History 322: England to 1689

Introduction to the Course:

England is a country that is small in geographical area, but has played a major role in shaping the course of Western Civilization. Indeed, England has the longest continuing governmental tradition, unbroken by any cataclysmic events, of any country in the world. English governmental traditions are widespread in the world today, as are legal concepts that developed over centuries of struggle and compromise. England also emerged as a major imperial power by the age of Elizabeth and, in the ensuing centuries has played an important role in European affairs. Last, but not least, much of our cultural heritage was transmitted to the New World from Albion's pleasant, green shores.

It should be remembered that England is only one of the cultural entities existing in the British Isles. During the time covered in this course there was a gradual tendency towards English domination of other cultures (especially the Welsh and Scottish peoples). This process culminated in the creation of the Kingdom of Great Britain following the unification of England and Scotland in 1707.

While proper emphasis will be given to political events, we will also give attention to important social and cultural transformations that have given shape to the course of England's history. As a survey course, not all relevant themes can be explored in depth, but it is the intent of the course to provide the student with a good structural foundation of knowledge that will be useful for various academic majors or for further historical study.

Student Expectations:

Students are encouraged to think and express themselves on the problems and the ideas that will be presented. Because of the wide span of history that will be covered in this course, it is absolutely imperative that you keep up with the reading assignments and attend the classroom presentations on a regular basis.

Reading assignments are to be completed before the classroom period. In that education is an interactive process, it is required that all students come prepared, having read both the textbook, as well as the documents.

Attendance will be taken in class. Flagrant absenteeism can result in a lowering of grade. However, you should remember that there is a direct correlation between academic success and participation in university courses.
Required Reading:

The following books needs to be purchased from the bookstore:


In addition, you will be required to read various documents and articles. I will provide you with copies of most of these sources, although there will be several assignment that you will have to get from the web (see Tentative Schedule).

Examinations and Grading:

There will be three midterms (100 points possible for each examination) and a final (150 points) examination. All examinations will be of an essay variety and you will need to bring blue books for all examinations.

Each student will also complete two written assignments based upon the paperbacks we read for the semester. Each of these assignment should be typewritten and approximately five pages (no more than seven) in length. These assignments will be fully explained to you in class at a later date. Each paper will be worth 50 points.

Grading will be on the decade system on a cumulate point basis.

Class Policy on Make-up Examinations:

Students should plan to take examinations at the scheduled time. In case of an emergency (such as illness), you should check with the instructor the following class period. Please remember that it is not fair to other class members not to take examinations because of lack of preparation. You should be reminded of the Honor Code contractual obligation in this regard. Makeup examinations will be given at the end of the semester.

Office Hours:

Office hours will be scheduled on MWF (12:00-12:50). You should feel free to see me about any problem that you might have connected with this course. This is your time, so take advantage of the opportunity!
Tentative Schedule

Reading Schedule for First Exam

29 August   Introduction to Course

1 September. History and Geography of the British Isles
2 September Geography (continued)

7 September Britannia: Celts and Romans
Reading: Strong, 4-10.

9 September Roman Occupation of Britain
Reading: Strong, 11-17.

12 September Roman Britain: Life in Town and Country

14 September Anglo-Saxon Conquest and Consolidation
Reading: Strong, 18-27.

16 September Anglo-Saxon Contributions to English Civilization
Reading: Strong, 28-33.

19 September Anglo-Saxon Cultural Developments
Reading: Strong, 34-41.

21 September Norman Conquest
Reading: Strong, 42-47

23 September England under the Normans
Reading: Strong, 48-62.

26 September Tentative Date for Examination 1

Reading Schedule for the Second Exam

28 September Medieval Revolution in Government
Reading: Strong, 63-69;
History.wisc.eduisommmerville/123/123%20104%20Common%20Law.htm
3 October Magna Carta: Historical Background and Significance
Reading: Strong, 70-75.

5 October Origins of Parliament

7 October Edward I: the Zenith of Medieval Monarchy
Reading: Strong, 84-89.

10 October The Medieval Renaissance and England
Reading: Strong 76-88.
For this lecture, you are also required to take a virtual tour of one of the early Cathedrals, such as Canterbury or York. This assignment will be explained in class.
This site has many different tours of cathedrals has dozens of religious sites including
Cathedrals: http://www.request.org.uk/main/churches/tours/tours.htm

If you choose Canterbury, here is one virtual tour:
http://www.clicksandclicks.com/cant-cathedral-tour.htm

... and here is another:
http://www.request.org.uk/main/churches/tours/canterbury/tour.htm

Or here is York Minster:
http://www.request.org.uk/main/churches/tours/york/tour.htm

12 October Medieval Towns and Industry

For this lecture, you will need to pick one East Anglian town from the given site (below)
and write about what you find. This assignment will be explained in class.
http://users.trytel.com/~tristan/towns/towns.html

14 October Life on the English Manor

17 October The Black Death
Reading: Strong, 103-112
DUE TODAY: Assignment on Hatcher's The Black Death

19 October Strange Death of Medieval England
Reading: Strong, 90-102

21 October Problem of Succession: Lancastrians and Yorkists
Reading: Strong, 113-120; Strong, 128-138

24 October English Culture in the Later Middle Ages
Reading: Strong, 112-127; Strong, 150-159.

26 October Tentative Date for Examination 2
Reading Schedule for the Third Exam

28 October Edward IV and the Revival of Good Government
Reading: Strong, 139-149

31 October The First Tudor
Reading: Strong, 155-163

2 November Henry VIII: the Early Years
Reading: Strong, 164-172

4 November Henry VIII and the Reformation
Reading: Strong, 173-179.

7 November Religious and Economic Change, 1547-1560
Readings: Strong, 180-190.

9 November Reign of Elizabeth: The Early Years
Reading: Strong, 191-197

11 November Elizabeth I: Armada and After
Reading: Strong, 198-212.

14 November Elizabethan Culture and Society
Reading: Strong, 213-219

16 November Tentative Date for Examination 3

Reading Schedule for the Final Exam

18 November Early Stuarts
Reading: Strong, 220-229.

21 November. Charles I and the Origins of the English Revolution

Reading: Strong, 230-243; "Puritan Voices":
http://history.hanover.edu/texts/IPURITANS.html;

28 November Civil War and the Rule of the Saints
Reading: Strong, 250-277;
DUE TODAY: Assignment on Christopher Hill's The World Turned Upside Down.

30 November A Problem of Political Stability: Charles II and James II
Reading: Strong, 278-287.

2 December Glorious Revolution and the Revolutionary Settlement
Reading: Strong, 288-297.
5 December From Renaissance to Classicism: Culture in Early Modern England
Reading: Strong, 244-249

7 December TBA

Final Examination: As Scheduled in the Fall Timetable