

Sultan Moulay Slimane University
Faculty of Letters and Humanities
English Departement.

**British Culture and Society/
Culture and Society in the US
3rd Semester, 2020/2021**

Beni Mellal

Prof. Meryem Krimi

British Culture and Society / Culture and Society in the US

Course description:

This course is intended to acquaint students with elements of British and American culture and society. It is, on one side, a survey of historical, political, educational, and cultural life in Great Britain and, on the other side, and cultural perspective on the USA, with a focus on the building of the American nation and its relation with the world at large.

Part I: British Culture and Society

Chapter 1: Historical Synopsis of Great Britain (Dynasties, etc.)

Chapter 2: British Government (Political System)

Chapter 3: The Educational System in Great Britain

Part II: Culture and Society in the US

Chapter 4: Native American Culture

Chapter 5: The Building of the American Nation (Revolution+History+20th century)

Chapter 6: American Political System

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Part I: British Culture and Society

(M19) Course-pack

Academic Year: 2021/2022

Britain, England or UK? What is the difference?



The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

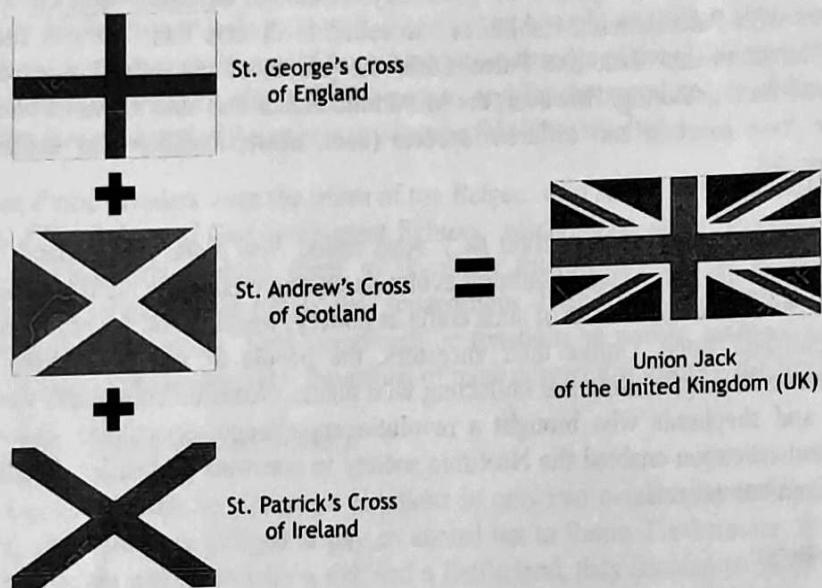
These toponyms are oftentimes used interchangeably, while in fact, they refer to distinct geographical and, frequently, political entities.

Great Britain: Great Britain is a large island that consists of three somewhat autonomous regions: England, Scotland and Wales.

England: England is an administrative region, the largest and most populous nation in the UK. Its capital city is London.

The UK: The UK is the brief abbreviation of the official name of the sovereign state we are talking about, which is, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The UK includes four administrative regions: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Flag of the UK, “*the Union Jack*”, was initially made by combining the flag of England with the flag of Scotland in 1606. When Ireland joined the union in 1801, Saint Patrick’s flag was also added to the composition.



The National Flag of the UK, the Union Jack

Chapter I: Historical Synopsis of Great Britain

1. Pre-Celtic Period

Prehistory:

The *Paleolithic Age* (2.5 million to 8000 BC): Also called the *Old Stone Age* (from Greek palaios - old, lithos - stone) is the 1st period of prehistory. It was characterized by the use of stone as the raw material for the development of tools and weaponry. The inhabitants of this period, known also as *Presapiens*, were nomadic and lived in caves. Their food came from fishing, hunting, and gathering vegetables, tubers and fruits.

The *Mesolithic Age* (8000 – 4000 BC): Also called *Middle Stone Age* is an ancient cultural stage and the 2nd period of prehistory. Although culturally and chronologically continuous with Paleolithics, Mesolithics succeeded to diversify their cultures and adapt to different environments. Just like Paleolithics, the people of this period lived on fishing, hunting and food gathering. However, the Mesolithic hunter was able to avail a wide range of vegetable food sources, and different species (deer, bears, shellfish and snails) than the Paleolithic did.

The *Neolithic Age* (4000 – 2000 BC): Also called *New Stone Age* is the 3rd period of prehistory, and the final stage of cultural evolution among prehistoric humans. This period is characterized by the appearance of such crafts as pottery, weaving and the production of tools out of polished stone. Unlike their ancestors, the people of this stage were no longer dependent on fishing, hunting and collecting wild plants. Neolithic immigrants were tillers of the soil and shepherds who brought a revolutionary change: agriculture. Cultivation and animal domestication enabled the Neolithic society to construct permanent dwellings and to release from nomadism.

Protohistory:

The *Bronze Age* (2000/1700 – 700 BC): It is the third phase in the development of material culture among the ancient phases. As the term denotes, this age was the first period in which metal was used. The economy of this period was mainly based on agriculture and craftsmen's trade. It was characterized by the use of bronze in the production of tools, weapons, jewels, ornaments and cult objects. The rise of the Bronze Age varied with regions; in Greece and China, for instance, it began before 3000 BC, whereas in Britain, the Bronze civilization was developed by the Picts until about 1900 BC.

