

IDH 4007 / IDH 4008  
Spring 2026 / Summer C 2026  
Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. / TBA  
MMC / Miami – London and the UK, Ireland,  
Cornwall, Devon, and Bristol/Bath

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## “The United Kingdom”: Still United?

### Course Introduction

The much-debated and highly publicized June 2016 “Brexit” referendum, in which a narrow majority of British citizens voted to leave the European Union, made newly apparent what has, in fact, been a centuries-old dynamic between the British Isles (England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales) and the European continent. This messy divorce, now nearing its tenth anniversary, has also revealed tensions within the UK itself, such as the uneasy question of Scottish independence from England, and anxiety over Northern Ireland’s position in the UK. Other divisions abound too, typified by “Megxit” and the near breakup of the beloved English Premier League a few years back. Add into the mix racial, class and religious tensions; a weakened Labour Party; and concern about the vaunted, beloved National Health Service (NHS) as it continues to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic: everywhere you look, divisive challenge abounds. Can the United Kingdom hold itself together? And as always, what exactly does the centuries-long tumult between England and Ireland, London and Dublin appear today, in 2026—now 100+ years after Irish Independence.

Honors College students enrolling in the UK program will have the opportunity to answer this question first-hand. In the spring semester, in IDH 4007, we will emphasize both coherence plus unity, **and** division and tension, as we study the dual strands of English and Irish history, culture, religion, literature and art, and advances in science, technology, medicine and engineering from the pre-Roman and Roman eras, through the Middle Ages, Renaissance, Restoration and Enlightenment, Industrial Revolution, Victorian and Edwardian ages, the World Wars of the last century, and right up to the present. This learning about the United Kingdom and too Ireland will then be tested and extended *in situ*, as participants travel in the summer, under the IDH 4008 rubric, observing first-hand, in London and Dublin, Cornwall and Westminster, if despair and dismay over Brexit and Megxit is real, or not. “United we stand. Divided we fall”: does Churchill’s famous formulation, spoken in June 1941, still apply in speaking of the UK, and Ireland, today?

In this, the sixth year of this Study Abroad program, we will begin our travels in London and the southeast, for our first fortnight (15 days). Then, over two more weeks, we will journey first to the Republic of Ireland, and then to the far southwestern tip of England. Thus, from the London metropolis, we will fly to the west of Ireland, where we will spend a few days first in the tiny fishing village of Dingle and its surrounding peninsulas, then north to Galway and Connemara. From there, we will head to the Irish capital, Dublin, for a weekend rich in exploration and experience of this thriving city on the Liffey. From Dublin, we will embark, again by plane, to Cornwall and Devon, the rugged picturesque counties at the far southwestern tip of England. The entire trip will end in the bustling port city of Bristol, with a day trip to nearby Bath.

There is too much in London and the whole of the UK and Ireland to ever encompass it “all” in the space of just one month; that said, your travels in London and the southeast, and then in Ireland, Cornwall and Devon should provide you an excellent introduction to the UK, vastly deepening your understanding of this fabled nation-state and its current position in the world.

Both in our spring term studies here in Miami, and while we travel in the UK and Ireland throughout June, a few threads of history and culture will be front and center. These include, but are not limited to: London’s centrality to the nation-state’s identity, even if challenged by other urban centers such as Dublin/Belfast, Glasgow/Edinburgh, and Manchester/Birmingham; the relationship of the urban and the rural in English life, as manifested by the institution of the country house; the relationship between the British people and the royal family, teased out at several royal palaces; the relationship between England and “her” colonies, including the U.S., Canada, Australia, India, Kenya, Zimbabwe, and most significantly for our Miami context, Caribbean nations such as Jamaica and the Bahamas; highlights and trends in the British arts, architecture, painting, and of course theatre—both classical drama (Shakespeare!) and the musical; politics and governance in the U.K. both at “home” and abroad; the “special relationship” as it stands today between the U.S. and Britain; the importance of family and lineage in a country that is increasingly multicultural, especially in and around London and other major urban centers; and the remnants and shards of an empire that, famously and not so long ago, spanned the globe.

Throughout both spring and summer, you will each be expected to tailor your studies in the course to your own interests, strengths, and majors. For example, pre-med students might examine the National Health Service, nursing, community medicine, or other aspects of British medicine, including the country’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic; engineers might study major feats of civil and industrial engineering, or construction and infrastructure, such as Hadrian’s Wall, Henry VIII’s fortifications, or the modern-day Thames Barrier; or advances made by Britons in technology and engineering, such as Turing’s decoding machine; science and philosophy students can study Stephen Hawking and Dawkins, among others; business students can examine all sorts of questions related to British, European and world financial relationships, or the life-story and business model of Virgin Atlantic entrepreneur Richard Branson, etc... I’m confident that no matter what your major might be, in consultation with me we can quickly find several topics of unique interest to you, and worth studying in detail, that will conjoin your own expertise and career interests to the course’s focus on the U.K.

