The United Kingdom underwent a remarkable transition in the second half of the 20th century. It lost an empire, experienced large-scale immigration from around the world, joined the European Economic Community (now the European Union), and became a global cultural engine. This course examines the history of Britain from the end of the Second World War until recent events including the death of Princess Diana and Brexit. In this course you will study decolonization and its impact on British society, the creation and expansion of the welfare state, the "White Heat" of the "Swinging Sixties," shifting dynamics of class and gender, British popular culture from James Bond to David Bowie to Britpop, Irish and Scottish nationalism, the rise of Margaret Thatcher and neo-liberalism in the 1980s, New Labour in the 1990s, and developments in the new millennium.

Introduction  (Week 1)
- themes in the history of modern Britain
- Britain’s Second World War and its legacies

British Society  (Weeks 2 - 4)
- A class society and a Multicultural Britain?
- A United Kingdom?: England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland
- Work and play; body and soul: histories of work, leisure, private, and religious life

British Culture  (Weeks 5 - 7)
- The Monarchy (Elizabeth and Princess Diana to Harry and Meghan)
- Postwar culture: kitchen-sink drama; James Bond and imperial nostalgia; Swinging London; and postwar fiction
- Culture 1970s-today: Bowie, punk, Britpop; the “Diamond Decade” of the 1980s; “New Britain” of the 1990s; 21st century

British Politics  (Weeks 8 - 10)
- The Postwar Consensus (1945-1970s)
- Thatcher and the 1980s

- 1990s – Blair to Brexit

Brexit Simulation (Week 11)

Conclusion (Week 12)

Assignments

Tutorial Discussions

- Readings TBD

British cultural history essay (2,000 words)

- Choose a film, novel, play, album, artwork, or other cultural creation. Explain the historical context within which it was created, and the ways in which it helps explain certain aspects of modern British History

Brexit simulation

- We will divide the class into different groups in the Brexit debate, and conduct a simulated negotiation session seeking a Brexit agreement/outcome that reflects themes of modern British history we’ve studied this term. More details will be provided during term.

Final Exam