The *Iron Age*: Iron was stronger and more plentiful than bronze and its introduction marks the beginning of the Iron Age. The use of Iron instead of bronze revolutionized many aspects of life, most importantly agriculture (e.g. ploughs and iron axes). It is generally thought that a Celtic language was spoken. Celtic is mostly used to refer to the pre-Roman inhabitants of Britain. The last centuries before the Roman invasion saw increasing sophistication in British life. Iron bars began to be used as currency, while internal trade and trade with continental Europe flourished, largely due to Britain's extensive mineral reserves. beginning of the Iron Age. The use of Iron instead of bronze revolutionized many aspects of life, most importantly agriculture (e.g. ploughs and iron axes).

Later on, the ability to heat and forge a new metal, Iron, brought the Bronze Age to an end, and the Iron Age began. The availability of great Iron sources facilitated land clearance, therefore, the growth of population.

2. The Founding of Britain:

2.1. Early Inhabitants:

The earliest inhabitants of Britain were the *Gaels*, men of Celtic race. The Celts migrated from the Continent, in the 8th c. BC, and arrived in Britain as separate tribes. They were united under a similar language, religion, and cultural expression. When the Gaels arrived, they dominated the native peoples, the *Picts*, and drove them toward the west and the north. Although the Celts were described as excellent warriors, they were innovative farmers. They brought iron ploughs to Britain, and were able to cultivate the hard land of valleys and lowland soils.

Between 500 and 300 BC, a second wave of Celtic invaders migrated to Britain, the *Brythons*, who drove the Gaels westward. The Britons brought to Britain a renewed interest in agriculture together with the age of Iron. Among the remains of the Celtic race, the massive hill forts. These were secure places for the people, and for the social and religious activities, as they are a live evidence of the existence of powerful Celtic chieftains.

The last Celtic invaders were the tribes of the *Belgae*, who settled in south-eastern Britain in 200 BC. The Belgae of Gaul were great fighters, their military skills, their iron weapons and two-wheeled carts enabled them to dominate the aborigines and to absorb their civilization. The religion of the Belgae was superstitious. Their priests, the Druids, occupied a dominant position in society. They combined the functions of priests, teachers and judges. However, things would change with the arrival of more powerful warriors – the Romans.

2.2. The Romans (55 BC – 410):

Julius Caesar was able to defeat the Brythons in only two quick raids in 55 and 54 BC. Compelled, the latter were obliged to pay an annual tax to Rome. Furthermore, the Romans realized that Britain was potentially a rich and a fertile land, they decided to annex it to their Empire. The real conquest was, then, undertaken in AD 42 by Emperor Claudius, when this latter send a huge army of 40,000, not only foot soldiers but cavalry as well.

Many tribes quickly made peace with the Romans, for they realized the sheer power of their army, while others fiercely resisted. Caratacus, a British leader, called for resistance and led some tribes of Wales, but was arrested in AD 51. Queen of the Iceni, Boudicca, succeeded to rally other tribes to her assistance and revolted in AD 61. As for the North of Scotland, it was not encompassed by the Romans, being peopled by the Picts. The latter built Hardian's Wall as a frontier with the North in 122.

The process of Romanization was very strong among the upper classes. However, Latin did not succeed in superseding the language of the defeated nation. And after more than four centuries of Roman occupation, the old Celtic background persisted. In 410, the Romans retreated, and left Britain exposed to the constant raids of their northern neighbors.

2.3. The Saxons:

As the Romans departed, successive waves of invaders and settlers arrived. England entered a period of time known today as the Dark Ages for the rest of the fifth century and early sixth century. During these Dark Ages, the Anglo-Saxons settled in eastern Britain.

Anglo-Saxon England refers to the period of the history of the part of Britain that became known as England, lasting from the end of Roman occupation and establishment of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in the 5th century until the Norman Conquest of England in 1066 by William the Conqueror.

In 430, Britain was invaded by a wave of Teutonic tribes coming across the North Sea: Jutes (Jutland in Denmark), Saxons (Holland) and Angles (Germany). It is believed that these tribes were invited to fight with a British kingdom, and defend it from the northern neighbors: The *Picts* and the *Scots*. Later in 442, these Anglo-Saxon mercenaries would revolt against their British employers. Under the leadership of King Arthur, the new settlers met native resistance, but soon became the rulers of the land, and by the early 7th c., Britain was already a Heptarchy: Wessex, Essex, Sussex (Saxons), Kent (Jutes), East Anglia, Mercia, and Northumbria (Angles).

2.4. The Vikings:

The Danes, kinsmen of Angles and Jutes, came from Scandinavia: modern Norway, Sweden and Denmark. They travelled great distances, mainly by sea and river and landed for the first time in 787. When Egbert of Wessex (802-839) was unifying all the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms, the Danes were conquering England little by little. They dominated the country at the north, and by 867, they completely submitted Northumbria and the whole of Ireland.

In Wessex, the Saxons of the south organized an effective opposition to the Danes under the rule of King Alfred the Great (871-901). This latter defeated the Danes in the battle of Edington (878), and signed the Peace of Wedmore and took London. Hence, the country was divided by a frontier-line: London-Chester. In 973 Edgar, Alfred's grandson was crowned king of a united England. Ethelred 'the Unready' (978-1016) tried vainly to stop the invasions of the Danes by paying high taxes. However, the Danes conquered all England in 1013, and their Viking king, Canute, became in 1017 the supreme ruler of England, Viking Scotland, Denmark and Scandinavia. Unlike the Anglo-Saxons, the Danish conquerors were absorbed in the mass of the English nation. Together, their tongues would later form the basis of English.

