ENGLISH LONDON: LONDON IN TIMES OF CRISIS AND CHANGE (EXPLORATION SEMINAR)

Applications are closed for this program. View more details at the UW Study Abroad Website.

- Autumn 2019

Program Dates: August 18, 2019 to September 14, 2019
Application Deadline: February 15, 2019
Information Sessions: Friday February 1st and March 1st, 2019 @ 3:30 to 5 pm in Padelford B-13

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This program is designed to link classroom activities, site visits, and walking tours to bring our readings to life and to enrich students' understanding of the ways in which contemporary London has been shaped by its past.

The last years of the reign of Elizabeth I presented the country with a political crisis: Elizabeth did not have a male heir and forbade the court to discuss who might be her successor, uncertainty about the future was only resolved by the accession of a foreign king--James VI of Scotland who became James I of England. The turmoil of the period is seen in the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. We will read a Shakespeare play and see a production of it performed at the Globe theatre. We will also tour the Globe theatre, do a walking tour of Shakespeare's Southwark, and a tour of Southwark Cathedral.

Later in the seventeenth century the Great Fire wiped out large sections of London. Much of the architecture we associate with London was built after this event, and building codes today are still impacted by fears of the fire. Samuel Pepy's Diary will provide a basis for examining the devastation of the fire. Visits to the Museum of London and to some of the buildings in reconstructed London such as St. Pauls' Cathedral and some of Sir Christopher Wren's churches illustrate the importance of this event in London's history.

A major turning point came in the early twentieth century. London had become powerful and wealthy during the high point of its colonial empire in the nineteenth century bringing prosperity to some but great poverty to many others. By Queen Victoria's death in 1901 the divide between the elite and the workers who increasingly lived in poverty is one which Britain is still trying to heal in the twenty first century. Oscar Wilde's A Woman of No Importance will introduce students to Victorian 'society'. Visits to Linley Sanbourn House, walking tours of Victorian neighborhoods, and a consideration of Pre-Raphaelite artists will provide some understanding of the upper classes and their attitudes at the end of Victoria's reign.

Not long after the first World War created another crisis. The deaths of so many men on the battlefields...
of Northern Europe and the horrors of the conflict left an entire generation in shock. The sense of fragmentation and disorientation is illustrated by a selection of First World War poetry. A visit to the Imperial War Museum will complement this section of the course.

The decision to leave the European Union was made by the people of Britain in a 2016 referendum in which concerns about Immigration was a key issue. Some commentators point out that Britain's relative prosperity in the late twentieth century could not have come about without immigration: that of Indians and Pakistanis to provide labour for the cotton and wool industries, particularly in the north of the country; that of West Indians to service the London Underground and National Health Service; and that of Eastern Europeans to service agriculture.

Clearly, Britain is experiencing something of an identity crisis yet again in the early twenty first century. Monica Ali's Brick Lane will open up a consideration of the effects of immigration and the challenges faced by immigrants. Visits to Brick Lane and to Brixton Market will help students appreciate the nature of multi-racial, multi-cultural twenty first century London.