

Britain and Europe from 1945 to Brexit

Virginie ROIRON

Type de cours / Course type : Online course –5 ECTS

Langue du cours/Language of instruction : English

Descriptif du cours et des objectifs pédagogiques / Course description and objectives

The UK emerged from the Second World War as a great power in mind but no longer in fact. Britain's current foreign policy was forged throughout the second half of the 20th century by taking stock of her own relative decline in power as well as trying to find remedies to overcome it. In this respect, Britain's relation with Europe provides an interesting lens through which to analyse Britain's foreign policy, and particularly the difficulties linked to the adaptation of her role in the post-war international order.

The UK joined the EEC in 1973 after two unsuccessful attempts, more than 15 years after its creation. The question of membership of the EEC was always a highly divisive issue and remained so even after 1973, only to reach a kind of climax at the end of the last decade with the organisation of the second referendum on membership and the victory of Brexit.

It will be the object of this module to give some keys to understand Britain's tumultuous and ambiguous relation to the European construction project and the EEC/EU, from her initial refusal to join the EEC to her repeated applications for membership, which turned into a so called "awkward partnership". The module will explore how Britain's foreign policy and vision of her role in the world informed, as much as it was informed by, her relation to Europe and European integration.

This module will follow a chronological outline, in order to identify the continuities and changes in Britain's foreign policy choices and participation to the European regional organisation.

Objectives:

- To appraise Britain's vision of European construction after WW2
- To account for the ups and downs of Britain/EEC-EU relations since 1973
- To understand the various factors that led to Britain's applications, membership and exit
- To critically evaluate Britain's foreign policy since 1945 and identify the driving forces behind it as well as their impact on Britain's European commitment.
- To have a better grasp of Britain's current foreign policy choices, challenges and perspectives in the wake of Brexit
- To analyse primary sources

Enseignant.e(s) / Teacher(s)

Virginie Roiron

Senior Lecturer in British and Commonwealth history.

Dispositif d'enseignement à distance envisagé / Online teaching method

Note that the online teaching method as well as the assessment might be slightly adapted according to the number of students actually enrolled.

- 45mn-to-one-hour online interactive classes every week for a first discussion on the topic of the week.
- Weekly podcast lectures providing background knowledge on the topic discussed during the class

Profitable participation in class discussions requires regular compulsory readings every week.

The online classes will take place on Zoom (link available every week on the Moodle page)

Evaluation / Assessment

- An oral presentation and analysis of the primary sources during the weekly class discussion + regular participation in class discussions (30%)
- A written 300- to 500-word reading report on an academic article (20%)
- A final paper at the end of the semester (c.1000 words) (50%)

Plan des séances / Course outline

The course will be organised around a number of topics, by chronological order.

Session 1 : Introduction

1- The post-war paradigm of Britain's foreign policy

- Session 2: Churchill's three circles and Labour's foreign policy in the first years of the Cold War (1945-55)
- Session 3: "Missing the boat"? Britain and the creation of the EEC

2-To join or not to join?

- Session 4: Defining priorities: the consolidation of the special relationship under Macmillan
- Session 5: Walking a tight rope: the representation and meaning of the first application
- Session 6: Between the Devil and the deep blue sea: the second application

3- An awkward partner?

- Session 7: The difficult adjustment of the "sick man of Europe" among the European Six (1973-1979)
- Session 8: From the "European jumper" to the Bruges speech: Britain and the EEC under Thatcher
- Session 9: Towards deeper integration? The making of the EU and the ambiguities of Britain's European policy / concluding remarks

Bibliographie sélective / Select bibliography

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- Daddow O., *Harold Wilson and European Integration: Britain's Second Application to join the EEC*, London: Franck Cass, 2003
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- Daddow O., Gaskarth J. (eds), *British Foreign Policy: the New Labour years*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011
- Garnett M., Mabon S. (eds.) *British foreign policy since 1945*, Routledge, 2018
- Gibbins J., *Britain, Europe and National Identity: Self and Other in International Relations*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014
- Gowland D., Turner A., Wright A., *Britain and European Integration since 1945*, Routledge, 2010.
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- Harris T., *Une certaine idée de l'Angleterre : la politique étrangère britannique au 20^{ème} siècle*, Armand Colin, 2006
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- Murphy Ph. *The Empire's new clothes: the myth of Commonwealth*, Hurst&co, 2018
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- Sanders D., *Losing an Empire, finding a role: British foreign policy since 1945*, (2nd ed) Palgrave Macmillan, 2017
- Schnapper P., Avril E., *Où va le Royaume Uni ? Le Brexit et après*, Odile Jacob, 2019
- Smith J., *The UK's journey into and out of the EU: Destinations Unknown*, Routledge, 2017
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- Turner M., *Britain and the world in the twentieth century: ever-decreasing circles*, Continuum, 2010