3. The British Dynasties:

3.1. The Normans (1066 – 1154):

In 1066 William the Conqueror became king of both, England and Normandy. At first, his campaign met resistance in the north of England, but in 1071, he put down the last English rebellion. His campaigns were savage and brutal what emphasized his military supremacy. Doomsday Book is a multipurpose document, and a fascinating insight into the Norman takeover of Anglo-Saxon England. It recorded each and every property with its annual income, and was compiled in 1086 mainly for taxation.

In 1087, King William passed away, and his son William II "Rufus" inherited the throne in spite of the opposition of his brother Robert, Duke of Normandy, with whom he made war from 1089 to 1096. William II followed his father's strong-armed rule, what earned him a reputation as a brutal, corrupt tyrant. His son, Henry I, became king of England in 1100. He defeated Robert in the battle of Tinchebray (1106) and became king of both England & Normandy.

The years from Henry's death (1135-1154) were a total anarchy. The succession was in dispute between Stephen, son of Adela (William's daughter) and Matilda (Henry I's

daughter), who wanted the throne for herself, then for her son Henry. The two sides engaged in a civil war until 1153, and came to an agreement in the Treaty of Winchester. In this way Stephen reigned up until 1154, and on his death Henry Plantagenet became king of the whole empire.

3.2. The Plantagenets (1154 to 1485):

The Plantagenets is a remarkably long-lasting dynasty. This dynasty is called 'Plantagenets' because the emblem of their first king Henry II (1154-1189) was a plant called 'planta genista. Among Henry II's greatest accomplishments there was the creation of the Common Law, thus giving to every free man the right to plead in royal courts (Curia Regis). He also issued the Constitutions of Clarendon (1164), which restricted ecclesiastical privileges and reduced the power of the Church. And he instituted the Assize of Clarendon, in which the procedure of criminal justice was established, and ecclesiastical criminals would be judged in royal courts.

In 1173 Henry's sons raised a rebellion throughout his domains. However, Henry was able to defeat them one at a time. On succeeding his father in 1189, Richard I '**The Lion-Heart**', joined the third Crusade against Moslems to take Jerusalem. On his return, Richard was imprisoned by the Duke of Austria, and then held for a huge ransom of 150.000 marks. He spent the rest of his reign in defending his possessions in France.

When Richard I was killed in 1199, he was succeeded by his brother John (1199-1216). This latter could not defend the English possessions in France. Hence, by 1214, John lost all his lands in the north of the Loire at the Battle of Bouvines. This defeat and his surrender to the Pope caused the anger of the English nobility. The rebellious barons made an alliance with the Church and the merchants, and obtained from the king the Magna Carta (The Great Charter) in 15-6-1215. This document reinforced the rights of the feudal aristocracy and tried to ensure that the king was beneath rather than above the law. When John passed away, England was in war between royalists and barons supported by France. Soon the Church supported Henry III, and during his reign, the Hundred Years War began (1337), a struggle between England and France.

In spite of the frequent fratricidal plots and civil wars, this period, 15th c., knew the emergence of new social institutions and the prosperity of the English culture. Printing was invented, parliament grew, cathedrals were remodeled and universities were founded (Oxford and Cambridge).

3.3. The Tudors:

Tudors, an English royal dynasty of Welsh origin, reigned for little more than a century and gave five sovereigns to England: Henry VII (1485-1509); his son, Henry VIII (1509-47); followed by Henry VIII's three children, Edward VI (1547-53), Mary I (1553-58), and Elizabeth I (1558-1603).

Henry VII the heir of Lancaster, and the founder of the Tudors' dynasty, landed in Wales and defeated Richard in the battle of Bosworth in 1485. He triumphed over all the Yorkist opponents and restricted the power of the nobility. **Henry VIII**'s councilor, Cardinal Wolsey, pushed him to declare war on France and Scotland. His main concern was for the succession of the throne, but the Church refused the divorce of Katherine of Aragon from the king. As a result, Wolsey was charged with treason in 1529. He chose another minister, Thomas Cromwell, to carry out the Reformation and to reduce the legal authority of the Church.

Thomas Cranmer, the new archbishop of Canterbury, assented to the marriage of the king with Anne Boleyn, who became now the new queen of England. Even though, Henry VIII was excommunicated by the pope, the Clergy was obliged to admit him as the supreme head of the Church, by the Act of Supremacy (1534). The constitution and the dogmas of the Church remained Catholic. The dissolution of monasteries was followed, in 1539, by the passing of the Six Articles. These were intended to abolish the diversity of opinions, and permitted Henry VIII to prosecute Catholics as traitors and Protestants as heretics. Yet, the general tendency was toward Protestantism.

Edward VI paved the way for the growing influence of Protestants. However, when **Mary Tudor**, Katherine of Aragon's daughter, became queen, she re-established Catholicism. Her reaction was so violent that she was known as *Bloody Mary* for her persecution of Protestants to restore Roman Catholicism in England: 300 executions, including Thomas Cranmer.

Elizabeth I succeeded her half-sister, Mary Tudor, and restored Protestantism. She signed the 39 articles, and gave a much more Protestant aspect to the Anglican doctrine. In 1572, Scottish Presbyterianism infiltrated to England and became Puritanism. The Puritans intended to purify the English church from all the aspects of popery.

Mary Stuart claimed for the English throne, but was imprisoned and, later, executed (1587). Her execution conjured the conflict with Spain. The destruction of the Invincible Armada in 1588 assured the English supremacy on the sea, and saved both Elizabeth and Protestantism. As a result, England broke the Spanish leadership and became the biggest Protestant power.

