THE ELIZABETHANS AND THEIR WORLD:
SOCIAL CHANGE AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ENGLAND,
1550 - 1610
This course aims to look critically at a crucial but frequently misunderstood and over-sentimentalised period of English history. Often regarded in retrospect as a golden age of stability and order, the reign of Elizabeth was in reality a period of great change, conflict and anxiety. Its achievements, not least those of Elizabeth herself, were even greater than has sometimes been granted. But the costs in economic, political and spiritual terms were equally great. Amidst the anxieties of the age and the arising from its social and ideological conflicts there appeared an extraordinary flowering of literature and thought which was both unprecedented and never since equalled. This course will explore the extent of the Elizabethan achievement in several fields: political, religious and cultural. But it will also investigate the great tensions underlying the Elizabethans’ aspirations. It will adopt a comparative approach, assessing political, ideological and cultural developments in England in relation to similar trends in Continental Europe. And by these means it will attempt to reach an understanding of how, over such a brief period, England became at one and the same time the locus of the release of so much creative and imaginative energy and also of so much violent and destructive force.

General Reading:

Susan Brigden, *New Worlds, Lost Worlds: the rule of the Tudors, 1485 – 1603* and John Guy, *Tudor England* are good introductory surveys. The former is keenly priced and shows a timely interest in developments in sixteenth century Ireland and Scotland. Both have valuable bibliographies.

J.B Black, *The reign of Elizabeth I* is now outdated but contains a large amount of reliable information within a dull interpretation. It can be acquired cheaply on the Net.

Those seeking entertainment, stimulation and colour might indulge in A.N. Wilson’s spirited, opinionated and provocative *The Elizabethans*.

Susan Doran and Norman Jones (eds), *The Elizabethan World* is a compendious collection of relatively short essays introducing a very broad variety of themes concerning later sixteenth century England many of which will be discussed in both the lectures and seminars on this module with very useful bibliographies.
The following surveys offer more specialised treatments of themes and periods:

(A) Economic and Social:

D.M. Palliser, *The Age of Elizabeth, 1547 – 1603*
Keith Wrightson, *English Society, 1580 – 1680*
Derek Wilson, *Elizabethan society: high and low life*

(B) Political:

Penry Williams, *The Later Tudors, 1547 – 1603*
A.G.R Smith, *The emergence of the English state, 1520 – 1660*
Christopher Haigh (ed.) *The reign of Elizabeth I*

(C) Religious:

Felicity Heal (ed), *Church and Society in England from Henry VIII to James I*
Patrick Collinson, (a) *The birth-pangs of Protestant England*
(b) *The religion of Protestants*
Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: religion, politics and society under the Tudors*
Felicity Heal, *Reformation in Britain and Ireland*
Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe’s House Divided, 1490 – 1700*
Patrick McGrath, *Papists and Protestants in the reign of Elizabeth I*

(D) Cultural and Intellectual:

Julia Briggs, *This stage-play world*
Hardin Craig, *The enchanted glass: the Elizabethan mind in literature*
B.L. Joseph, *Shakespeare’s England*
Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*
John Buxton, *Elizabethan Taste*
C.S. Lewis, *English literature in the sixteenth century, excluding drama*
A.L Rowse, *The Elizabethan Renaissance (i): the structure of Society*
A.L Rowse, *The Elizabethan Renaissance (ii): the life of society*
Debora K. Shuger, *Habits of thought in the English Renaissance*
F.P. Wilson, *The English Drama, 1485 - 1642*

**Electronic and Internet sources (free or available through the Library):**
The internet has now become a major tool for research into early modern English history. Numerous sites are of relevance, but some are more useful (and some considerably less useful!) than others. Among the most important are the following:

**JSTOR:** a data base of scores of periodicals easily searchable by author, subject and title. It can provide a major supplement to references to the periodical literature given in lectures and seminars.

**ODNB: Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.** This is a major on-line resource which offers short and up-to-date biographical sketches of all the major Elizabethans discussed in this course, with very valuable bibliographies attached.

**Early English Books on Line (EBOL):** Only recently acquired by the library, this (expensive but marvelous) database provides access to electronic copies of all books printed in England between 1450 and 1700 that have been identified and traced and are housed in rare book libraries all over the world. It is a virtual library of massive proportions, and will be of inestimable value to this course. **ECCO: Eighteenth Century Books on Line:** also contains printed editions of Elizabethan State Papers, memoirs and other texts which are of major relevance to this course.

Other internet sites of use are to be found in the **Tudor History Web.** They are of varied value but elizabethi.org is most helpful and contains links to a wide range of other sites of interest. Of a lesser level but often useful is www.elizabethan englandlife. The anglican library.org contains modern downloadable editions of some key religious tracts.

More specialized monographs and articles dealing with special aspects of the period which will be recommended and discussed as the course progresses. In the discussion list below authors’ names cited in brackets are keyed to a reference list at the end of this guide.

Documents set for discussion are already available on-line or in the Library’s data-bases, or will be supplied in copy a week in advance of the relevant class.
Week I

Lecture: Introductory: The reign of Glorianna: a myth and its uses
[Reading: Neale (a), Rowse (b) Shapiro, Bednarz, Bradbrooke, Ryan, Burgess ]

Week II

Lecture: European dynastic politics and the problem of a female monarch:
[ Reading: MacCaffrey (a); Jones, Neale (a), (c); Bassett, Felch, Richards (a), Richards (b) Alford (a), McLaren.]


Week III

Lecture: The Elizabethan Political Settlement: government and society in a post-war world.
[ Reading: MacCaffrey (a); Jones, Dewar, Alford (a), Read (a) McLaren; Amussen; Griffiths (ed); Collinson, (e). Fideler & Mayer]

Seminar: John Knox’s First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women (1559) and John Alymer’s A Harborowe for True Subjects (1560)
Week IV
Lecture: The Anglican Religious Settlement in an age of confessional strife, 1540 - 1572
[Reading: Cross, MacCulloch (a), (b), (c); Collinson (a), Booty, Haugaard, O’Day (a)]
Seminar: Sir Thomas Smith’s *De Republica Anglorum*

Week V
Lecture: England and the European economic Crisis, 1540 – 1580.
[Reading: Kamen, Palliser, Clay, Coleman. Outhwaite, Ramsay]
Seminar: *The Thirty Nine Articles*, 1563 / John Foxe’s *Booke of the Elect English Nation*, 1563

Week VI
Lecture: The social and cultural consequences of economic change, 1540 - 1580
[Reading: Stone (a) Stone(b), Stone (c) , Campbell, Cliffe, Hindle, Houlbrooke, Mingay, Amussen, Prior, Tillyard (a) Whittle, Archer]
Seminar: Sir Thomas Smith’s *Discourse of the Commonweal*;
Letters of Sir Thomas Gresham in J.W Burgon *Life and letters of Sir Thomas Gresham*
[http://archive.org/stream/lifetimesofsirth01burguoft/lifetimesofsirth01burguoft_djvu.txt]
Week VII

Lecture: Explaining the early Elizabethan World: humanism, scholarship and education, 1540-1580  
[Reading: Caspari, Fox, Fidelner & Mayer, Dewar, Tillyard (a), Peltonnen, French, O’Day (b), Simon, Charlton, Cressy, Curtis]  

Seminar: William Harrison’s Description of England (c.1566); John Norden’s Preparatue to his Speculum Britanniae, (1595); Thomas Wilson’s ‘Description of England, (c.1600) 

Week VIII

[Readings: Duffy, Lewis (a), (b); Haigh (b); Thomas (a), (b); Yates (b), (c); French; Bauckham]  

Seminar: Roger Ascham, The Schoolmaster

Week IX

Lecture: The Elizabethan Settlement under stress: European dynastic wars and Court politics, 1568 – 1587  
[Readings: Elliott, MacCaffrey (b), (c) and (d); Mattingly, Williams, Sutherland, Wormald, Wernham; Loades; Starkey; Basett, MacCaffrey, Hurstfield(a), (b); Wilson, D; Hammer (b)]  

