**Introducing Britain:**

**Language, Culture, and Society from the Age of Empire to Brexit**

This course enables international students to visit Lancaster for a short period and to engage in an intellectually stimulating and rigorous study abroad experience, without necessarily committing to a full term or year abroad. It helps students to familiarise themselves with the UK, and with the British university education system. The themes of the course are intentionally broad, and are designed to be accessible to students with a wide variety of backgrounds and interests. The central principle of the course is that students learn about the impact of historical developments on the present, with a particular focus on not only reading and hearing about events but visiting sites of importance to the material covered. Students focus on crucial historical events, including:

• the impact of political revolutions in Europe and America on eighteenth-century Britain;  
• the vast social changes accompanying the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century;  
• the effects of the World Wars in the twentieth century on British society and culture;  
• the impact of the end of Britain as a global empire from the 1940s and the subsequent events, including increasing globalisation, that have led Britain to Brexit in the twenty-first century.

The content is designed to be accessible to students who may have little experience of Britain and the British university system, and who may not have English as their first language. Students can choose one of two versions of the course: either 8 ECTS or 6 ECTS (4 or 3 US semester credits). Both versions contain the same curriculum content and teaching timetable; the 8 ECTS version includes a final essay assessment which students complete after the teaching period. This course encourages an enthusiasm for the history, literature, language, and culture of Britain and, more specifically, of the North-West of England, as well as a sense of its past and present.

**Academic Learning Outcomes:**

1. Knowledge of some necessary critical terminology, conventions and literary forms as well as skills in close reading of literary and historical texts;
2. Understanding of a range of literary texts, and a capacity to discuss their significance;
3. Knowledge of the relationships of texts to their various contexts and locations;
4. Understanding of the production, reading, interpretation and evaluation of primary literary and historical texts and secondary criticism;
5. Independent thinking, self-directed study;
6. Scholarly presentation of material in the manner required;
7. Research skills: identifying questions, the structured, systematic acquisition of substantial amounts of information, and its analysis and organized use;
8. Knowledge of some of the relevant scholarly research in the subject (published and ongoing) as an aid to understanding texts;
9. Organization of work and time-management;
10. Problem solving within a small group;
11. The ability to express ideas and knowledge on paper clearly, accurately, and persuasively, in appropriate English;

12. The ability to present ideas and knowledge orally.

# **TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT**

The teaching and assessment on this course introduces students to a range of British university practices. The course integrates teaching and learning with assessment, so that assessment is part of the learning process. Lectures and seminars are the primary means of teaching, supplemented by one-to-one sessions with the tutors and group work sessions. Students learn and are assessed in a variety of ways so that knowledge is gained, skills are developed and strengths rewarded. Teaching and learning methods for this course typically include the following elements:

1. **Independent study**: Students have study time to read the weekly assigned texts (usually extracts), and to prepare coursework. There are various aids provided to facilitate this preparation and help develop independent thought, including a virtual learning environment site (Moodle), and additional guidance from course tutors.
2. **Group work**: Supplementing independent research, students work as a member of a team. This is a standard feature of British university courses. Group work sessions are guided by the course tutors and help to develop the skills necessary for the course assessment.
3. **Lectures**: Around four lectures per week provide essential information, review current scholarly perspectives, offer exemplary approaches or interpretations, and stimulate debate.
4. **Seminars:** These are principally a forum for student-led discussion of the week’s set texts. The seminars help students to assimilate knowledge, develop oral skills and work as a team. They also allow students to explore, question and negotiate views. There are three seminars per week.
5. **Tutorials:** One-to-one sessions with a course tutor.
6. **Film Screenings**. Every week students are presented with the screenings of relevant audio-visual material that link with the week’s thematic concerns.
7. **Field and local trips**. Each week students are based in a different place in the North West of England. All learning activities take place on location. These residential trips also feature guided tours of local sites of interest and complement the materials studied in the lectures and seminars.

The course’s assessment methods relate closely to its teaching and learning objectives. They consist of:

* 1. **Textual Analysis (250–300 words):** A short piece of writing designed to encourage students to develop critical and analytical skills in response to one text from the course.
  2. **Group Presentation**: An assessed small group presentation helps to develop oral communication skills. This also helps develop the students’ group work skills.
  3. **In-class Test:** The course includes a short in-class test. This task tests students’ capacity to think creatively under time constraints, using knowledge from their learning when analysing some short extracts.
  4. **Essay Assignment for those taking 8 ECTS version (1200–1500 words):** Essays typically address open-ended questions involving literary and historical research. There are opportunities here for students to draw on skills already developed in the textual analysis assessment. Students are encouraged to carry out research relevant to the specific task, and to make critical and self-reflective use of the acquired information. In preparation for this assessment, students work on the skills necessary to convey information in a persuasive manner with their tutors and peers.

**Social Events:** The course provides a wide range of extracurricular activities aimed at providing an insight into British culture and introducing students to the North West. An active calendar and team-building social events, designed to fit in with the residential aspect of the course, helps students get to know each other. As well as visiting historically and culturally significant sites we also incorporate location-specific social events, walking in the Lake District and visiting entertainment venues, such as the cinema, in Manchester. Tutors and other staff are available throughout the duration of the trips to help guide students around their new environments.

**Weekly Schedule**

In order to fulfil our overall aims of the course, we have specific weekly topics. These are briefly outlined below (subject to some change depending on lecturer availability):

**Week One: Manchester: ‘Changing Political Structures’**

The course begins in Manchester, where we discuss the changing political structures of Britain and British society. Students examine diverse representations of Britain in the eighteenth century, from celebration of Britain as an emerging colonial power to engagement with European revolutionary ideals. Based in Manchester, the students are able to learn about the developments and social and economic consequences of the Industrial Revolution in Britain, incorporating a visit to a local cotton mill, Quarry Bank Mill in the village of Styal. A day trip to Liverpool allows further investigation of political developments following the two world wars and the impact of Chinese migration into Britain in a new global era.

**Week Two: The Lake District: ‘Culture and Communication’**

This week the course is based in the scenic Lake District, where students read and explore the literary outputs associated with the political, cultural, and social changes learned about in week one. We use a variety of different fiction and non-fiction writing to show how modes of communication in Britain have changed over the past three hundred years. This includes a focus on language and linguistic variation, and how distribution of and access to literature has evolved. Being situated in the Lake District, students study the work and visit the houses of the famous writers William Wordsworth and John Ruskin, and also learn about the Industrial fiction of the nineteenth-century North West author, Elizabeth Gaskell.

**Week Three: Lancaster: ‘Movements and Migrations’**

The last week of the course is based in Lancaster, and incorporates local trips, including a tour of the war memorials in the city. In this week, we focus on the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, considering the impact that the two world wars had on Britain and on Britain’s relationship with the rest of the world. Students learn about individual and cultural experiences in a geographically and demographically changing Britain, culminating with an analysis of some of the causes and political implications of Brexit. Texts studied in this week include a story from *The Good Immigrant*, a recent collection of personal accounts about life in a multi-racial Britain, along with extracts from the political arguments used for and against the Brexit vote.