Economically, the loss of the old places of exportation (Antwerpen and Bruges to Spain; Calais to France; Hamburg to the Hanse) obliged England to look for new markets. New companies such as: the Moscovite Company 1554 and East India Company 1600 were created. These companies represented the beginning of the colonial expansion.

3.4. The Stuarts:

In 1604, the Scottish King James I reunited in his person the English and Scottish crowns, and became the King of Great Britain. Religiously, he adopted Anglicanism and condemned Puritanism. Puritans made their 1st exodus to America in 1620 (the Mayflower). Catholics on the other hand were disappointed by their new King and some of them plotted to kill him, they were discovered and executed.

Taxation, the selling of monopolies and bad foreign policy was the Stuarts' resort to face the financial difficulties inherited from the Tudors. In 1621, the House of Commons acted against James I when he made peace with Spain, and defied him by discussing foreign affairs in their Chamber. In 1624, he declared war on Spain and failed, what triggered the Commons' anger against him and against his son, Charles.

Charles I (1625-1649) persecuted all the political and religious opponents, especially Puritans. He tried to make the Puritans conform to Anglicanism, and this task was led by William Laud, the archbishop of Canterbury. When this latter attempted to introduce the Anglican Church in Scotland (1638), the Scots rebelled against Charles I, and expelled his forces from Scotland. At this point, Charles was obliged to call the Long Parliament. The first thing the Long Parliament did was the trial and execution of the King's councilors. This latter attempted to take custody of the royal family, and the king imprisoned the leaders of the Commons. The country was deeply divided and the Civil War broke out in 1642.

Oliver Cromwell, leader of the new parliamentary army formed an alliance with the Scots and defeated the royalists. Charles I surrendered to the Scots, who handed him over to the English Parliament for £200,000 later in 1647. He escaped once again in 1648, but he was captured again and executed in 16.02.1649.

The Puritans were more empowered with the establishment of the Commonwealth. Under the Commonwealth, the Republic, Cromwell made a Puritan purge in Scotland (1651) and in Catholic Ireland (1649), with complete dispossession of land, and was proclaimed "Lord Protector". Cromwell died in 1658, and so did the Republic. His son Richard succeeded him only for a short time and resigned in 1659. Thus Charles II was back as king and the monarchy was restored.

James II, Charles's Catholic brother, promoted Catholics in the army and navy, and forced universities to admit them. However, he met resistance from the Anglican Church and the Whigs. The danger of a durable Catholic dynasty led to the replacement of James by his Protestant daughter, Mary, and her husband, William III of Orange in 1688.

In 1701, the Act of Settlement confirmed the Protestant succession on the throne of the house of Hanover, and was at the same time the cause of the Act of Union (1707) which united England and Scotland under Queen Anne (1702-14). Finally, by the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), Britain who was victorious over the French, purchased Gibraltar, Minorca, Nova Scotia & other territories. She also took the monopoly of the slave trade with Spanish America thanks to the Treaty of Asiento. The progress made in science was represented by Isaac Newton (1642-1727) who rediscovered gravitation. In 1694, the Bank of England was created, and London replaced Amsterdam as the new financial pole of Europe. Together with the economic boom and the parliamentary regime, by the 17th century, Britain became a world power.

4. 18th-century Britain (1714–1815):

George Ludwig or George I, of Hanover (1714-27) had very limited English, lived mainly in Hanover and was not as capable as his son, George II (1727-60). This one relied heavily on the ability of Britain's first Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole, especially in the period between 1721 & 1742. During his government, he succeeded to maintain good relations with France. In Parliament, which had now the task to form the ministry, the difference between Tories (ancestors of Conservatives) and Whigs (ancestors of Liberals) was more & more neat.

Economically, the industrial growth in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries gave Britain larger markets for her raw materials and goods. New ideas were borrowed from other European countries what led to technical revolutions and industrialization. Likewise, the 18th century's wealthy people invested their money to improve land, sinking mines and building factories, since the profits accumulated from business transactions were very high. By the 18th century, London became the largest business and banking center in the world.

By the early 18th century, Britain was already a powerful, prosperous, cohesive and a leading European and imperial power. However, it also had its weaknesses, and the country was in some respects, internally divided. The Celtic fringe (Scotland, Ireland and Wales) was barely assimilated. Scotland, recently united with England and Wales (1707), was still retaining its own religious, educational and cultural aspects. The vast majority of Irish people spoke Gaelic only, and belonged to the Roman Catholic Church, when Britain was staunchly Protestant. Most Welsh men and women could neither speak nor understand the English language.

Alongside the internal divisions, the 18th c. was mainly a century of external conflicts. In 1740, GB was allied to Austria against France, Spain and Prussia in the Austrian War of Succession. The British army and fleet fought against the French in North America & in India, where the trade companies of the two countries were struggling to spread their influence. Just after the end of this conflict by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (1748), the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) broke out. It opposed Britain & Prussia to France, Austria & Russia. The British were at first defeated and they lost Hanover to the French. Then William Pitt was called and the British were victorious, mainly off Portugal, in the Indies & in Canada. Thus the Treaty of Paris consecrated the British victory, and France lost definitely her colonies in North America and her trading posts in the Indies.

