



LT338 LONDON THROUGH THE EYES OF CHARLES DICKENS

IES Abroad London

DESCRIPTION:

This course embraces literature and social history, introducing students to the works of Charles Dickens and the world in which he wrote. In the nineteenth century, London was the largest city in the world: a place of vastly inflated wealth and shockingly extreme poverty, rife with social problems and crime. Students will examine the importance of London in Dickens's work, the impact his own life experiences had on his fiction and the vast social changes Dickens helped to bring about through the medium of his writing. Students will analyse primary texts that include *Oliver Twist*, *Bleak House*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *Little Dorrit*, and *A Tale of Two Cities*. The course will also look at Dickens's journalistic career and examine texts within their historical context. Students will explore how the author depicted London and Londoners, as well as how the city shaped Dickens's own life and career. In addition, students will discuss similarities between the social problems of nineteenth-century London, and those of the world today. In addition to seminar lectures and discussions, students will also attend field study trips, including but not limited to the Charles Dickens Museum in Bloomsbury (the author's only London home to have survived war, terrorism, and developers), the National Portrait Gallery and walking tours around Dickens's London.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: None

ADDITIONAL COST: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

- Lectures (including PowerPoint projections and other visual materials)
- Seminar discussions
- Student presentations
- Field study trips.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Participation & Conduct - 10%
- Midterm Exam – 30%
- Presentation – 30%
- Final Essay – 30%

Course Element

There are required readings (referenced below) for the course in general. In addition, there are readings provided for all classes, except for those classes which are course-related trips. In the recommended reading section (referenced below), are sources that offer extra scope for students wanting to go deeper into their studies.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Understand the works of Charles Dickens and their contemporary social relevance and importance
- Analyse the social history of London in the 19th Century and its relationship to Charles Dickens's life and work
- Contextualise the relationship between Victorian history and some of the world's social problems today
- Engage the relevant primary and secondary materials necessary to produce a research paper

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Global brilliance begins here.®

Institute for the International Education of Students
Africa | Asia Pacific | Europe | Latin America

Regular class attendance is mandatory. Irregular attendance may result in a lower grade in the course, and/or disciplinary action. The IES Abroad London class attendance policy does not allow for unexcused absences, and grades will be docked one-half letter grade for each such absence. Rare exceptions will be made for the following reasons:

- The student is too sick to attend class. In this instance, the student must call the IES Abroad Centre before class to notify any of the IES Abroad staff. It is not sufficient either to email, send a message with a friend or call the Centre after the class has started.
- A serious illness or death in the immediate family requiring a student to travel home. This requires written approval from the Centre Director before departure.

Arriving more than 10 minutes late to class may count as an unexcused absence. Immigration laws in the UK are extremely strict, and we jeopardize our legal status in hosting students who do not regularly attend class. Students who do not attend class regularly will be reported to the appropriate officials and risk dismissal from the program and deportation from the UK. If a student incurs absences representing 25% of the total class hours, they will be contacted by the Academic Programme Manager (APM) and Centre Director (CD). If these absences are made up exclusively of unexcused non-attendance, this will trigger a disciplinary review. If these absences are made up of excused non-attendance, a meeting will be held to discuss the underlying reasons for lack of attendance, and to discuss ways it can be maintained for the duration of the term. If the 25% threshold is reached due to a mixture of excused and unexcused absences, students will also be asked to attend a meeting to discuss.

CONTENT:

Week	Content	Assignments
Week 1	An Introduction to Dickens and London The background of nineteenth-century London and an introduction to Charles Dickens's life. This class will show how London shaped Dickens's personal history as well as his writing. Works discussed will include <i>Oliver Twist</i> and <i>David Copperfield</i> , as well as Dickens's journalism.	Reading the provided handouts.
Week 2	Charles Dickens's Social Conscience Looking at life in 19th-century London through the lens of Dickens's social conscience and the events in his own life that shaped his beliefs and helped define his causes. This class will include extracts from Dickens's novels and journalism including <i>Nicholas Nickleby</i> , <i>Oliver Twist</i> and <i>The Old Curiosity Shop</i> .	Reading the provided handouts.
Week 3	Children in Dickens's Works Foundlings, illegitimacy, baby farms and child labour, in reality and in fiction. Students will be encouraged to debate the similarities between the conditions in nineteenth-century London and those in the Developing World today. Readings will include <i>Oliver Twist</i> , <i>Bleak House</i> , <i>Great Expectations</i> , <i>Our Mutual Friend</i> , <i>A Tale of Two Cities</i> , <i>A Christmas Carol</i> and Dickens's letters.	Reading the provided handouts.

