*

Kieran Connell, *Black Handsworth: Race in 1980s Britain*

Coursepack

Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (recommended)

### **Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments:**

Week One: Introduction/Syllabus

### **Unit One:**

Week Two: Labour, Empire, and the Race Riots of 1919 [Practicum: Periodical Databases]

Jenkinson, "The 1919 Race Riots in Britain: A Survey"

Evans, "Across the Universe: Racial Violence and the Post-war Crisis in Imperial Britain"

*Daily Mail, Guardian, The Times* race riots coverage

"From Great War to Race Riots" (online source)

Week Three: Global Connections, Local Mixing [Practicum: Archives and Personal Papers]

Marke, *In Troubled Waters*

Bressey and Romain, "Staging race: Florence Mills, celebrity, identity and performance in 1920s Britain"

Lahiri, "Performing identity: colonial migrants, passing and mimicry between the wars" (CP)

### Visit Schomburg

Week Four: The Second World War [Practicum: Ego documents]

Mass Observation June 1939 Directive on Race

<http://www.massobservation.amdigital.co.uk.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/Documents/Images/DirectiveQuestionnaire-1939June1/0>

Webster, *Mixing It*

Rose, "Sex, Citizenship, and the Nation in World War II"

*Short writing assignment due*

## Unit Two: The Empire Comes Home

Week Five: Encounters [Practicum: Ethnographic Sources]

Picture Post Online Archive <http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/pipo/>

Brooke, "Revisiting Southam Street"

Nava, "Sometimes Antagonistic, Sometimes Ardently Sympathetic"

*Available Readings (choose one)*

MacInnes, *Absolute Beginners*

Patterson, *Dark Strangers*

Hall, *Familiar Stranger*

Lamming, *The Emigrants*

Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners*

Huxley, *Back Streets, New Worlds*

Levy, *Small Island*

Braithwaite, *To Sir with Love*

Glass, *London's Newcomers*

Jephcott, *A Troubled Area*

Week Six: Claiming Commonwealth Citizenship [Practicum: State Documents]

Perry, *London is the Place for Me*

Cabinet Papers on Immigration

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/cabinetpapers/themes/immigration.htm>

Week Seven: Racism and Powellism [Practicum: TV and Media]

Media Archive of Central England Archive <https://www.macearchive.org/>

Buettner, "The is Staffordshire not Alabama: Racial Geographies of Commonwealth Immigration in 1960s Britain"

Schaeffer and Nasar, "The White Essential Subject"  
Hirsch, *In the Shadow of Enoch Powell*

### **Unit Three: Multiculturalism and Its Discontents**

Week Eight: The Race Relations Settlement and Multiculturalism

Waters, "Integration or Black Power"

Feldman, "Why the English Like Turbans"

Saggar, "Black participation and the transformation of the 'race issue' in British politics"

Peplow, "'Lynchpin for Success'?: The problematic establishment of the 1965 Race Relations Act and its Conciliation Board"

Runnymede Trust

Week Nine: Resisting the State

Coard, "How the West Indian Child is made Educationally Sub-normal in the British School System"

Gerrard, "The Emergence of Black Supplementary Schools"

Sands-O'Connor, "The Multicultural Education Movement"

Darcus Howe Papers, Columbia Special Collections

Week Ten: Political Blackness and Black Feminism

Hall, "New Ethnicities"

Sivanandan, "From Resistance to Rebellion"

Carby, "White Women Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood"

Mirza, *Black British Feminism*

Week Eleven: Race and Urbanism

Connell, *Black Handsworth*

*Policing the Crisis*

*Annotated bibliography due*

### **Unit Four: Contemporary Black Britain**

Week Twelve: Cultural Production and Consumption

Gilroy, "Black Art and the Problem of Belonging to England"

Hopkinson, "Booker's Prize"

Jackson, "Myth of a Multicultural England in BBC's *Luther*"

Bailey et al, *Shades of Black: Assembling Black Arts in 1980s Britain*

*Return of the Rudeboy*

Week Thirteen: Contemporary Politics

Vernon, "When Stuart Hall was White"

Bhamra, "Brexit, Empire, and Decolonization"

<https://twitter.com/Southall40>

<https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/3771-the-windrush-generation-and-illegal-immigrants-are-both-our-kin>

### **Faculty Statement on Academic Integrity:**

The intellectual venture in which we are all engaged requires of faculty and students alike the highest

level of personal and academic integrity. As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity.

Scholarship, by its very nature, is an iterative process, with ideas and insights building one upon the other. Collaborative scholarship requires the study of other scholars' work, the free discussion of such work, and the explicit acknowledgement of those ideas in any work that inform our own. This exchange of ideas relies upon a mutual trust that sources, opinions, facts, and insights will be properly noted and carefully credited.

In practical terms, this means that, as students, you must be responsible for the full citations of others' ideas in all of your research papers and projects; you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent.

Any breach of this intellectual responsibility is a breach of faith with the rest of our academic community. It undermines our shared intellectual culture, and it cannot be tolerated. Students failing to meet these responsibilities should anticipate being asked to leave Columbia.

The Columbia Center for New Media, Teaching, and Learning defines plagiarism and its consequences at Columbia University:

[ccnmtl.columbia.edu/projects/compass/discipline\\_humanities/documenting.html#plagiarism](http://ccnmtl.columbia.edu/projects/compass/discipline_humanities/documenting.html#plagiarism)

### **GSAS Statement on Academic Integrity:**

Students should be aware that academic dishonesty (for example, plagiarism, cheating on an examination, or dishonesty in dealing with a faculty member or other University official) or the threat of violence or harassment are particularly serious offenses and will be dealt with severely under Dean's Discipline. Graduate students are expected to exhibit the high level of personal and academic integrity and honesty required of all members of an academic community as they engage in scholarly discourse and research. For further information, see the GSAS page on Academic Integrity and Responsible Conduct: <http://gsas.columbia.edu/academic-integrity>

### **Disability-Related Accommodations:**

In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations, students must first be registered with Disability Services (DS). More information on the DS registration process is available online at [www.health.columbia.edu/ods](http://www.health.columbia.edu/ods). Faculty must be notified of registered students' accommodations before exam or other accommodations will be provided. Students who have (or think they may have) a disability are invited to contact Disability Services for a confidential discussion at (212) 854-2388 (Voice/TTY) or by email at [disability@columbia.edu](mailto:disability@columbia.edu).