

Popular protest in Britain

Scope

During this course, we will explore **key moments and aspects of popular protest** in Britain. A wide range of primary sources (texts, oral archives, iconography) as well as later representations and interpretations (movies, scholarly texts) will be examined. Some sessions will focus on illustrious events and movements (the peasants' revolt, chartism, the suffragette movement, etc.), whilst others will address less prominent but equally significant phenomena (18th-century rioting, strikes during the Second World War, etc.). Particular emphasis will be placed on the **conflicting representations and interpretations** these events have generated over time. These conflicts often persist today, sometimes in a more subdued form – but not always.

Purpose

- To practice and develop the five **Cambridge English C1 Advanced skills** (listening, reading, speaking, interacting, writing).
- To acquire key **reference points** within British history.
- To develop a **critical awareness** of the contested nature of memory and historiography.
- To gain insight into the **main principles that have shaped the perception, representation and interpretation of popular protest**.

Format

- 1 hour of preliminary work at home: study of introductory materials related to the topic of the upcoming class.
- First 30 minutes of class: collective discussion of the preparatory documents.
- 45 minutes to 1 hour: small-group work on more specific sources, focusing on contrasting perspectives on the events.
- Final 30 to 45 minutes: whole-class discussion or collaborative writing activity, in which students are encouraged to articulate their own interpretation of the past.

Pre-requisites

- An **interest in the history of ordinary people and their forms of protest** (no prior knowledge of British history is required).
- A **commitment to completing the preliminary work** and a **willingness to engage in class discussions**.

Assessment

- 50% continuous assessment (attendance, oral and written contributions throughout the course).
- 50% final exam.

Provisional outline

1. The Peasants' revolt
2. The Levellers and the Diggers
3. 18th-century Rioting
4. Luddism
5. Chartism
6. A Corporatist Working Class?
7. Suffragettes and Suffragists
8. A People's War? Strikes during the Second World War
9. The Poll Tax Riots
10. Black Lives Matter