In IDH 4007, you will complete several in-class presentations. The major assignment for the course, which you will research, design and execute with a partner, will entail a 75-90 minute Canva, Prezi or PowerPoint presentation, given in class on an assigned day, on one of the major periods of British history (such as the Middle Ages, the Tudor Era, Stuarts and the 17<sup>th</sup> century, or, skipping ahead, WWI, WWII, contemporary Britain from 1952 – 1981, or truly contemporary UK, 1982 – 2026). With 22 students in the class, there will be 11 such major presentations, scheduled throughout the semester. This is a high stakes project, counting for 30% of your final grade; the presentation could easily include 50 – 75 slides, or more, and I expect sharp design, strong and thoughtful research, editing and curating of the information you choose to present, and superb public speaking. You will also give a “wildcard” presentation, done solo, lasting about 25-30 minutes, where you are able to dig deeply into some aspect of one of these periods—you will be assigned a “wildcard” period different from your major presentation, both so you do not have two presentations to give on the same Thursday morning, and to spread out your research and learning across periods, as well. This too will be given in class to your cohort, and you will be graded on design, ideas, content, and your ability to relate the topic or idea to the class in a fun and compelling manner (cooking or baking, doing crafts, making things, Kahoots games—all these enliven your

“wildcard” and make it relatable.) This “wildcard” will count for 20% of your final grade. In addition, you will create a third slide show, called a “Site Report,” worth 10% of your grade; here, you will be asked to create about 10-20 slides that dive deeply into one of the locations we will visit during the summer. These are peer reviewed and peer-graded; they will be turned in on Canvas, but not presented during class. You will also take 12 quizzes, each worth one point; only your best ten scores will count towards your grade. These quizzes will involve 5 multiple choice questions, and they will in fact be written by the pair of students each week who is giving the major presentation; they will be based on two readings this pair will choose and that Professor Sutton will place on Canvas a few days before class. These quizzes, altogether, count for 10% of the grade. Two more short assignments, a research proposal and a brief slide show on some aspect of life in contemporary Britain, will each be worth another 5%; these will be turned in at the very end of the semester. Finally, attendance (showing up on time, and for all classes!), and your participation in our class will count for an additional 20% of the final grade.

Grading scale is as follows:

- 94 – 100: A
- 90 – 93.9: A-
- 87 – 89.9: B+
- 84 – 86.9: B
- 80 – 83.9: B-
- 75 – 79.9: C+
- 70 – 74.9: C
- 60 – 69.9: D
- 0 – 59.9: F

Broadly speaking, this course, IDH 4007, has two major outcomes. First, it aims to inculcate in all students a broad and deep knowledge of the UK and Ireland, from ancient Roman days to the present moment, 2025. All aspects of British and Irish history, culture, and experience—both the very praiseworthy and the truly questionable—will be on the table. Secondly, the course aims to foster a close-knit, trusting learning community of 24 individuals (22 students, program assistant, and faculty director) who trust and understand each other well—success with this goal will in turn pay off handsomely in the summer as we travel together through England, Northern Ireland, and Wales. In summation, IDH 4007 is a professor-organized, student-driven, academically rigorous, fun and lively course: it provides the foundation for what occurs in the summer.

During the summer, specifically while we travel in the UK from May 31 – June 30, 2026, you will be enrolled in IDH 4008. In this summer term class, you will again be assessed on your attendance, punctuality, and participation, especially in terms of the way you conduct yourself while we travel. You are a representative of FIU and the Honors College, and you should act accordingly; 20% of final grade will be based on these factors. **Unexcused absences will be tracked, and each one will result in a reduction of your final grade; four or more unexcused absences will result in an F for the course, and automatic dismissal from the program, without refunds.** While we are in London, each student will give one presentation in front of a major painting, artifact, or book, either in the British Museum, National Gallery, or British Library. You will choose what object or painting you wish to talk about—you should expect to talk for about 10 minutes on your chosen object, with your classmates (and strangers!) listening to you. This presentation will count for 10% of your grade. You will also be required to write 1000 words per week, 4000 words in total, about your experiences—details forthcoming. This journalistic writing will count for another 10% of your final grade. While we travel in the UK and Ireland, I will

