A Social History of the English Country House
Leeds International Summer School, 2010

Basic Information:

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<th>Module Leader</th>
<th>Dr Kerry Bristol, Room 204 Old Mining Building, <a href="mailto:k.a.c.bristol@leeds.ac.uk">k.a.c.bristol@leeds.ac.uk</a>, 0113 343 5280</th>
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| Module Description     | Country houses are one of Britain’s greatest contributions to world culture, but who created them and why? Have they always functioned as ‘containers’ for art collections or have they had deeper meanings and a wider social impact? Using Yorkshire’s world-class country houses as case studies, this course will introduce you to:  
  - The builders of the country house  
  - The rise and fall of the great estates  
  - The ‘upstairs’ lives of the men, women and children who lived in the country house and the ‘downstairs’ world of the men and women who served them  
  - The idea of a ‘court style’ and its regional variations  
  - The often difficult relationship between patron and architect  
  - The allied arts of interior design and decoration  
  - The relationship between the aristocratic great house, the more modest gentleman’s house and the villa |
| Credits                | 10                                                                                       |
| Contact Hours          | 2 X 90 minutes classes per day + 3 site visits                                           |
| Timetable              | Please refer to syllabus                                                               |
| Teaching Methods       | Lectures, Seminar discussions, Visits                                                  |

Assessment:

| Type                   | Portfolio                                                                                 |
|                       | Deadline: Thursday 15 July 2010                                                          |
|                       | Penalties for late submission or non-attendance:  
  If the portfolio is submitted late without permission from the Course Leader, it will lose 5 marks for each working day after the deadline. Works handed in two weeks late will fail. |
Monday 5 July 9:30-11:00 - The Builders of the Country House

Questions to consider:
- What motivated the building (or rebuilding) of country houses?
- How was the supply of money, labour and materials managed?

Suggested Reading:
Trevor Lummis and Jan Marsh, *The Woman's Domain* (London: Viking, 1990), ch.1

Monday 5 July 11:30-1:00 - The Idea of the Architect

Questions to consider:
- When is it legitimate to use the word 'architect' when speaking of country house builders?
- How does the concept of abstract design relate to the emergence of the architect?
- Has the fact that architecture has become a profession affected the interpretation of its history?

Suggested Reading:
Tuesday 6 July 9:30-11:00 - Country House Planning

Questions to consider:
- What can we learn about a building from its plan?
- What were the different functions of spaces and what role did they play in defining gender and class?
- Which spaces were public, which were private, and how did boundaries between the two change over time?
- What was the influence of Italy on the country house plan?

Suggested Reading:

Tuesday 6 July 11:30-1:00 - Collecting and the Stuart Court (+seminar presentations)

Questions to consider:
- How widespread was art collecting in the seventeenth century?
- Why were paintings and sculpture collected and by whom?
- To what extent do changes in a portrait’s location alter understanding of the portrait and of the ways in which portraits can function?

Suggested reading:
David Howarth, Lord Arundel and his Circle (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985)
Alastair Laing and Nina Strachey, 'The Duke and Duchess of Lauderdale’s pictures at Ham House,'


Christopher Rowell, 'A seventeenth-century 'Cabinet' restored,' *Apollo*, April 1996, pp.18-23


**Wednesday 7 July 9:30-11:00 – Women (+ seminar presentations)**

Questions to consider:

What role did women play in the social and economic life of the country house?

How are women portrayed within the country house?

Suggested reading:


Helen Berry, 'Women, Consumption and Taste', in *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850*, ed. by Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 194-216


Wednesday 7 July 11:30-1:00 – Servants (+ seminar presentations)
Questions to consider:
- Can the life of domestic servants be seen only as a reminder of the patriarchal and feudalistic values which dominated the social structure of the country house?
- How are servants portrayed within the country house?

Suggested Reading:

Wednesday 7 July 2:30-4:30 Visit to Temple Newsam House, Leeds, West Yorkshire

Thursday 8 July 9:30-11:00 – Eating and Drinking
Questions to consider:
- What social rituals revolved around food and drink?
- What was the role of the country house kitchen and why has there been a growing fashion to represent it (and servants’ rooms) to the present day visitor?
- What role did breweries play in the social and economic life of the country house?

Suggested Reading:

Thursday 8 July 11:30-1:00 – Brotherton Library Special Collections

Friday 9 July – Visit to Chatsworth House, Derbyshire

Monday 12 July 9:30-11:00 – The Villa (+ seminar presentations)
Questions to consider:
- What were the social functions of the villa?
- What cultural associations informed the villa – taste, antiquarianism, wealth?

Reading:
James Ackerman, *The Villa: Form, Function and Ideology* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990)
Monday 12 July 11:30-1:00 - Collecting in the Eighteenth Century

Questions to consider:
- What is the relationship between collections and eighteenth century interiors?
- Who was/were the intended audience(s)?
- How were works of art displayed?
- What is the place of portraiture?
- What is the role of past art?
- How well adapted are these ideas to a commercial society?

Suggested reading:


*Painting, Passion & Politics. Masterpieces from the Walpole Collection on loan from the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg* (London: Hermitage Rooms, 2003)


Tuesday 13 July 9:30-11:00 - The Grand Tour (+ seminar presentations)

Questions to consider:
What was the Grand Tour? Who went on it and why?
In what ways did interest in antiquity help shape aesthetic attitudes in the eighteenth century?

Suggested reading:


*Drawing from the Past. William Weddell and the Transformation of Newby Hall* (Leeds: Leeds
Museums and Galleries (City Art Gallery) in association with the West Yorkshire Archive Service, 2004)

*Grand Tour. The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Andrew Wilton and Ilaria Bignamini (London: Tate Gallery, 1996)


**Tuesday 13 July 11:30-1:00 – Nineteenth Century Collectors and Dealers**

Questions to consider:
- What impact did the change in focus to British history and tourism in the nineteenth century have on collecting interests and practices?
- Who collected art and objects? Why did they buy them?
- How did the emergence of the 'art professional,' i.e. dealers, auctioneers, experts, influence collecting practices?
- How were objects described by contemporary consumers? What appears to be important to them?
- What was the role of the country house collection in the light of the emergence of the public art museum in the nineteenth century?

Suggested reading:


Gustav Waagen, *Treasures of Art in Britain* (London: John Murray, 1854)


**Wednesday 14 July 9:30-11:00 – Landowners and land-based wealth**

Questions to consider:
- How did the pattern of land ownership change c.1550-1950?
- What factors contributed to the rise of the gentry?
• What has been the changing role of land-based wealth in the political and economic life of Britain?
• How is the concept of landownership represented within the country house?

Suggested Reading:
Christopher Christie, The British Country House in the Eighteenth Century (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), ch.1
Heather Clemenson, The English Country House and Landed Estate (London: Croom Helm, 1982), ch.1
Tim Fulford, Landscape, Liberty and Authority (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), ch.3

Wednesday 14 July 12:00+ - Visit to Castle Howard, North Yorkshire

Thursday 15 July 9:30-11:00 - The End of the Country House? (+ seminar presentations)

Questions to consider:
• Was the first half of the twentieth century one of ‘doom and gloom’ or ‘survival and revival’ for the aristocracy?
• Why were country houses demolished?

Suggested Reading:
David Cannadine, The Decline & Fall of the British Aristocracy (London: Penguin, 1990), pp. 1-87
W.A. Forsyth and Christopher Hussey, 'The Future of the Country House,' Country Life, 17 October 1941
John Harris, No Voice from the Hall: early memoirs of a country house snooper (London: John Murray, 1998)
Thursday 15 July 11:30-1:00 – The End of the Country House 2? (+ seminar presentations)
Questions to consider:
• Was post-war government policy hostile to the country house?
• Whose history was displayed in country houses after the war?
• How were country houses marketed to the public in the 1970s and 1980s?
• How do modern heritage organisations such as the National Trust and English Heritage present the country house today?
• Did these differ from those of private owners?
• In what ways do you think country houses and their contents could/should be displayed for a non-traditional museum visiting audience? