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# ENG 3809-001: Punk Britannia? Terror, Violence, and Dystopia in Contemporary British Literature

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**English 3809 (section 001): Punk Britannia?  
Terror, Violence, and Dystopia in Contemporary British Literature**

**Instructor:** Dr. Robert Martínez

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**Course time & location:** MWF 2-2.50 PM, Coleman 3150, Spring 2015

**Office Hours:** Mon. 3-4 PM, Wed. 11 AM-12 noon, Fri. 11 AM-12 noon and 3-4 PM, and by appointment

**Class Web:** [www.martinezliteraria.com/new3809](http://www.martinezliteraria.com/new3809)

**Course Description:**

English 3809 (3-0-3 credits, Group 3C) is a study “in fiction, poetry, and drama published since 1950 in one or more of the following countries: Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom (England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland).” In this course, we will explore the exciting genesis of new fictions and art forms that emerged in Britain after World War II. Specifically, we will look at how the punk explosion of 1976 serves as a galvanizing force that transforms not only contemporary British life but also Western society at large. Students will learn about the variety of economic, political, and social crises of our contemporary times (e.g., the political violence in Northern Ireland, the rise of Thatcherism, the eruption of race riots, the fears of nuclear warfare and the advent of global terrorism) as well as new developments in literary and artistic styles (e.g., radical experiments in postmodern and feminist writing, film, and thought; new developments in music after punk; startling criticism of race and “Britishness” through postcolonial theory).

Not only will we study British writers, but we will also consider how other British artists use mediums such as drama, film, video, and music to explore and evaluate the vast socio-political and economic changes to their environment. Writers, filmmakers, and artists covered in the course may include J. G. Ballard, Angela Carter, Sarah Kane, David Mitchell, Mike Leigh, Derek Jarman, Sally Potter, and of course generous selections of contemporary music from the Sex Pistols and The Clash, to Joy Division and The Smiths, to Radiohead, Portishead, the Arctic Monkeys, Chvrches, and Roots Manuva. Students will emerge from this course with a wider understanding of the intellectual, social, theoretical, and popular forces at work that have shaped our present moment.

This course is writing intensive and requires a shorter analysis paper, a research term paper, several online forum posts and in-class writing exercises, active class discussion, and midterm and final examinations. This course actively aims to prepare students to meet EIU's university learning goals of critical thinking, writing and critical reading, speaking and listening, quantitative reasoning, and responsible citizenship.

**Course Learning Goals:**

- Students will understand various genres of literature written in English since 1950 in one or more of the following countries: Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.
- Students will identify the central literary innovations and tendencies of this period.
- Students will explain the social, historical, and cultural context of the period, through readings and discussions of a number of selected literary works, political documents, popular music, historical research, and political philosophy.
- Students will work on their critical reading and critical thinking skills through intensive engagement with a variety of traditional and multimedia texts (including cultural analysis of popular music).

- Students will develop sophisticated research and argumentative skills through the completion of short analytical papers and response papers, examinations, and a longer research term paper.
- Students will enhance their writing skills by completing revisions of analytical papers.
- Students will understand specific nuances of gender, sexuality, and identity being explored by British thinkers and artists through literature, philosophy, film, and music.

#### Required Texts:

- Herbert Marcuse, "Repressive Tolerance" (D2L document)
- J. G. Ballard, *Crash*
- Martin Amis, *Dead Babies*
- Angela Carter, *The Passion of New Eve*
- Pat Barker, *Blow Your House Down* and *Union Street*
- David Mitchell, *Black Swan Green*
- Margaret Thatcher, "To Conservative Rally, Cheltenham (July 1982)" (D2L document)
- Brian Eno, "On Ambient Music" (D2L document)
- Sarah Kane, *Blasted* (D2L document)
- Caryl Churchill, *Serious Money* or *Far Away* (D2L document; time permitting\*)
- Carol Ann Duffy, *The World's Wife* (poetry selections, time permitting\*; D2L document)
- Iain Banks, *The Wasp Factory*
- Robert McLiam Wilson, *Eureka Street*

**Note:** You are required to do all assigned reading for this course. The texts listed above are available from Textbook Rental (TRS). Other required readings will be available online via our course page on D2L. **Online readings must be brought to class on the day the material is discussed.** You must either print out the document(s) or use your laptop, iPad, Kindle, or Nook to view them. Using Smartphones to view readings for class discussion is not acceptable.