When the American colonists refused to pay taxes on trade to the British government, George III and Lord North decided to use force. This marked the beginning of the American war of Independence (1775-1783). After the battle of Saratoga (1777), the civil war became an international one. The French, the Spaniards & the Dutch joined the anti-British front. The defeat of G. Charles Cornwallis in Yorktown (1781) by the troupes of G. Washington, forced Lord North to resign. The Treaty of Versailles (1783) recognized the independent 13 colonies as the republic of USA.

As a result of the war, a deep reform of institutions was made. The Economic Reform Act (1782) reduced considerably the powers of the king. The India Act (1784), which gave the government the authority over British India, was supported by PM William Pitt the Second. From 1783 to 1801, and from 1804 to 1806, the latter turned upside down the equilibrium of powers: henceforth, the king would no longer govern.

5. The Victorian Age (1837-1901):

At the age of 18, Victoria became a queen, and reigned for more than 60 years, longer than any other British monarch. Her reign was a period of significant social, economic and technological change, which saw the expansion of Britain's industrial power. The British Empire grew, and encompassed Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Africa, Kenya, and India.

Because of its impressive might and economic power, Britain started introducing its culture and civilization to the world. Charles Dickens was one of the greatest Victorian novelists, his novel '*Oliver Twist*' (1838), was published in serial form and brought to public attention contemporary social evils.

Prince Albert's death from typhoid plunged Queen Victoria into a long period of mourning and withdrawal from public life, during which a republican movement gained popularity. Victoria died at the age of 81. As queen-empress she had ruled over almost a quarter of the world's population. She established firm precedents for a hard-working 'constitutional monarch', operating as a head of state above the conflict of party politics. Her death, coming so soon after the end of the 19th century, was truly the end of an era.

6. The Commonwealth:

Commonwealth (1931-49), also called Commonwealth of Nations, is a free association of sovereign states comprising the UK and 53 other states or countries that were formerly part of the British Empire, and chose to maintain practical cooperation and ties of friendship. These countries acknowledge the British monarch as their symbolic head. Although politically independent, 16 members of the Commonwealth of Nations recognize the UK's monarch as

their king or queen. These are identified as the Commonwealth Realms. Among the Commonwealth countries we find:

Country	Type of Government
India	Republic
Bangladesh	Republic
Ghana	Republic
Kenya	Republic
Maldives	Republic
Malta	Republic
Australia	Monarchy
Canada	Monarchy
Tonga	Monarchy
Eswatini	Monarchy

Chapter II: British Government (Political System)

The UK is a constitutional monarchy. Its government is called "Her Majesty's Government", because it governs the country in the name of the Queen, Elizabeth II. It is a parliamentary democracy where the party that wins the most seats in the general elections forms the government, and the leader of this party becomes Prime Minister, the head of the government.

1. The chief characteristics of British Government:

- A. Unitary system: A unitary system means that all power & authority for exercising the functions of state are concentrated and centralized in one sovereign power: Parliament, Government or a person (monarch/president). In Britain, it is the Parliament.
- B. Constitutional Monarchy: A Constitutional monarchy is a government in which a monarch (King/Queen) acts as the head of the state within the parameters of a written or unwritten constitution. In other words, the monarch's powers are limited by law and convention. In Britain, Queen Elizabeth's functions are limited mainly to ceremonial and advisory tasks.
- C. Unwritten Constitution: Almost all countries have written constitutions in which the principles of government are embodied in one document. In this sense, Britain is unique in having no single constitutional document. Another characteristic of the British constitution is its flexibility. In other words, there aren't complicated procedures to change laws.
- D. Parliamentary System: In Britain there is no strict separation btw the executive and the legislative branches of government. That is, the government is chosen from members of the legislature.

2. The Monarchy, the Prime Minister and the Cabinet:

- A. The Monarchy: In Britain, there is a difference between the Crown & the Sovereign. The former is a permanent institution and personifies the supreme executive power of the nation. It is mostly exercised by ministers on behalf of the Queen. The Sovereign is the person on whom the Crown is conferred (given, attributed) and in whose name acts of state are carried out. Powers, which are left legally in the hands of the crown, are known as the royal prerogative. Examples of these functions are: appointment of PM, approval of legislation, the granting of honors & titles, Parliamentary sessions, the granting of pardon, speech from the throne, etc.
- B. The Prime Minister: As the leader of government, he is responsible for forming a government at the start of his office, selecting a Cabinet, appointing & dismissing ministers as circumstances arise, directing & coordinating policy. He is the main link between the Government & the sovereign. He represents the Government at important international meetings, and often takes a leading role in foreign policy. He is also leader of his party in the country & in Parliament. The PM needs to be a strong personality & in good health.
- C. The Cabinet: The PM is not completely free to choose whom he wants, but he must have a Cabinet (a committee of leading ministers) representative of the various wings of the party. It is composed of the most capable, influential and respected party leaders in Parliament. The power of the Cabinet is, in turn, controlled by Parliament.

3. Parliament and Law making:

The British Parliament has a bicameral system. It consists of the sovereign, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons. The 3 elements are outwardly separate, being constituted on different principles, and do different tasks in different places. They meet on occasions of symbolic significance such as the coronation or the State opening of Parliament. As a law-making institution, however, Parliament is a corporate body since all 3 elements take part in the process by which Bills become Acts.

The House of Lords comprises 186 peers (barons, earls, viscounts, marquis, dukes, bishops, and archbishops), and is presided by the Lord Chancellor (the Speaker in HC). The members examine and amend (make changes in the wording of a proposed law) if necessary bills sent to the HC, but it rarely votes against the Government, because the Lords only have the power to delay the passing of a Bill.