Week	Content	Assignments
Week 4	Prisons, debt, and debtors In this class, we'll discover the Victorian legal system and the resonance this had in Charles Dickens's own life. This class will focus on Dickens's journalism and fiction including excerpts from <i>Our Mutual Friend</i> and <i>The Old Curiosity Shop</i> .	Reading the provided handouts.
Week 5	Course-Related Trip to the National Portrait Gallery In this class, we will go to one of London's premier galleries to look at the people whose work influenced Dickens, and who were influenced by him. We will also look at one of the gallery's most important works, the 1839 portrait of Dickens by Irish artist Daniel Maclise.	Reading the provided handouts.
Week 6	Sexual Inequality, Marriage and Women's Rights Students will examine the contemporary social situation in London including reading depictions of women in Dickens's works. They will also discover the truth about the real women in his life and how they appear in his writing. Works examined will include extracts from <i>Oliver Twist</i> , <i>Bleak House</i> , <i>A Tale of Two Cities</i> , <i>A Christmas Carol</i> and Dickens's journalism.	Reading the provided handouts.
Additional Class	Course-Related Trip to the Charles Dickens Museum The visit includes a comprehensive tour (guided by Lucinda Hawksley) that details Charles Dickens's life and the books he wrote while living in this house. The museum also houses special exhibitions which may be of interest to students in the course.	This field trip will take place on a Friday, as the Dickens Museum is not open on a Monday.
	Midterm Exam	

Week	Content	Assignments
Week 7	Crime and the policing of London Dickens was very interested in crime, and this class will look at the detective stories he wrote, as well as his journalism about this topic. Works examined will include <i>Oliver Twist</i> , <i>Little Dorrit</i> , <i>Bleak House</i> , <i>David Copperfield</i> and Dickens's letters.	Reading the provided handouts.
Week 8	Course-Related Trip: Walking Dickens's London part 1 On a guided walk, the students will have the chance to explore parts of the city that feature prominently in the texts they are reading, including Gray's Inn, Clerkenwell and Bloomsbury.	
Week 9	The River Thames in Dickens's Work The River Thames is the main artery of London. We will look at what it was like to live on and along the river and how it inspired Dickens's writing, helping him create some of his best-loved – and most terrifying – characters. We will look at excerpts from <i>Our Mutual Friend</i> , <i>The Old Curiosity Shop</i> and Dickens's journalism.	Reading the provided handouts.
Week 10	In sickness and in health The realities of medicine and doctoring in 19th-century London, including the ever-present threat of cholera and infant mortality; as well as the expense of obtaining medical care. This lesson will also look at representations of mental health issues in Dickens's work. We will look at excerpts from <i>Bleak House</i> , <i>Our Mutual Friend</i> , <i>Oliver Twist</i> , <i>Great Expectations</i> and Dickens's letters.	Reading the provided handouts.
Week 11	Dickens as a Travel Writer Most people are unaware that Dickens was also a travel writer, In this class we will look at his two travelogues: <i>American Notes</i> (1842) and <i>Pictures from Italy</i> (1846) as well as his travel journalism.	Reading the provided handouts.

Week	Content	Assignments
Week 12	Course-Related Trip: Walking Dickens's London part 2 On this guided walk, the students will have the chance to explore the areas around Borough and Southwark, looking at places they have read about in Dickens's works.	Final Paper Due

COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

- Walking tour
- National Portrait Gallery
- Charles Dickens Museum

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Dickens, Charles Oliver Twist (London, 1838)
- Dickens, Charles Bleak House (London, 1853)
- Dickens, Charles A Tale of Two Cities (London, 1859)
- Handouts provided throughout the course of Dickens's writings and excerpts from Charles Dickens's journalism as published in Household Words and All The Year Round, as well as Henry Mayhew's non-fictional accounts of nineteenth-century London, London Labour and the London Poor and Jerry White's London in the 19th Century.

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Hawksley, Lucinda, Dickens and Travel (Pen and Sword, 2021)
- Patterson, Michael Voices from Dickens's London (David & Charles, London, 2007)
- Hawksley, Lucinda, Dickens and Christmas (Pen and Sword, 2019)
- Hawksley, Lucinda, Dickens's Artistic Daughter, Katey (Pen and Sword, 2018)
- White, Jerry, London in the Nineteenth Century (Penguin, 2016)