Seminar: John Dee - astrologer/astronomer and his Monas Hieroglyphica
Week X
Lecture: The Elizabethan settlement: under stress: the Court, parliament and public policy
[Readings: Neale (b), Elton, Mears, Pocock, Williams, Kesselring]

Seminar: The Spanish embassy in England, 1558 -68/ The English embassy in France, 1558 – 1585 as revealed in Calendar of State Papers Spanish, and Calendar of State Papers Foreign

Week XI
Lecture: The Elizabethan settlement under stress: radical Protestants and revitalised Catholics
[Readings: Alford (b); Black, J; Collinson (a), (b),(e) (f); Cross, Haigh, Hunt, Houlston; Lake, MacCulloch, (b), (c); Questier; Lake&Questier.]

Seminar: Leicester’s Commonwealth

Week XII
Lecture: The Elizabethan Settlement under threat: private enterprise and public policy
[Reading: Thirsk (b), Gough, Andrews, Rowse (b), Knapp]

Seminar: Martin Marprelate V/s Cardinal Allen
[Documents :The Martin Marprelate tracts; Allen’s Admonition to the nobility and people of England and Ireland, 1588 ]

Week XIII
Lecture: A new Elizabethan world: the rise of the popular press
[Readings: Bennett, Dolan, Eisenstein, Lewis (c), Watt, Wright, Margolis, Miller, Sharpe]

Seminar: Richard Hakluyt, A Discourse of Western Planting (1584)
Week XIV

[Readings: Helgerson (a), Jardine&Grafton, Kewes et al ; Knapp, French, Levy; Lewis (c), McKisack, Patterson, Yates (b)]

Seminar: Elizabethan Crime Writing

Week XV

Lecture: A new Elizabethan world: the rise of the urban playhouse.
[Readings: Chambers, Gurr, Branmuller, Harbage, Howard (a)]

Seminar: Holinshed’s Chronicles (1577/1586)

Week XVI

Lecture: A new Elizabethan world: political argument at the Elizabethan Court.
[Readings: Collinson (d); Mc Diarmid; Helgerson (b), Lake; Lake & Pincus; Montrose (b); Norbrook, Rosenberg, Worden]

Seminar: History in the playhouse: Marlowe’s Edward II and Shakespeare’s Richard II

Week XVII

Lecture: Counter-Offensive: Propaganda police, and political anxiety in late Elizabethan government
[Readings: Alford (b); Doran & Kewes; Williams, Sharpe, Cockburn, Smith, Loades (b), Strong, Goldring, King, Wilson, E, Yates (a), Montrose (c), Youngs]

Seminar: Politics and Society in Sidney’s Arcadia
Week XVIII

Lecture: Counter-Offensive: the re-construction of the Church of England
[Readings: Cross (b), Houlbrooke (b), Heal, Hill (a), Manning, McGrade, Cargill-Thomson, Childs]

Seminar: The changing portraits of Queen Elizabeth I

Week XIX

Lecture: Striving for unity: Edmund Spenser’s English epic
[Readings: Hough, Hadfield, Greenblatt (a) McCabe, Montrose (d)]

Seminar: Richard Hooker’s, Laws of the Ecclesiastical Polity

Week XX

Lecture: Striving for unity: Shakespeare’s England
[Readings: Bloom, Lake (b), Schoenbaum, Greenblatt (a), (c); Montrose, (a)
Dollimore; Howard (b), Zeeveld].