#### Required Films:

- Shane Meadows, *This Is England*
- Alan Clarke, *Elephant*
- Andrea Arnold, *Wasp*
- Ken Loach, *Hidden Agenda*

#### Required Music:

- Sex Pistols, *Never Mind the Bollocks* LP
- Joy Division, *Closer* LP
- The Cure, *Pornography* LP
- The Specials, *Ghost Town* EP
- The Au Pairs, *Playing with a Different Sex* LP
- Generous selections from the punk, post-punk, synth-electronica, new wave music scenes (all music available via class web site: <http://www.martinezliteraria.com/eng3809>)

#### Content Warning:

Contemporary, and especially postmodern, texts ("texts" meaning novels, films, music, poems, etc.) often use violence and disturbing misappropriations of sex (rape and other forms of sexual abuse) as a way to get readers' attention and tell stories that represent realities and challenges they see in their worlds. Some of our texts may prove either emotionally painful for or morally offensive to you. If you're unwilling to read such material, please consider switching to another course. If you consider this literature worth reading but find yourself upset by it, always feel free to talk to me during my office hours, and to bring up your concerns during class if you're comfortable.

### Required Attendance, Materials & Editions:

- Check e-mail **daily**
- Visit class web site frequently (*use Firefox, Chrome, or Safari browsers*)
- Use text editions found at Textbook Rental
- Attend class and participate daily in discussion
- Listen to all assigned music **carefully**
- Attend all film screenings
- Additional readings via handouts or D2L

Attendance in English 3809 means that you are present in class each day in both *body and mind*—that is, I expect you to come to class each day having completed any required reading or listening or viewing assignments and ready to share your thoughtful, considered ideas. **Missing class and not completing assignments are not acceptable.** If you become ill or experience family or personal difficulties beyond your control, then you must notify me of your absence as soon as possible. Not completing daily assignments and not contributing to class discussion will result in poor participation grade scores. If you miss more than three (3) classes, your final course grade will be penalized: starting with the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) absence, a "+" or "-" will be deducted from your final course grade.

### Assignments:

- Paper #1 (6-8 pages/1500-1950 words): 15%
- Several Short D2L Forum Responses (250-500 words per post): 10%
- Paper #2 Term paper (9-11 pages/2300-2800 words): 25%
- Attendance & Participation: 15%
- Midterm Exam: 15%
- Final Exam: 20%

### Specific Assignments:

All papers should be double spaced, in 12-point, Times New Roman font, with 1" (top/bottom) and 1.25" (left/right) margins. Make sure to include your name, course name, professor's name, and date on the front page; a title for your paper; and your name and page numbers in the headers of the paper. All course essays will be turned in electronically in Microsoft Word format via D2L Dropbox.

The Short Paper (6-8 pages): You must choose to write about one of the novels we have covered in the first half of the course. You should identify a specific topic of interest to you in the novel and develop an argument that interprets that aspect of the novel. For example, you may wish to discuss the treatment of a certain character or theme, the use of a recurring image, motif, or word/phrase in a given work, but make sure your topic is focused. Remember, this is a short paper that must present a convincing interpretation of the work you have chosen. Outside research is not required for this paper; it should simply be your analysis of the text(s) at hand.

The Long Paper (9-11 pages): This paper still requires you to close read and analyze a particular text from or related to class, but your choice of text must be different from the choice of your first paper. Outside research is required for this paper (at least three academic, professional sources). You must cite your sources in MLA format.

Forum Posts: Throughout the semester I will require each student to write a short critical response to the many bands/music artists we will study, as well as the texts or films we will study. Each post will require you to engage in closer analysis of course material in order to augment and enhance class discussion.

**A Note about Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional use of someone else's ideas, words, or work as your own. If you use or refer to ideas or work other than your own, you must acknowledge the source and author of those ideas/that work and document it properly using MLA format (Purdue MLA guide: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>). Plagiarism is an Honor Code violation at EIU, and offenders will be referred to the EIU Office for Student Standards. **Failure to cite any outside sources or critics will constitute plagiarism.**

**Grading Scale:**

- A = 94-100
- A- = 90-93
- B+ = 87-89
- B = 84-86
- B- = 80-83
- C+ = 77-79
- C = 74-76
- C- = 70-73
- D = 64-69
- F = 63 and below

**Student Academic Integrity:**

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

**Disability Services:**

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583.

