ELIZABETH I AND HER WORLD: GENDER, POWER, AND THE BEGINNINGS OF THE GLOBAL

SEMESTER: SPRING 2023

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Office hours: M 11.00-12.00; W 12.00-1.00; or by appointment
Classes: MW 3.35-4.50, Kenan Labs B125

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The reign of Queen Elizabeth I of England (1558-1603) has long been recognized as a momentous time in the history of her own country and of the world beyond it. This course seeks to explore Elizabeth’s significance through three complementary lenses. The first is the ‘traditional’ perspective on the Virgin Queen, one of the most powerful rulers of her day. But what exactly was power and what did it mean to be powerful in Elizabeth’s world? The second lens is that of gender. How might this aid our understanding of the images that Elizabeth projected and of the ways in which members of the male elites, at home and abroad, reacted to her? The third lens is that of emergent globalization, for Elizabeth’s lifetime coincided with a significant extension of the European reach into other parts of the world - a process in which England played an initially tentative but ultimately significant part. The course is deliberately structured so as to interweave these perspectives: not the political history, then the gender, then the global, but a blended approach that seeks to identify and exploit the synergies between these different but complementary historical approaches. The topics that we shall study include rebellions and plots against Elizabeth; religious conflict; long-distance voyages and patterns of trade; royal portraiture and courtly self-styling; the Spanish Armada in reality and in myth; the Shakespearean theater; popular beliefs; and Mary, Queen of Scots. An important strand of the course is the in-depth study of primary sources, several of them written by or in the name of Elizabeth herself.
AIMS AND OUTCOMES: HOW TO APPROACH THIS COURSE

As noted above, a class such as this is an opportunity to practice certain skills and to develop certain approaches that will be of benefit to you throughout your time at UNC. So, what is the value of this course? In the first place, it will help you to appreciate that people in the past – it does not matter when and where they lived – were every bit as real to one another as we are to ourselves. An appreciation of diversity is a central strand of modern-day values; but it is important to bear in mind that human difference and diversity also reach back in time. The most important lesson to be derived from this class is, therefore, not to assume that people in the past thought and felt and acted like we do; and that studying history is about extending our understanding of the range and depth of human experience.

In terms of the specific skills and aptitudes that you should use the class to develop, they come down to asking yourself various questions:

- Am I developing a sense of sixteenth-century England, and the world beyond it, as a specific place and time that was as real for the people living in it as our world is for us?
- Am I avoiding the shortcut of assuming that the people who feature in this course were basically like me, and that I can therefore explain their perceptions, motivations and actions with reference to my own (historically situated) frames of reference? In other words, am I trying to appreciate how human diversity extends longitudinally through time as well as latitudinally across the modern world?
- Can I see patterns and trends across the span of the course? But am I also avoiding easy generalizations and the reduction of people in the past to stereotypes?
- When I read, both primary sources and modern writings, am I doing so carefully and critically, not just accepting things at face value?
- As I read and think, am I trying to ask myself questions, not just reducing the material to a collection of facts?
- When I study texts, images, and objects from the early modern world, am I thinking about ways of integrating these different types of evidence?
- Am I preparing carefully for classes and contributing actively to them?
- In papers and class discussion, am I articulating and organizing my ideas in a clear and effective way, and am I always trying to base what I say in evidence, not contenting myself with unsupported or general assertions?
- In short, am I developing a sort of self-awareness about what I am reading, learning, discussing and writing – a way of standing back and thinking about the process that complements my close engagement with the specifics of the class’s contents?
COURSE STRUCTURE AND COURSE TEXTS

There are two 75-minute classes per week. Classes will take place on Mondays and Wednesdays between 3.35 and 4.50 in Kenan Labs B125. Check the schedule below carefully for full details.

Required readings for each class are to be found listed in the schedule; these are extremely important, because a major part of our class time will be devoted to discussion of questions and issues arising from the readings. You should read carefully and critically, asking yourself what strikes you as especially significant, and relevant, and what might seem unclear or puzzling. Come to class with these points of significance, questions, and inquiries noted down, so that you have already reviewed the reading carefully before I ask you for comments and observations.