Seminar: Politics and Society in The Faerie Queene, Book V

Week XXI

Lecture: Moving beyond unity: the new worlds of Walter Raleigh and Francis Bacon
[Readings: Lake (a); Raleigh ;Greenblatt (a) ; Greenblatt (b)
Martin, Hill(b)]

Seminar: Politics and Society in The Tempest
Specialised References (keyed in Lecture and Seminar list above)

Alford, Stephen, (a) *The early Elizabethan Polity*
   (b) *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I*

Amussen, S,  *An ordered society: gender and class in early modern England*

Andrews, K.R. *Trade, plunder and settlement: maritime enterprise and the genesis of the British Empire*

Archer, Ian, *The pursuit of stability: social relations in Elizabethan London*

Bassett, Susan, *Elizabeth I: a feminist perspective*

Bauckham, Rudolf, *Tudor Apocalypse*

Bennett, H. S. *English Books and readers, 1558 – 1603*

Bednarz, James, *Shakespeare and the poets’ war*

Bloom, Harold, *Shakespeare: the invention of the human*

Booty, J.E, *John Jewel and the Anglican Church*

Black, Joseph (ed.), *The Martin Marprelate Tracts: A Modernized and Annotated Edition*

Bradbrooke, M.C., *Shakespeare: the poet in his world*

Branmuller, A.R. and Hattaway, Michael, (eds), *The Cambridge companion to English Renaissance drama*

Burgess, Glenn (et al., eds) *Neo-historicism*

Campbell, Mildred, *The English Yeoman*

Cargill-Thompson, W.D. J. *Studies in the Reformation*
Caspari, Fritz, *Humanism and the social order in Tudor England*

Chambers, E.K., *The Elizabethan Stage*

Charlton, Kenneth, *Education in Renaissance England*

Childs, Jesse, *God's traitors : terror and faith in Elizabethan England*


Cliffe, J. T. *The Yorkshire Gentry from the Reformation to the Civil War*

Cockburn, J.S. *Crime in England, 1550 – 1800*

Coleman, D.C., *The Economy of England, 1450 – 1750*

Collinson, Patrick (a), *The Birth-pangs of Protestant England*

(b), *The Religion of Protestants*

(c), *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*


(e), *De Republica Anglorum: or history with the politics put back*

(f), *Archbishop Grindal*

(g) *Richard Bancroft and Elizabethan anti-Puritanism*

Cressy, David, (a), *Literacy and the social order: reading and writing in Tudor and Stuart England*

(b), *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England.*

Cross, Claire (a), *Church and People, 1450 – 1660,*

(b), *The Royal Supremacy in the Elizabethan Church*

Curtis, M.H., *Oxford and Cambridge in transition*

Dewar, Mary, *Sir Thomas Smith*

Dollimore, Jonathan, *Radical Tragedy*

Doran, Susan & Kewes, Paulina (eds), *Doubtful and dangerous : the question of succession in late Elizabethan England*

Duffy, Eamon, *The Stripping of the Altars*

Eisenstein, Elizabeth, *The Printing Press as an agent of change*

Elliott, J.H., *Europe Divided, 1559 – 1598*

Elton, G. R., *The Tudor Constitution*

Evans, Emrys, *The origins of Shakespeare*


Fox, Alastair, *Reassessing the Henrician age: Humanism, politics and reform*

French, P, *John Dee: the world of an Elizabethan magus*

Fideler, Paul & Thomas Mayer, *Political thought and the Tudor Commonwealth*

Goldring, Elizabeth, *Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and the world of Elizabethan art : painting and patronage at the court of Elizabeth I*

Gough, J.W. *The rise of the entrepreneur*

Greenblatt, Stephen (a), *Renaissance self-fashioning*  
(b), *Sir Walter Raleigh*  
(c), *Shakespearean Negotiations*

Griffiths, P (et al, eds), *The experience of authority in early modern England*

Gurr, Andrew, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*

Hadfield, Andrew (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to Spenser*

Haigh, Christopher, (a) *English Reformations*
(b) Reform and Reaction in Tudor Lancashire

Haller, William, John Foxe and the Elect English Nation

Hammer, Paul, The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics

Harbage, Alfred, Shakespeare and the rival traditions

Haugaard, W.P, The Elizabethan Religious Settlement

Haydn, Hiram, The Portable Elizabethan Reader

Heal, Felicity, Of Prelates and Princes

Helgerson, Richard (a), Forms of Nationhood
(b), The Elizabethan prodigals

Hill, Christopher (a), Economic problems of the Church
(b), Intellectual origins of the English Revolution

Hindle, Steve, The State and Social Change in early modern England

Hough, Graham, A Preface to Spenser

Houlbrooke, Ralph (a), The English family, 1450 – 1700
(b), Church Courts and the People, 1520 – 70

Houliston, Victor, Catholic Resistance in Elizabethan England

Howard, Jean (a), The stage and social struggle in early modern England

Howard, Jean (b), Engendering a nation: a feminist account of Shakespeare’s History plays

Hurstfield, Joel (a), The Queen’s Wards
(b), Freedom, corruption and government in Elizabethan England

Jameson, Fredric, The Political Unconscious


Jones, Norman The Birth of the Elizabethan Age
Kamen, Henry, *The Iron Century*

Kesselring, K. J., *The Northern Rebellion of 1569: faith, politics and protest in Elizabethan England*

Kewes, Paulina (et al); *The Oxford Handbook of Holinshed’s Chronicles*

King, John N., ‘Queen Elizabeth I: Representations of the Virgin Queen’ *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (Spring, 1990), pp. 30-74

Knapp, Jeffrey, *An Empire nowhere: England, America and literature from Utopia to The Tempest*

Lake, Peter (a) *Moderate Puritans in the Elizabethan Church*

Lake, Peter (b) *How Shakespeare put politics on the stage*

Lake, Peter and Stephen Pincus (eds), *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*

Lake, Peter and Michael Questier, *The trials of Margaret Clitherow: persecution, martyrdom and the politics of sanctity in Elizabethan England*

Levy, Fritz, *Tudor Historical Thought*

Lewis, C.S., (a), *The discarded image*

(b) *The allegory of love*

(c) *English literature in the sixteenth century, excluding drama*

Loades, David, *The Tudor Court*

McCabe, Richard, *Spenser’s Monstrous Regiment*

MacCaffrey, Wallace, (a), *Elizabeth I*

(b) *The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime*

(c) *Queen Elizabeth and the making of policy, 1572 - 88*

(d) ‘The Anjou match’ in Peter Clark et al (eds), *The English Commonwealth.*

MacCulloch, Diarmaid, (a) *Reformation: Europe’s House Divided, 1490 – 1700*

(b) *The later Reformation in England, 1547 - 1603*

(c) *Building a Godly Realm: the establishment of English*
Protestantism, 1558 - 1603

Mc Diarmid, John, (ed), *The Monarchical Republic of Early Modern England*

McGrade, A.S. (ed), *Richard Hooker and the construction of a Christian community*

McKisack, May, *Medieval History in the Tudor Age*

McLaren, A.N. *Political culture in the reign of Elizabeth I: Queen and Commonwealth, 1558-1585*

Manning, R. B. *Religion and Society in Elizabethan Sussex*

Margolis, David, *Novels and Society in Elizabethan England*

Martin, Julian, *Francis Bacon, the State and Natural Law*

Mattingly, Garrett, *Renaissance Diplomacy*

Mears, Natalie, *Queenship and Political Discourse in the Elizabethan realms*

Miller, E.H, *The Professional Writer in the Elizabethan Age*

Mingay, G. E. *The Gentry*

Montrose, Louis, (a) *The purpose of playing: Shakespeare and the cultural politics of the Elizabethan theatre*
   (c) ‘Idols of the Queen: Policy, Gender, and the Picturing of Elizabeth I’, *Representations*, No. 68 (Autumn, 1999), pp. 108-161
   (d) ‘Spenser and the Elizabethan Political Imaginary’, *English Literary History*, Vol. 69, No. 4 (Winter, 2002), pp. 907-946

Neale, J.E., (a), *Queen Elizabeth I*
   (b), *Elizabeth I and her parliaments*
   (c), *The age of Catherine de Medici and other essays*