The House of Commons comprises 650 members who are elected by direct universal suffrage for 5 y. The Speaker is an MP of long experience, proposed by the Government. & acceptable to all parties. He is elected at the beginning of each new parliament to preside over the House and make respect the regulations. After his election, he must show impartiality.

Concerning law making, a Bill is presented 1st to the HC where it is explained & debated. If it receives a majority vote it goes to the HL, which debates & criticizes it. Then the Bills are taken by the PM to the queen. If the royal assent is given, the Bill becomes a law & is entered in the Statute Book.

4. Political Parties:

Britain has basically a two-party system (Conservative & Labor) but there are numerous other parties having a considerable impact on the political life. This two-party system has generally produced firm and decisive government, and has produced the British phenomenon of the Opposition.

The two original parties, Tory & Whig, originated in the constitutional struggles during the reign of Charles II in the 17th c., when the Tories represented the interests of the Crown & the Church, and the Whigs the interests of liberal aristocrats, the commercial classes and Nonconformists. They changed their names into Conservative and Liberal in the 19th c., when the Conservatives pursued a vigorous imperialistic policy, and the Liberals were interested in reforms at home. By 1900 the growing needs of the workers had given rise to the Labour Party, which represented a moderate type of socialism.

In addition to these two parties, there are now in Britain more than 50 political parties. The Liberal Party was the third largest national party, but when it merged in 1988 with the Social Democratic Party (SPD) they formed the Social & Liberal Democratic Party. The other parties include: the British National Party (BNP), the Communist Party (CP), the Green Party (GP), and the Islamic Party of Britain (IPB). As for regional parties, the main ones are the Scottish National Party, the Plaid Cymru (Welsh nationalists), and the parties of Northern Ireland: Ulster Unionist Party, the Sinn Fein, etc.

5. Civil Services and Local Government:

- A. Civil Service:** Government officials forming the administration are known as civil servants. They are servants of the Crown (other than holders of political or judicial office) employed in a civil capacity, paid out of public funds, approved by Parliament.
- B. Local Government:** It permits variation in government. according to differences in local needs & difficulties; it produces continuity of policy in an area; & it relieves the burden of work of central Gov. According to the administrative reform of April 1996, the new map of Britain is divided into 53 counties with their councils, which are subdivided in their turn into 569 districts with their councils. Added to these, six other metropolitan counties represent the heavily populated conurbations. These are Merseyside, Greater Manchester, West Midlands, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Tyne & Wear. As for Greater London Council, it is divided into 32 districts.

In England all country councils are responsible for planning & administration over wider areas, e.g. education, the police, the fire service, personal social services, traffic regulation, transportation planning. The chief functions of district councils are the levy and collection of rates (local taxes), environmental health and housing (council houses).

In a nutshell, Great Britain is an institutional monarchy with a unitary system, where the sovereign power is the parliament. The British parliament is a bicameral body consisting of a lower house, (HC) and an upper house (HL), alongside the reigning monarch. The monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, has limited to no political powers, and even her annual Queen's speech is provided by the ruling political party.

Chapter III: The Educational System in Great Britain

In many ways, the educational system in Great Britain is similar to that of other countries, notably other countries in Europe. In Britain, education is compulsory from age 5 to age 18, and mainly assured by the state education system. However, the British state school system is not unitary. Most schools are public, and are directly or indirectly financed either by the state or by churches and religious organizations.

1. Primary & Secondary Education:

With the Education Act of 1944, a national system was introduced and placed under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. Primary education is free and compulsory from age 5 to 11. Secondary education, which is organized in a variety of ways, is provided by LEAs for children aged 11 to 19. The orientation of students is made on the basis of the exam passed at the last year of the Primary Cycle. This gives them the opportunity to enter a "grammar school" or a "secondary modern school."

After the age of 16, education is not obligatory. When they get their General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), students have the choice to remain at school or to go to complementary education schools. They continue their studies either to have a professional qualification, or to pass the exams of the General Certificate of Education (GCE) commonly known as "A-level." Obtaining the G.C.E. 'A'-level enables students to enter a university.

2. Higher Education:

British universities are completely autonomous and their independence is guaranteed, but they have close links with the central government, in that a large proportion of their income derives from public funds. By the end of 1994, there were 90 universities, including the Open University. During the term 1992-93, there were more than 1.4 million students in the high education in GB (850.000, 10 years earlier). The amount of scholarship was determined by the income of parents. Nevertheless, by the end of the 1980s, these amounts have been stabilized.

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Part I: Culture and Society in the US

(M19) Course-pack

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The United States of America, shortly abbreviated as the U.S., is considered to be the fourth largest country in the world (after Russia, Canada and China), and its capital city is Washington D. C. (District of Columbia). It is a federal republic composed of 50 states, and the last two states to join were Alaska and Hawaii. Originally, there were 13 English colonies on the American continent. These colonies became independent on July the 4th, 1776 (Independence Day). The American flag consists of 13 red and white stripes representing the 13 original states and 50 white stars representing the 50 states of the US.



The American Flag

Chapter IV: Native American Culture:

1. Pre-Colombian Americans:

Native Americans, also called American Indians, Amerindians and aboriginal Americans, are members of nomadic hunting and gathering cultures of any of the aboriginal tribes of the Western Hemisphere, and the ancestors of contemporary American Indians. The Native American culture dates back to thousands of years (approximately 30,000–12,000), when these people traveled in small family-based groups from Asia to North America during the ice age.