In the class listings below, where a class is described as “Key Sources”, this means that we will be focusing our attention on selected primary sources. Some of these sources will be “unseens” that I bring to the class; all such material will be posted on Sakai. Other sources will be taken from Elizabeth I: Collected Works (see next paragraph).

One of the required purchases for this course is an anthology of primary sources relating to Elizabeth’s reign. This is Elizabeth I: Collected Works, ed. Leah S. Marcus et al. (Chicago, 2000). Although we shall not refer to material in his volume in every class, we shall do so regularly; so, please bring this book to every class.

Secondary works listed in the class readings will partly comprise books that are accessible in e-format through the Library. There will also be chapters that have been scanned and posted on Sakai. The means to access such material will be indicated in each instance in the class schedule below.

I shall, in addition, email details of supplementary readings for those who may wish to pursue a given topic in somewhat greater depth.

There is a foundational secondary text for the course, which you should also buy:

Judith M. Richards, Elizabeth I (Abingdon, 2012). This will supply the basic narrative of Elizabeth's reign.

See also Helen Castor, Elizabeth I (London, 2018). This is the best concise overview of the reign. You are strongly encouraged to read it at the beginning of the semester to provide fundamental initial orientation, on which we can subsequently build.

CLASS FORMAT

The classes will be organized around a mixed format of lecture-style delivery, small-group discussion, discussion in pairs, plenary discussion, and primary source analysis. You should seek to participate actively and regularly, both to contribute to the dynamic of the group and to enhance your own learning.

First and foremost the aim of the classes is to present key themes in the history of Elizabethan England,
both internally and in its engagement with an increasingly ‘global’ world. We will not have the time to cover everything, so the focus will be on selected aspects of the subject, discussed in such a way as to foreground argument construction and use of evidence to substantiate arguments. The classes are therefore designed to be, *inter alia*, demonstrations of the sort of argument-building that you should apply in your written work. It is very important to note that the classes will not minutely track the entire content of the readings that you are assigned, but, rather, complement them, helping you to build up a fuller picture. So you should think about ways of combining and integrating your ideas and notes from the classes and from your reading.

Remember: the main aim of the classes is to encourage active participation. Much of the time we shall be engaged in-depth analysis of various pieces of primary evidence: these will comprise combinations of assigned readings and “unseens”, as noted above. In addition to plenary discussion, much of the time you will be assigned to pairings or small groups; this is to encourage you to articulate and share your analyses effectively, to exchange and challenge views in a dynamic and interactive fashion, to listen carefully, and to revise your ideas, as necessary, in the light of collaborative and constructive discussion and debate.

Each week we shall tackle a particular problem or topic. But you are encouraged and expected to develop a cumulative and comparative understanding as the course progresses. So, it is important, in your reading and class participation, to think about making comparisons and contrasts with what you have already encountered as aids to effective learning.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADED ELEMENTS**

The graded components of this course are:

Two papers, amounting to 12 pages: one of 4 pages; one of 8 pages
Midterm exam
Final exam
Participation in class

The percentage distributions of the graded elements used to arrive at the final grade are:

- Participation in class 10%
- Midterm exam 15%
- Source critique paper 15%
- Main paper 30%
- Final exam 30%

**Participation in class** will be judged according to evidence of satisfactory and consistent preparation, contribution to small-group discussion, and engaged participation in plenary debate. Missing class more than once will adversely affect the grade. The bands for this portion of the overall grade will be:

Outstanding 97+; Excellent 93-96; Very Good 90-92; Good 85-89; Satisfactory 80-84; Adequate 75-79; Below Adequate <70.
The **midterm exam** will be a 60-minute “pre-seen” test in which you will be asked to answer two questions: one on the general content of the course thus far; the second a commentary on one from a selection of short passages taken from the principal primary source texts that we will have studied by that point. **NB: the question paper will be posted on Sakai 24 hours before the scheduled beginning of the exam. You may not bring notes into the exam. Bring a blue book to the exam.**

The **final exam** will last 2 hours 15 minutes and will be an unseen in which you should answer two essay questions from a choice of about ten. One of the questions will be specifically addressed to the main primary texts that we have studied but you are free to draw on them, and indeed on other primary sources that we have discussed, in your responses to other questions.