expect you to collect tickets, souvenirs, postcards, photos, knick-knacks, and other assorted memorials—these should all be collected, curated and wrapped up into a travel journal or diary, a scrapbook if you will. This compilation of notes, sketches, tickets, photos, souvenirs and so much more, capturing individually and personally your experiences while traveling in the UK, should be highly personal. For 30 days of travel, I will be looking for at least 30 pages of memories—including plenty of written entries, journal musings, poems, etc. This project is really for you, and it will not be due until late July, when Summer C term concludes—thus, though you might gather things for your scrapbook and even begin writing in it while we travel, most students will complete these projects after our travels, when back in Miami. These journals—which will be memorable and beautiful—will count for 25% of the final grade for IDH 4008. The other major project for the class, worth 35% of the final grade, will reflect personal study and research conducted while in England and Ireland. What you research, write and/or present might be proposed as the spring term (IDH 4007) concludes—and each of you will do research that you find personally interesting and that might well relate to your own major and your future career or professional aspirations. Thus, STEM students and pre-med kids might study the science, medical care, the NHS; pre-law and Poli Sci majors might study British politics, law, and government; English and Humanities majors some feature of art, theatre or book culture in the UK and Ireland. That said, you are not required to research and write on a project that is related to your course of studies—the only requirement in terms of the topic is that it must be related to the UK and/or Ireland! And, while I want you to conduct “observational” and preliminary research while we travel, I do not want you writing or designing anything related to this project until you return to Miami in early July. This gives you time to reflect and gather your ideas and thoughts and conduct further research on your topic once back in South Florida. In other words, your time in the British Isles will be, precisely, your “field-study,” and your return to Miami represents your time to write up your findings. Written essays and reports should be about 10 – 15 pages, with ample sources; slide presentations or Canva projects should number at least 30 slides. You will be evaluated for the depth of your research, the factual nature of what you present, the design of your projects, and the writing (vivid, strong, clear) of your essays. As with your travel journal/scrapbooks, this final project will be due at the end of July 2025, as Summer C concludes. Grading scale for IDH 4008 will be identical to that for IDH 4007, shared above.

#### Preliminary Syllabus for IDH 4007, Spring 2025

Thursday January 8: Introductions to Course (assignment of Period projects, Wildcards, Site-Reports)

Thursday January 15: Ancient and Roman Britain; Stonehenge and other mysteries (Sutton)

Thursday January 22: Medieval Britain

Thursday January 29: Tudor Britain

Thursday February 5: Stuarts: Civil War, Revolution, Interregnum, Restoration (Panther Alumni Week)

Thursday February 12: Class Tea at Cauley Square

Thursday February 19: From the Glorious Revolution to the American Revolution

Thursday February 26: No Class-Spring Break OR Visit to the British Consulate

Thursday March 5: French Revolution, The Romantic Era, and the Regency

Thursday March 12: Victorian Era at Home

Thursday March 19: Victorian Era, The Age of Empire

Thursday March 26: before and after World War I

Thursday April 2: before and after World War II

Thursday April 9: The (Second) Elizabethans, 1552 - 1882

Thursday April 16: The (second) Elizabethans, 1882 - 2024

Thursday April 23: Contemporary Britain and its customs—in-class presentations

**Final Grades for IDH 4007 will be computed and reported by Wednesday April 29**

Resting Period, and Preparation for travels: From April 30 – May 29 or 30

You will note that during the spring term, I'll also aim to enrich your learning with visits to the UK consulate here in Miami and immerse you in British style and flavor as we take Tea together at Cauley Square. We will also stay on the look-out for British artists, musicians, films, etc... playing or showing in Miami that you (we) might attend. I welcome your help in such efforts! We are all in this adventure together: the success (and brilliance) of this sixth year of the Honors UK program depends as much upon you as it does me.

#### Basic Schedule for IDH 4008, Summer C 2026

All students must arrange for their own flight from Miami to London; you must be in London by 3:00 p.m. GMT on Sunday May 31, and report to our designated housing, to be determined, for check-in and program orientation.

Sunday May 31 – Sunday June 14: In London; Students will reside hopefully in an all-house flat on Hartham Road in north London; four daytrips from London will be planned, and activities in and around London on other days. The first weekend, June 6 -7, will be left free for students to travel away from London or remain in the city and explore the metropolis on their own. Students will also be free on Saturday June 13 to do as they please, but are recommended to stay in or near London that day.

Sunday June 14: Flight from London Heathrow to Ireland's Shannon airport; meet coach and driver, transfer to Dingle

Monday June 15 – Wednesday June 17: in Dingle, on the water, Dingle and Kerry peninsulas

Wednesday June 17: depart Dingle, transfer to Galway, with stop enroute at Cliffs of Moher for two hour visit

Wednesday June 17 – Friday June 19: in Galway, and Connemara National Park

Friday June 19: transfer from Galway to Dublin, and check in

Friday June 19 – Monday June 22: In and around Dublin

Monday June 22: Fly from Dublin to Cornwall, Newquay airport; meet new coach and driver; tour Tintagel Castle, then to either Newquay, Truro or St. Ives, check in

Monday June 22 – Thursday June 25: in Cornwall

Thursday June 25:– transfer from Cornwall to Exeter

Thursday June 25 – Saturday June 27: in and around Exeter, including Dartmoor, Weymouth and the Jurassic Coast

Saturday June 27: Transfer to Bristol (or Bath)

Sunday June 28: Bath

Monday June 29: Bristol and/or Cotswolds

Tuesday June 30: transfer from Bristol to London Paddington, and Study Abroad program concludes

From Tuesday June 30 – as long as students wish: they can remain in the UK, or travel around the EU, or return to Miami as they deem fit

Wednesday July 1 – Friday July 31: wherever they might be, students will work on their final essay or project relating to the UK. This will be due Friday July 31.

**Wednesday August 5: Final Grades for IDH 4008 computed and reported**