Sea levels were so low (120 meters) what led to the emergence of a land-bridge (Beringia), connecting the two continents and making migration easier. Some groups of emigrants followed a glacier-free corridor and settled in what is now known as Canada, while other went through the Pacific coast towards the south. However, the most important of the two avenues to the peopling of America remains ambiguous. The Pacific has washed away most of the coastal migration route, and glacial meltwash completely destroyed traces of inland journey. Thus, most traces of this period in human prehistory have been erased.

2. Paleo-Indians:

According to North American prehistory, these very early cultures are generally referred to as the Paleo-Indians. Paleo-Indians settled in different post-Ice Age environments, such as coastal regions and forests, and adapted their lifestyles to their environment. Tribes along the East Coast (Virginia) for instance, based their lives on sea food.

Paleo-Indian groups lived in dynamic landscaped that they shared with megafauna such as mammoths, mastodons, giant bison, giant ground sloths and short-faced bears. Their sites oftentimes contain the remains of these giant mammals, what emphasizes the fact that among the Paleo-Indian hunters' activities was the pursuit of big game. When the number of big game diminished, the hunters went after smaller preys such as rabbits and deer.

By about 2000 BC, some Paleo-Indian groups had begun to experiment with food production, and started to cultivate different plants. They also developed their Material Culture, and developed ceramics, jewelry and begun crafting stone into spear tools and producing weapons. Archaeologists have therefore sorted Paleo-Indians into two groups, based on the different types of spear points they used: Clovis and Folsom.

A. Clovis Culture:

The Clovis culture, approximately lasted from 9500 to 9000 BC, is considered to be the 1st of the two cultures. The Clovis projectile's points are made of leaf-shaped thin stone, where one or more longitudinal flakes were omitted from the bottom of the point's two flat sides. Clovis points were often found on mammoth kill sites, together with side scrapers, used to flense the hide.

B. Folsom Culture:

Developed from its ancestor the Clovis culture, Folsom culture emerged. Similarly leaf-shaped, the Folsom points were more precisely crafted, and had much larger flutes than those made by the Clovis people. Lindenmeier, a Folsom campsite in northeastern Colorado, has yielded a large variety of gravers (used to engrave bone or wood) and scrapers, as well as bone artifacts. The Folsom culture is thought to have lasted from approximately 9000 to 8000 BC.

As the European conquest of the Americas began at the dawn of the 16th century, the Paleo-Indians resided throughout the Western Hemisphere. They were soon subject to discriminatory political and legal policies, as they were decimated by the effects of the military conquest, enslavement and epidemic diseases. Nonetheless, The American Indians have always one of the most active and successful native peoples in processing political change and regaining their autonomy in areas such as land ownership, religious freedom, local laws, education, and the revitalization of traditional culture.

Chapter V: The Building of the American Nation

Historical Synopsis of the USA:

1. Early Settlements and the Colonial Period:

In 12 October 1492, Christopher Columbus landed in the Caribbean looking for a western route to Asia, without knowing that he had in fact discovered what he thought was a new world, but was really North America, which along with its Indigenous people and culture had been there all along.

Portuguese explorers and Spanish Conquistadors soon diverted their destinations towards the new world to conquer, seek treasures and convert native populations (the three Gs). France and the Dutch Republic also joined in by exploring and colonizing northern regions of North America. In 1497, the English explorer John Cabot landed on the east coast of what is now America, and England claimed its stake.

In 1607, a group of about 100 men set out for the Chesapeake Bay, under King James I's order, and founded Jamestown, the first of the British colony in North America. Fifteen years and much drama later, in 1620, another group of Puritans set out for Virginia on board of the famous ship: the Mayflower. Later the Mayflower reached Plymouth harbor, where the Pilgrims began to build their settlement. After the death of James I in 1625, King Charles I founded Massachusetts Bay which led to the founding of the Connecticut and Rhode Island colonies.

From the foundation of the first colony of Jamestown until the beginning of the Revolutionary War, various regions of the eastern coast had different characteristics. Once founded, the 13 British colonies were divided into three geographic areas: New England, Middle England, and Southern England. Each of these areas had specific economic, social, and political growth.

2. The War of Independence (1776-1783):

War of Independence, also called the American Revolution, is the insurrection by which the 13 British North American colonies won their political independence, and went on to form the United States of America. This war arose from growing tensions and estrangement between the colonial government and its North American colonies due to the British attempts to assert greater control over the colonial affairs.

In May 10, 1775 the 2nd Continental Congress met in Philadelphia and voted to go to war, appointing Colonel George Washington of Virginia as commander-in-chief of the American forces. In 1776, Thomas Paine, a political theorist and writer, advocated, in his Common Sense, the idea of an independent republic. And in July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence, first written by Thomas Jefferson, was adopted by the colonies.

Two years later, and after a series of battles (Saratoga 1777, Camden 1780, Yorktown 1781, etc.), the conflict officially ended and the Americans won the War and became independent in 1783. The Treaty of Paris was signed on September 3rd, 1783, by the representatives of King George III (David Hartley and Richard Oswald) and the United States (Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and John Jay), and was ratified on January 14th, 1784, by the US Congress of the Confederation.

3. The Civil War (1861-1865):

The Civil War, also called the War Between the States, is a four-year war between the United States (Northern States) and 11 Southern states that seceded from the Union and formed the Confederate States of America. This war began in 1861, following decades of conflicts between northern and southern states mainly over slavery, and westward expansions.