Norbrook, David, *Poetry and politics in the Elizabethan Renaissance*

O’Day, Rosemary, (a) *The English Clergy 1558 - 1642*
   (b) *Education and Society, 1500 - 1800*
Outhwaite, R. B. *Inflation in Tudor and Stuart England*

Palliser, D.M., *The Age of Elizabeth, 1547 – 1603*

Peltonnen, Markuu, *Classical Humanism and Republicanism in English political thought, 1570 - 1640*

Patterson, Annabel, *Reading Holinshed’s Chronicles*


Prior, M (ed), *Women in English Society, 1500 – 1800*

Questier, Michael,  
(a) *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England*  
(b) ‘Sermons, Separatists, and Succession Politics in Late Elizabethan England’, *Journal of British Studies*, 52, (2013)

Quinn, D.B. *England’s Sea Empire*

Ramsey, Peter, *Tudor Economic Problems*

Raleigh, Sir Walter, *The Complete Works*

Read, Conyers, *Mr Secretary Cecil*

Rosenberg, Eleanor, *Leicester, Patron of Letters*

Rowse, A.L. (a), *The England of Elizabeth*  
(b), *The Elizabethan Renaissance: the cultural achievement*


(b), "To Promote a Woman to Beare Rule": Talking of Queens in Mid-Tudor England in *Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 28, (Spring, 1997), pp. 101-121

Ryan, Kiernan, *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism*
Schoenbaum, S., *Shakespeare: a Documentary Life*

Shapiro, James, *1599: a Year in the life of William Shakespeare*

Sharpe, John, *Crime in early modern England, 1550 - 1750*

Simon, Joan, *Education and Society in Tudor England*

Starkey, David (a), *The English Court from the wars of the roses to the civil war*  
(b) *Queen Elizabeth*

Stone, Lawrence (a), *The Crisis of the Aristocracy*  
(b), *Social Change and revolution in England, 1540 – 1640,*  
(c), *The family, sex and marriage in England, 1500 – 1800*

Strong, Roy, *The Cult of Elizabeth*

Sutherland, N.M., *The massacre of St Bartholomew and the European Conflict, 1558 – 1572*

Tawney, R.H., *The Agrarian Crisis of the Sixteenth Century*

Thirsk, Joan, (a), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*  
(b), *Economic Policy and Projects*

Tillyard, E.M.W., (a), *The Elizabethan World Picture*  
(b), *Shakespeare's History Plays*

Veeser, Abraham, *The New Historicism*

Watt, Tessa, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety*

Wernham, R.B., *Before the Armada*

Whittle, Jane (ed.), *Landlords and tenants in Britain, 1440-1660 : Tawney's Agrarian problem revisited*

Williams, Penry, (a), *The Later Tudors*  
(b), *The Tudor Regime*
Wilson, Derek, *Sweet Robin: a life of Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester*

Wilson, E.C, *England’s Eliza*

Worden, Blair, *The Sound of Virtue: Philip Sidney’s Arcadia and Elizabethan Politics*

Wormald, Jenny, *Mary, Queen of Scots: a study in failure*

Wright, L.B, *Middle Class Culture in Elizabethan England*

Wrightson, Keith, *English Society, 1580 – 1680*

Yates, Frances, (a) *Astraea: the Imperial theme in the sixteenth century*  
(b) *The occult philosophy in the Elizabethan age*  
(c) *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*

Youngs, Frederick, *The Proclamations of the Tudor Queens*

Zeeveld, Gordon, *The temper of Shakespeare’s thought*

**Assessment and Examination Protocols**

This *List One* module will be assessed by two examinations (worth 60%) and two items of assessed coursework, one per term (worth 40% in total). Assessed essays will normally be 3,000 words in length. Additional coursework is required in the form of *Two* short seminar presentations per term which may be undertaken either individually or as part of a group presentation.

**Dates of essay submission**

Essay 1: **Tuesday 30 October 2018**

Essay 2: **Friday 1 March 2019**

The examinations will be scheduled at some point within three weeks after Monday 22 April 2019