The **source critique paper** will be a four-page essay analyzing a written primary source, written or other. The purpose of the paper is to consider the usefulness of that source for an understanding of aspects of Elizabethan history. What, for example, are the challenges of interpretation that it poses? What particular features of the period in which it was written does it especially illuminate? What are its imbalances? What particular questions and issues does it throw light on? What questions is it useful to ask of the material? Further details of the sources from which to choose will be posted on Sakai.

The **main paper** will be an eight-page discussion of a problem or issue that you have identified in your work on the course. You are strongly encouraged to frame the title of the paper as a direct question that invites an analytical, rather than a simply descriptive, response. Examples might include:

- **To what extent did England become a ‘global entity’ in Elizabeth I’s reign?**
- **Why was the motif of the Virgin Queen so resonant in later sixteenth-century England?**
- **Were the incipient European global expansion of the later sixteenth century and England’s role in it a continuation of European political competition by other means, or something distinctive and new?**
- **How important was London’s mercantile activity as England’s ‘window’ on the world beyond Europe?**
- **Did Elizabeth I transcend gender norms, exploit them, ignore them, or surrender to them?**
- **To what extent was Elizabeth I’s experience of rulership similar to that of other politically powerful women in the sixteenth century?**
- **Was the Lost Colony doomed to failure?**
- **Who was more ‘unsettled’ by Elizabeth’s religious settlement, Protestants or Catholics?**
- **Why were Elizabeth and her regime so attentive to image?**
- **Was the Spanish Armada actually important?**

You are free to use one of these titles or to devise another. Please feel free to discuss your choice with me.

**Important note:** the bibliography of the main paper must include, in addition to any primary sources consulted, a *minimum* of four single-authored academic books and four articles in scholarly journals and/or chapters in edited collections of papers. These materials must be accessible through the University Library. On no account should you use, and cite, Wiki, websites, books aimed at a popular readership, or any material the scholarly status of which is less than clear. I shall have regard to the content of the bibliography in arriving at the grade.
A further note: you should cite single-authored books in your footnotes and list them in your bibliography as such, not by individual chapters.

For the two papers, the standard university recommendations as to format apply, i.e.

- Double-sided printing if possible
- 12 pt Times New Roman font for main text and bibliography; 10 for footnotes
- 1.5 line spacing of main text, 1 line spacing of footnotes
- Page length includes notes but not bibliography
- One-inch margins

NB: You must use footnotes for your references, NOT in-text citations in parentheses.

**GRADING SCALE**

The grading scale is as follows:

- 93+ A
- 90-92 A-
- 87-89 B+
- 83-86 B
- 80-82 B-
- 77-79 C+
- 73-76 C
- 70-72 C-
- 67-69 D+
- 60-66 D
- 0-59 F

**ATTENDANCE, CLASS ETIQUETTE, AND LAPTOP POLICY**

No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences: 1. Authorized University activities; 2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by Accessibility Resources and Service and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC); or 3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the Office of the Dean of Students, Gender Violence Service Coordinators, and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC). Students are responsible for completing any reading/work due during their absence. If you know in advance that you are going to miss class or have a legitimate excuse for missing class, please discuss the matter with me.

Missing more than one class without a legitimate excuse (e.g. religious holiday, illness) will have a negative impact on your participation grade. Students will be responsible for completing any work due during their absence.
Attendance at classes will be recorded: late arrivals will risk being marked as absent. Please, therefore, arrive promptly for classes. Remember that the University forbids eating and drinking in teaching spaces!

You will not need your laptops or tablets, or equivalent devices, during classes. This will be politely but strictly enforced. So, as a courtesy, please respect this rule. The reason for it is to prioritize active engagement during the classes, not rote note-taking. This is a very important skill that is a fundamental part of university-level study. You may and should, of course, take notes by hand. All cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off during classes.

