An introduction to the period

The two-and-a-third centuries of British political history covered by this paper were, for the people who experienced them, difficult, unstable, and profoundly unsettling - for historians, then, they are exciting and challenging. Between 1485 and 1714 the subjects of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales learned to challenge the sanctity and authority of kings and governors. They executed one king and a queen, deposed another monarch, and built a republic; they fought a war in three kingdoms in the seventeenth century, three more against the Dutch Republic, and finally two major European wars against Louis XIV’s France. The medieval polity transformed itself into the modern state, although how, why, and when this transformation happened are controversial questions. The Tudors declared themselves supreme heads and governors of the English Church, and the Protestant Reformation they sponsored destroyed ancient forms of worship and reinforced the coercive power of the state. And yet religion also became a resource for challenging royal authority. The close relationship between confessional faith, royal dynasty, and the acceptable – and unacceptable – exercise of political power set the scene for the ‘intestine’ wars of the seventeenth century.

Central themes

When studying this period keep in mind these key themes, some of which form specific topics in the Reading List, but all of which are implicit throughout the course:

- the relationship of court, privy council, counsel, and parliaments
- the relationship of Whitehall and Westminster to counties, towns, and parishes
- the relationship between England, Scotland, and Ireland
- the relationship of church and state, religion and politics
- the machinery, financing, and personnel of government
- religious and political ideologies and mentalities
- the relationship of political processes to the social structure
- the mediation of politics through public media: pulpit, print, cartoons, ballads
- the connections between politics and culture: art, poetry, theatre, music, ritual
- the impact on domestic affairs of events in Continental Europe and beyond
- the connections between the British Isles and the Atlantic world

Rubrics

1. Paper 4 remit. The paper covers the Tudor-Stuart age, 1485-1714, and is a paper in political and religious history. (Note, however, that the boundary between this paper and Paper 9 is porous, and that the division between ‘political and religious’ and ‘economic and social’ history is often artificial, especially given the recent growth of ‘cultural’ history.)
2. Two sections. The paper is divided into two sections. Section A provides a chronological overview of Early Modern Britain and Ireland between 1485 and 1714, and comprises 15 topics covering the whole period sequentially. Section B, called Themes in Early modern British History, comprises 8 topics that encompass the whole period. Again, the boundaries are often artificial. Essays on the ‘Themes’ in Section B will often have overlaps with material covered in Section A. In the examination, candidates should not feel constrained by boundaries, but should avoid undue repetition. The remit of the topics in Section A has been modified since 2014-15 to encourage candidates to examine the period with reference to and from the perspective of all three kingdoms. Section B no longer contains separate topics on Scotland and Ireland.

3. Exam paper. The exam paper is divided into the same two sections, and candidates are required to answer three questions, including at least one from each section. The exam paper will include questions on each of the 23 topics on the Lecture List. The questions in Section A will provide candidates with the opportunity to display their knowledge of individual countries and kingdoms as well as to discuss them comparatively.

4. What to cover. In your study for Paper 4, you should aim to cover about a century in your chronological work (Section A), typically 1485-1603, 1558-1660, or 1603-1714; and should cover as many topics in Section B as will enable you to answer a question in the exam. Thus, the aim is to acquire a broad grasp of major themes throughout the Tudor-Stuart period, together with more specialist knowledge of part of the period. In marking Section B answers, the examiners will recognize that candidates’ knowledge will not be equally deep for the whole Tudor-Stuart period.

Course Convenor and Moodle site

- The current convenor is Dr Paul Cavill (pc504@cam.ac.uk)
- There is a Moodle website for this paper, where you can find useful information such as lecture handouts.

Reading List and online resources

- You will find the Faculty’s Reading List for this paper on the Faculty and Moodle websites. The current edition was prepared in 2013, and has been updated in 2015, 2018, and 2019. Students are encouraged to recommend good recent publications to the convenor.

- There are many useful internet resources for early modern British history, available via the University Library e-resources site. You may need your Raven password. The most important are:

  JSTOR (journal articles)
  ODNB (Oxford Dictionary of National Biography)
  EEBO (Early English Books Online: pre-1700 printed texts)
  ECCO (Eighteenth-Century Collections Online: 1700-1800 printed texts)
  ESTC (English Short Title Catalogue: bibliography of pre-1800 books)
  BHO (British History Online)
Bibliography of British and Irish History (via Brepolis)
Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707 (www.rps.ac.uk)
*English Historical Documents Online*, vols. IV, Va, Vb, VI, cover our period
Depositions relating to the 1641 rebellion (http://1641.tcd.ie/)

- Note that the journals which contain most articles on early modern British history are:
  
  *English Historical Review*  *Journal of Modern History*
  *Historical Journal*  *Past and Present*
  *Historical Research*  *Transactions of the Royal*
  *Journal of British Studies*  *Historical Society*
  *Journal of Ecclesiastical*  
  *History*