**Student Success Center:**

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center ([www.eiu.edu/~success](http://www.eiu.edu/~success)) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

## Tentative\* Schedule for English 3809 – Spring 2015

\*Some events/assignments subject to change

Date	What's Happening in Class	What to Do for Next Class
M-1/12	Introduction to course; Historical background: Sixties protest and theoretical critique of modern society	Start reading Herbert Marcuse's essay, "Repressive Tolerance" (on D2L, read pp. 81-101); work on Marcuse Study Questions handout
W-1/14	Finish historical/cultural background; begin discussion of Marcuse's "Repressive Tolerance"	Review your Marcuse reading—read carefully!  Music: Start listening to the Sex Pistols's <i>Never Mind the Bollocks</i> and <b>post response to D2L forum</b> before 1/22; start reviewing "Studying Popular Music - Theoretical Background" handout
F-1/16	Discuss Marcuse's essay	Finish reading Marcuse essay (pp. 101-123) for Wednesday and review it carefully!
M-1/19	<b>No Class – Martin Luther King Day</b>	Finish listening to <i>Never Mind the Bollocks</i> ; start reading <i>Crash</i> (pp. 7-57)
W-1/21	Finish discussion of Marcuse; <b>post response to Sex Pistols via forum</b>	Continue reading <i>Crash</i> (pp. 58-88)
F-1/23	Discuss Sex Pistols; start discussing <i>Crash</i>	Continue reading <i>Crash</i> (pp. 89-138)  Music: Start listening to "Crash Music" (The Normal, Gary Numan, John Foxx, Human League)
M-1/26	Discuss <i>Crash</i>	Finish <i>Crash</i> (pp. 139-224); <b>post forum response to "Crash Music"</b> by 1/27
W-1/28	Finish discussion of <i>Crash</i> ; discuss "Crash Music"	Start reading Amis's <i>Dead Babies</i> (pp. 3-41)
F-1/30	Discuss <i>Dead Babies</i>	Read Amis (pp. 42-92)
M-2/2	Discuss <i>Dead Babies</i>	Read Amis (pp. 93-148)
W-2/4	Discuss <i>Dead Babies</i>	Finish reading Amis (pp. 149-206)  Music: Start listening to Joy Division ("Exercise One," "Digital," "New Dawn Fades," "She's Lost Control," "Atmosphere," "Love Will Tear Us Apart," and entire LP of <i>Closer</i> )
F-2/6	Finish discussion of <i>Dead Babies</i>	Music: Complete <b>D2L forum post</b> on Joy Division by 2/8.
M-2/9	Discuss Joy Division's music	Start reading Carter's <i>Passion of New Eve</i> (pp. 5-41)
W-2/11	Discuss <i>Passion of New Eve</i>	Read <i>Passion of New Eve</i> (pp. 42-132)
F-2/13	<b>No Class – Lincoln's Day</b>	Continue reading Carter  Start listening to music selections from Siouxsie & The Banshees and Au Pairs
M-2/16	Discuss <i>Passion of New Eve</i>	Finish <i>Passion of New Eve</i> (pp. 133-191)
W-2/18	Finish discussion of <i>Passion of New Eve</i>	Finish listening to the music selections from Siouxsie & The Banshees and Au Pairs and <b>post D2L forum response</b> by 2/19
F-2/20	Discuss music of Siouxsie & The Banshees	Start reading Mitchell's <i>Black Swan Green</i> (pp. 3-

