Description: From the time of the Industrial Revolution, London became not only the largest city in the world, but also, as a result of its status as the capital of an expanding empire, the driving force behind the configuration of much of the globe as we know it today. Considering the ways in which this city was simultaneously understood as the quintessential example of modernity and as the site of the primitive and the monstrous provides a productive lens for exploring representations and definitions of the modern more generally. We will examine London as a location of extremes between wealth and poverty, modern definitions of masculinity, femininity, and the queer, and changing definitions of race in the period of 1750-the present. Objects of study will include paintings, music, movies, diaries, novels, and poetry.

By introducing students to the cultures of Britain and its colonies, as well as to the concepts of imperialism and post-colonialism, the class will provide important historical context for understanding the contemporary world. Also important will be the acquisition of the key art history skills of visual analysis and understanding works in historical context. The course requires a short paper, a longer research paper, class presentations, and participation.

We will tour and observe key sites of London that feature in our class: Trafalgar Square; East London and the Jack the Ripper sites; the Thames; and a punk club or show (schedules allowing). We will also visit Tate Britain to tour the British eighteenth–twentieth-century painting galleries as well as other appropriate London-themed exhibitions through the semester.

COURSE TEXTS
Course Reader, Online /Packet TBD
Alan Moore, From Hell, 2000
Blanchard Jerrold and Gustave Doré, London: A Pilgrimage, 1872

*course details are subject to change. You will receive a detailed course syllabus in London.