

The British Country House: a Social, Economic, Architectural, and Cultural History

Arts & Sciences 138, Freshman Seminar

Quarter, 2 credits

Day/Time Room

Instructor

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M&TH 11-12 and by appointment

Course Description

The British Country House is an integral part of the history of Great Britain. This course will study the country house from the Elizabethan Period through the Industrial Revolution to the present. Throughout the course of the seminar, we will study the art, architecture, economics, social history, and culture of the British Country House by concentrating on specific houses each week. The Web sites for these houses will also be provided so that you can browse before class. You are always welcome to bring up any houses that you find in your browsing and class participation is welcome.

There are three writing assignments for the course. Two are short papers, and the final research paper can be on a topic of your choosing (a particular house, an art collection, gardens and grounds, the history of a family, ghost stories and tales, authors and their influence).

Texts

Various Web sites related to the topic.

Other readings on reserve as assigned below

Course Policies

Detail your expectations for:

- Students are expected to attend every class. If you must miss a class, please let me know in advance if possible or as soon as possible afterwards.
- Class participation is important for this course. Participation can take the form of questions, comments, and conversation.
- There will be four written assignments for the class—3 short assignments and a longer research assignment as a final for the class.

Grading

The course will be graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory, with at least 70% = Satisfactory.

Participation	20%	
Assignment 1	20%	2 page evaluation on a research source
Assignment 2	20%	2 page annotated bibliography
Research Paper	40%	5-8 page research paper

Academic Integrity

For all the assignments for this course, the Code of Student Conduct of The Ohio State University is in effect. Academic misconduct is defined as: Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the university, or subvert the educational process.

Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to:

1. Violation of course rules as contained in the course syllabus or other information provided to the student; violation of program regulations as established by departmental committees and made available to students;
2. Submitting plagiarized work for an academic requirement. Plagiarism is the representation of another's work or ideas as one's own; it includes the unacknowledged word-for-word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas;
3. Submitting substantially the same work to satisfy requirements for one course that has been submitted in satisfaction of requirements for another course, without permission of the instructor of the course for which the work is being submitted;
4. For an extended version of these examples please refer to http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp

To avoid plagiarism, students must make sure that they:

1. Always cite their sources (following the MLA format)
2. Read the guidelines for written assignments more than once
3. If in doubt consult with your professor.

Students with Disabilities

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 614-292-3307 in room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Or visit the internet address of this office at <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu> for more information.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1 – What is the British Country House?

Houses: Burghley House, Drago Castle

READ: “Introduction” *England’s Thousand Best Houses*, vii-xxvi.

“The great English country house was much more than merely home”
Smithsonian

Week 2 – The Country House and Economics

Houses: Kingston Lacy, Harewood House

READ: “What an English Country House Used to Mean” *The Fate of the English*

Country House

“How the English became obsessed with property” *New Statesman*

Week 3 – The Architecture and Art of the Country House

Houses: Strawberry Hill, Kedleston, Wilton House

DUE: Assignment #1

Week 4 – The Country House in Literature and Culture

Houses: Penshurst Place

READ: Chapter 6 & 7 *Life in the English Country House*

Week 5 – Upstairs and Downstairs: Social Life in the Country House

Houses: Errdig, Lanhydrock

READ: “What the butler wore” *Times Educational Supplement*

Week 6 – The Power Houses: the Country Houses that Have it All

Houses: Chatsworth, Blenheim Palace, Waddeston

READ: Chapter 1 *Life in the English Country House*

Week 7 – Visitors at the Gate: Open Days and Touring the Country House

Houses: Longleat, Beaulieu

READ: “Opening to the Public” *The Fate of the English Country House*

DUE: Assignment #3

Week 8 – The Changing Fate of the Country House: Demolition by the Numbers

Houses: <http://www.lostheritage.org.uk/>

READ: “The roots of The National Trust” *History Today*

“England’s Lost Houses” *History Today*

Selections from *No Voice From the Hall*

Week 9 – What the Present and Future Hold for the Country House

Houses: Tyntesfield, Calke Abbey

READ: “Beyond the powerhouse: understanding the country house in the twenty-first century” *Historical Research*

Week 10 – Wrap Up and Final Discussion

READ: No Reading

Due: Research Assignment

Biographical Statement

Melanie is a life-long Anglophile and avid student of English history, literature, and culture, especially the 17th-19th centuries. Her study of British Country Houses started when she was a teenager and at Washington and Jefferson College Melanie majored in English and history and completed a special project on women's writing in the English Renaissance. She continued this study women's writing and history her M.A. thesis on the writings of Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke and sister of Philip Sidney.

At Kent State University Melanie completed a Ph.D. in English Literature and concentrated on female authors of the 17th and 18th century. Melanie also taught composition and literature at Kent State University, as well as Ohio Dominican University and Ohio State University, Newark.

Melanie also received her M.L. I.S. from Kent State University and is currently an Assistant Professor with the Ohio State University Libraries. She is currently researching and publishing on the topic of Cataloging education, but has also conducted research on country house libraries and British society and culture.