Abraham Lincoln, the first Republican president, had long insisted that slavery was to be abolished and kept out of the territories. After having issued the Emancipation Proclamation, the abolition of slavery became a declared objective of the Union war. The Civil War lasted for four years from April 14, 1861 to April 6, 1865. The period 1861-62 was marked with undecided battles, but the years 1863-65 knew clear victories of the Northerners: Gettysburg, PA (1863), Vicksburg, MS (1863), Atlanta, GA (1864), etc.

The whole war ended with the victory of the Northerners and the union of the whole nation. However, in April 14th, 1865, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth, a Virginian actor embittered by the South's defeat. Indeed, the Civil War was the deadliest war ever fought on the American soil, where 620,000 of 2.4 million soldiers killed and millions more injured.

4. America in the thirties (1930s): The Depression and the New Deal:

The Stock Market Crash of 1929 conjured the start of the **Great Depression**, a worldwide economic crisis, and the longest and most severe economic downturn ever experienced by the industrialized western world. Although it originated in the U.S, its drastic deflation reached almost every country of the world. However, its social and cultural effects pierced the American society more than any other society, and Americans faced the harshest adversity since the Civil War.

Due to the economic crisis, the banking system of the nation was in a state of recession. Millions of Americans lost their jobs, while hundreds of thousands roamed the country for shelter and food. Bread lines were a common sight in most cities. In 1933 the new president, Franklin Roosevelt (FDR), declared to the nation: "*The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.*" This brought an air of confidence and optimism that quickly made the people accept and support his program, known as the **New Deal**.

The New Deal brought many reforms in a very short lapse of time. It also brought to the individual citizen a sharp revival of interest in government. With astonishing rapidity, the nation's banks were first closed – and then reopened only if they were solvent. To fight unemployment, a new program, Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), was enacted by Congress to bring relief to young men between 18 and 25 years of age. At the agricultural level, the Congress passed in 1933 the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) to provide economic relief to farmers. However, from 1935 to 1938, a severe drought – the "Dust Bowl" – hit the Great Plains states. Violent wind and dust storms ravaged the southern Great Plains. Crops were destroyed, cars and machinery were ruined, and people and animals were harmed. Approximately 800,000 people, often called "Okies," left Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Missouri and headed farther west to the land of myth and promise, California.

Chapter VI: The Political System of the U.S

The United States' government is based on a 4,400 words written Constitution, the world's shortest national Constitution. On March 4, 1789, the Constitution officially went into effect, after being ratified by New Hampshire giving it 9 out of 13 votes needed for it to pass. The American Constitution encompasses three separate branches of government, with each branch having its own powers and fields of influence. Nevertheless, the Constitution has a system of checks and balances, to ensure that no branch would reign supreme. The three branches are:

1. The Executive Branch: the President of the USA and the Executive Departments:

The American Constitution gives the Executive Power to the president. The latter should be a native-born American citizen at least 35 years of age. The presidential term lasts 4 years and begins on January 20th. If both the president and vice president vacate their offices, the speaker of the House of Representatives would assume the presidency. The White House, located in Washington, D.C., is the seat of government.

The Secretaries are heads of the executive departments (Ministries). They are chosen by the President and approved by the Senate. They form a council of advisers generally known as the president's Cabinet. Instances of such departments are: the Department of Agriculture (DOA), the Department of Defense (DOD), the Department of Education, the Department of the interior, etc.

2. The Legislative Branch: the Congress:

The American Congress is bicameral; it is divided into two chambers: the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate: it is composed of 100 members – 2 for each of the 50 States – and is headed by the Vice-President. Senators are chosen in statewide elections held in even-numbered years. The House of Representatives: it is composed of 438 members and is headed by the Speaker. Every 2 years, the voters of each district choose a Representative for Congress. Sessions of the Congress are held in the Capitol building in Washington, D.C.

3. The Judicial Branch: The Supreme Court:

The third branch of government, in addition to the executive (President) and legislative (Congress), is the federal judiciary. It is responsible for interpreting the law, and is headed by the Supreme Court, which watches over the two branches of Government. The Supreme Court consists of the Chief Justice of the United States and 08 Associate Justices. Federal judges are appointed by the President "with the advice and consent of the Senate." The Supreme Court decides questions of the constitutionality of laws when such questions are raised in appeals from lower courts. It also acts on disputes involving the national government, or two or more States, or citizens of different States. Neither the President nor the Congress can change a decision of Supreme Court.

4. The System of Checks and Balances:

The powers given to each branch of government is balanced by the powers of the other two branches. Each branch serves as a check on the others. This is to keep any branch from gaining too much power or from misusing its powers. The system of checks and balances makes compromise and consensus necessary. It also protects against extremes.

5. Political Parties:

Today, there are two major political parties in the United States: the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. The Democratic Party is considered to be the more liberal party. It is generally more responding to the rights of minorities, workers and social groups. The Republican Party is considered to be the more conservative one. It puts more emphasis on encouraging private enterprise because they believe that a strong private sector makes citizens less dependent on government. Minor political parties are generally referred to as "third parties." Tea Party is the latest and outstanding case in point.

6. Presidential Elections:

The president is not elected directly by the voters. Although the names of the presidential candidates appear on the ballots, technically the people of each state do not vote directly for the president. They rather select a slate of presidential electors, equal to the number of senators and representatives each state has in Congress. The electors of all states compose what is known as the Electoral College. The candidate with the highest number of votes in each state wins all the electoral votes of that state. The other candidates get none. To be successful, a candidate must receive at least 270 votes.