**Places to visit in and around Cambridge relevant to this paper**

- King’s College Chapel
- Gates of Trinity, John’s, and Christ’s Colleges
- Chapels of Trinity, Pembroke, Emmanuel, among others
- Halls of Trinity, St John’s, Christ’s, among others
- Libraries, especially Trinity’s Wren Library, Pepys Library at Magdalene
- Churches, esp. St Botolph’s; St Edward King & Martyr; Great St Mary’s
- The Fitzwilliam Museum – includes many relevant paintings and artefacts
- Cromwell House, Ely
- Ely Cathedral, particularly the defaced Lady Chapel

**The programme of teaching**

- The course is taught through Faculty lectures and classes, and College supervisions. The supervision norm is eight, plus at least one revision supervision in your exam term. Your supervisor will probably expect your weekly essay to be about 2500 words long, to be delivered the day before the supervision.

- The Faculty provides 32-48 hours of lectures per annum for each Part I paper; you should aim to attend 2-3 per week during Michaelmas and Lent Terms for this paper. As with all papers, the lecture cycle is annual, so you will need to attend lectures for this paper both in and outside your supervision term.

- The teaching for this paper takes various forms:
  
  (a) **Core Lectures**: twice weekly in Michaelmas Term
  
  (b) **Document Classes**: weekly in Michaelmas and Lent Terms. These one-hour classes focus on the topics in Section A of the Reading List and therefore correspond directly with those on which you will be writing supervision essays. You should attend several classes relevant to your supervision topics. These classes explore short extracts from primary sources, which will all be uploaded onto Moodle. You are asked to read these in advance and to bring either a copy with you or a laptop by which you can access them.
(c) **Supplementary lecture series**, which explore themes and topics in greater depth than the Core lectures. These take place in the Michaelmas and Lent terms.

(d) **Revision classes** in Easter Term. The classes are aimed at second-year students about to take Part I.

(e) **Supervisions.** Each student will have eight supervisions, arranged by their College Director of Studies. Please contact your DOS about supervisions, not the convenor.

**Prescribed topics**

The Reading List is organised under the following prescribed topics.

**Section A (Chronological): Early Modern Britain and Ireland, 1485–1714**

1. Kingship at the turn of the sixteenth century: Henry VII and James IV 1485-1513
2. Politics and government in the British Isles, c.1509-1547
3. The Henrician Reformation and its repercussions, 1521-1547
4. Crisis and conflict in the British Isles, 1542-1561
5. Securing regimes and eliminating rivals: governance in the British Isles 1558-1587
6. War and succession politics in the British Isles, 1585-1603
7. Reformation and state religion, c. 1559-1603
8. Politics and government, 1603-1640
9. Religion and the church, 1603-1640
10. The Civil Wars, regicide, and the radicals, 1637-1649
11. The Interregnum, Oliver Cromwell, and the republicans, 1649-1660
12. Politics in the reign of Charles II, 1660-1685
13. James VII and II and the Revolution, 1685-1690
14. Parliament, parties, and political culture, 1689-1714
15. The restored church and religious dissent, 1660-1714

**Section B: Themes in Early Modern British History**

16. The three kingdoms and the ‘British problem’
17. Centre and locality: state formation and patterns of governance
18. The culture of power and the power of culture
19. Political ideas: sovereignty, common law, counsel, and constitution
20. Rebellion, resistance and revolt
21. Media and opinion: pulpits and pamphlets, news and censorship
22. Britain, Europe, and Christendom
23. The emergence of the Atlantic Empire

**Class and lecture programme**

**MICHAELMAS TERM**

**Core lectures**

Weeks 1–6
Fridays at 10am and Mondays at 9am

**Document classes: 1485–1603**
- Weeks 2–8
- Tuesdays at 9am, weeks 2–4, 6–8; at 12 noon, week 5 only

**Supplementary lecture series**
1. Dr Harriet Lyon, ‘The politics of memory in early modern Britain’
   - Weeks 5–8
   - Wednesdays at 11am

**LENT TERM**

**Document classes: 1603–1714**
- Weeks 1–8
  - Fridays at 10 am

**Supplementary lecture series**
2. Dr Carys Brown, ‘Religious conformity and nonconformity, 1534–1714’
   - Weeks 1–4
   - Tuesdays at 9am
3. Dr Gabriel Glickman, ‘Politics, religion and revolution, 1660–1714’
   - Weeks 5–8
   - Tuesdays at 9am
4. Dr Daniel Trocmé-Latter, ‘Music in the British Reformations’
   - Weeks 5–8
   - Thursdays at 11am

**EASTER TERM**

**Revision classes (two hours)**

- Weeks 1–4
- Fridays at 9am

Please see the separate document, entitled ‘Class and lecture programme 2019–20’ for more information, including the dates and titles of particular sessions.