## Tentative\* Schedule for English 3809 – Spring 2015

\*Some events/assignments subject to change

Date	What's Happening in Class	What to Do for Next Class
M-2/23	Discuss <i>Passion of New Eve</i>	<p>Start reading Mitchell's <i>Black Swan Green</i> (pp. 3-83)</p> <p>Start listening to the music selections from Siouxsie &amp; The Banshees and Au Pairs and <b>post D2L forum response</b> by 2/27</p> <p>Listen to music responses to the Falklands War via the class website</p>
W-2/25	Wrap up discussion of <i>Passion of New Eve</i> ; start introduction to 1980s and Thatcherism	Continue reading <i>Black Swan Green</i> (pp. 3-83)
F-2/27	<p>Discuss <i>Black Swan Green</i></p> <p>Discuss Siouxsie &amp; The Banshees and Au Pairs</p>	Read <i>Black Swan Green</i> (pp. 84-144); read Margaret Thatcher's speech, "To the Conservative Rally at Cheltenham" (D2L)
M-3/2	Discuss <i>Black Swan Green</i>	Read <i>Black Swan Green</i> (pp. 145-195)
W-3/4	Discuss <i>Black Swan Green</i>	Read <i>Black Swan Green</i> (pp. 196-246)
F-3/6	Discuss <i>Black Swan Green</i>	<p>Finish <i>Black Swan Green</i> (pp. 247-294)</p> <p>Music: Listen to The Specials's EP <i>Ghost Town</i>, Steel Pulse's "Ku Klux Klan," selections from Cabaret Voltaire's <i>Red Mecca</i>, and the entire LP of The Cure's <i>Pornography</i>; <b>post D2L forum response</b> before class on 3/11</p>
M-3/9	Finish discussion of <i>Black Swan Green</i>	
Tues-3/10	<b>Watch <i>This Is England</i> (with pizza) at 5 PM</b>	
W-3/11	Discuss <i>This Is England</i>	
F-3/13	<p>Discuss The Specials's EP <i>Ghost Town</i>, Steel Pulse's "Ku Klux Klan," selections from Cabaret Voltaire's <i>Red Mecca</i>, and the entire LP of The Cure's <i>Pornography</i></p> <p><b>Paper #1 Due (via D2L)</b></p>	<p>Start studying for Midterm Exam!</p> <p>Note: Everything assigned up to spring break is fair game on the midterm, including the music</p>
3/16-3/20	<b>No Class – Spring Break</b>	
M-3/23	Discuss music of Echo & The Bunnymen, et al.	Study!
W-3/25	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	Read Brian Eno's short writings on "Ambient Music" (D2L)

		Music: Start listening to post-punk experiments of the Cocteau Twins
F-3/27	Discuss Eno's writings and music of the Cocteau Twins	Start reading Barker's <i>Blow Your House Down</i> (pp. 247-307)  <b>Post forum response</b> to Cocteau Twins/Eno by 3/29
M-3/30	Finish Cocteau Twins discussion  Start discussing <i>Blow Your House Down</i>	Read <i>Blow Your House Down</i> (pp. 308-368)
W-4/1	Discuss <i>Blow Your House Down</i>	Finish reading <i>Blow Your House Down</i> (pp. 369-416)
F-4/3	Finish discussion of <i>Blow Your House Down</i>	Read Sarah Kane's <i>Blasted</i> (D2L)
M-4/6	Discuss <i>Blasted</i>	Start reading McLiam Wilson's <i>Eureka Street</i> (pp. 1-51)
W-4/8	Discuss <i>Eureka Street</i>	Read <i>Eureka Street</i> (pp. 52-102)
F-4/10	Discuss <i>Eureka Street</i>	Read <i>Eureka Street</i> (pp. 103-203)
M-4/13	Discuss <i>Eureka Street</i>	Read <i>Eureka Street</i> (pp. 204-260)
W-4/15	Discuss <i>Eureka Street</i>	Read <i>Eureka Street</i> (pp. 261-311)
F-4/17	Discuss <i>Eureka Street</i>	Finish <i>Eureka Street</i> (pp. 312-396)
M-4/20	Finish discussion of <i>Eureka Street</i>	Music: Start listening to "Troubles Music" via class website and The Police ("Invisible Sun," "Rehumanize Yourself," "Driven to Tears")
W-4/22	Watch Alan Clarke's <i>Elephant</i>	Finish listening to music selections about the Troubles and <b>post forum response</b> by 4/23
F-4/24	Discuss <i>Elephant</i> and discussion of Troubles music	Better be working on / revising your term paper!
M-4/27	Watch Ken Loach's <i>Hidden Agenda</i>	
W-4/29	Watch <i>Hidden Agenda</i>	Finish up your term paper!
F-5/1	Finish <i>Hidden Agenda</i> and discuss <b>Term Paper Due (via D2L) by 5 PM</b>	

**Final Examination: Thursday, May 7, 8.00-10.00 AM**