**LATE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK**

Late written work will be accepted at my discretion, and unjustified lateness in submission will be marked down 2 percentage points for each day the piece is overdue. (For the numerical grading scale, see above.)

**SAKAI**

The posting of course materials on Sakai is an important part of the course, so check it regularly.

Among the materials that will be posted are:
- Primary source readings
- Advice concerning the written assignments
- Advice concerning the exams

**NB: The default location for all postings will be under “Resources”**

**YOUR PROFESSOR**

THE HONOR CODE AND PLAGIARISM

Students are expected to be familiar with and observe the Honor Code, which applies to all classes taught within the University. See http://catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/honor-code/

In particular, you should take very great care not to commit plagiarism. For details, see: https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/plagiarism/

A great deal of plagiaristic work is at least partly a consequence of poor note-taking technique and hurried writing. Give yourself time to read carefully and reflectively. Under no circumstances simply copy out or cut and paste portions of secondary source text – not even a clause or sentence. Think about how you can articulate your ideas and impressions in your own words as you read and take notes; this is in fact an important part of the process of understanding what you are reading. And when you come to write your papers, insulate yourself from reliance on the formulations of your reading; use your notes and don’t have the source books or articles immediately to hand to consult as you write, because it will be easy to fall into a rhythm of looking things up, and this can result in transferring the source’s wording into your own formulations, as if it feels that this is the only way in which the point you are making can possibly be put into words.

Similarly, it is poor paper-writing technique to quote extensively (i.e. with quotation marks) from your secondary sources: this can seem like a lazy way of making someone else do the argumentative work for you. Sequences in papers that amount to ‘collages’ of quotations are never effective. A good rule of thumb is to quote directly only when you intend to disagree with the remark (X argues that “……”, but it is more reasonable to suppose that……).

Quotation from primary source material is another matter, of course: this can be done profitably in order to offer evidence in support of your arguments. Again, however, do not overquote from primary documents: limit quotations to those passages that specifically support the point that you are making.

ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES

UNC Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations for students with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, mental health struggles, chronic medical conditions, temporary disability, or pregnancy complications, all of which can impair student success. See the ARS website for contact and registration information: https://ars.unc.edu/about-ars/contact-us

UNIVERSITY TESTING SERVICES

The College of Arts and Sciences provides a secure, proctored environment in which exams can be taken. The center works with instructors to proctor exams for their undergraduate students who are not registered with ARS and who do not need testing accommodations as provided by ARS. In other words, the Center provides a proctored testing environment for students who are unable to take an exam at the normally scheduled time (with pre-arrangement by your instructor). For more information, visit http://testingcenter.web.unc.edu/
COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: https://caps.unc.edu/ or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

*NB: The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus details, including due dates and test dates. Such changes will be announced as early as possible.*
CAPACITIES WITHIN THE IDEAS CURRICULUM

This course satisfies the following elements of the new IDEAS curriculum:

Engaging the Human Past

In terms of its content and methodology, this course meets the expectations and student learning outcomes for the Engaging the Human Past capacity. Students are expected to acquire an effective understanding of Elizabethan England as a discrete and distinctive historical entity; to assess and participate in historical debates; and to develop skills of primary source analysis, this last forming a very significant element of the content of the classes and assessments. Students are, moreover, encouraged to gain an appreciation of the alterity of the distant past; a fundamental goal is to equip students to understand that human diversity works along a “longitudinal” axis through time as well as laterally across the modern world. Moreover, the chronological span of the course confronts students with the fact that historical alterity does not reduce to a simple then-now, them-us binary: shifting and complex combinations of continuity and change characterize the period in question. Additionally, students perceive that a great deal of the study of a place such as Elizabethan England has immediate analogues with present-day experience – in, for example, the instrumentality of political power; tensions between individual and collective agency; the impacts of demographic change; trans-cultural interaction and religious conflict; gender relations; collective memory; and the complex, shifting relationships between various groups and group identities.

Ways of Knowing

This course also meets the expectations and student learning outcomes for the Ways of Knowing capacity. By confronting students with a historical era very different from their own, this course challenges their assumptions about the premodern and so, by extension, their own world and notions of modernity. Central to this course is the message that it is insufficient to understand Elizabethan England, or any distant human culture, simply with reference to the material circumstances in which people found themselves; one must, instead, concentrate on how historical actors understood their world, and on how their cognitive assumptions and epistemological norms fundamentally differed from our own. In addition, by foregrounding primary source material, the course confronts students with the paucity and unevenness of the evidence at our disposal, and thereby encourages them to develop strategies for overcoming these limitations. The students become aware of the need to exercise historical imagination in tandem with analytical rigor, but how may these be optimally combined, and at what point does imagination divert attention away from actuality? Students are, additionally, made aware of the deceptive allure of over-generalization and essentialism. Finally, the course confronts the challenges of juxtaposing different kinds of evidence – for example, texts and images – and thus the different methodological and analytical strategies that cluster around each type of source. How, if at all, may these be harmonized? And is a unitary, “joined up” understanding of a historical quantity such as Elizabethan England, and by extension any complex society, necessary or desirable?

The requirements with respect to the older curriculum remain HS and WB
CLASS SCHEDULE

Notation of forms of access to the reading
* Title is available through the Library in e-format
# Posted on Sakai

Week 1

Monday 9 January

Orientation

Wednesday 11 January

Introduction to sixteenth-century England

Reading

Week 2

Monday 16 January

NO CLASS: MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

Wednesday 18 January

Elizabeth I’s reign in the round: key events, patterns and themes

Reading
• You should aim to have read as much as possible of Helen Castor, *Elizabeth I* (London, 2018) by this class

Week 3

Monday 23 January

Elizabeth before 1558

Reading
• Judith M. Richards, *Elizabeth I* (Abingdon, 2012), pp. 5-40

Wednesday 25 January

Key sources

Week 4

Monday 30 January

Success and failure in the early years of the reign

Reading
Wednesday 1 February

**Catherine de’ Medici and other contemporary women rulers**

**Week 5**

Monday 6 February

**Consolidation c.1563-c.1570**

**Reading**


Wednesday 8 February

**Key sources**

**Week 6**

Monday 13 February

**NO CLASS: WELL-BEING DAY**

Wednesday 15 February

**Women in Elizabethan England**

**Reading**


**Week 7**

Monday 20 February

**‘Gloriana’: the Virgin Queen and the projection of the royal image**

**Reading**

- Christopher Haigh, *Elizabeth I* (Harlow, 1988), pp. 144-63 #

Wednesday 22 February

**Elizabethan portraiture**

**Reading**

Week 8

Monday 27 February
‘Damned if you do…’: The attitudes of Catholics towards the Elizabethan regime

Reading

Wednesday 1 March
‘…and damned if you don’t’: The hostility of hotter Protestants to the Elizabethan regime

Reading

Week 9

Monday 6 March

Key sources

Wednesday 8 March

MIDTERM EXAM

Week 10

SPRING BREAK

Week 11

Monday 20 March

The Armada in context

Reading
• Judith M. Richards, Elizabeth I (Abingdon, 2012), pp. 118-48

Wednesday 22 March

Key sources

SOURCE CRITIQUE PAPER DUE
Week 12

Monday 27 March

**London and urban culture**

**Reading**


Wednesday 29 March

**England and the wider world**

**Reading**


Week 13

Monday 3 April

**The Insights of Microhistory: Agnes Bowker’s Cat**

**Reading**


Wednesday 5 April

**Visit to Wilson Library**

Week 14

Monday 10 April

**‘All the world’s a stage’**

**The emergence of the Elizabethan theater and its vision of the world**

**Reading**

Wednesday 12 April

The final years: Essex’s ‘rebellion’ and the end of an era

Reading


Week 15

Monday 17 April

The death of a queen

Wednesday 19 April

Key sources

MAIN PAPER DUE

Week 16

Monday 24 April

Review: Can we really know Elizabeth and her world?

Reading


Wednesday 26 April

Paper Return Tutorials (details to be posted on Sakai)

EXAM: TUESDAY, 2 MAY: 4.00-6.15 PM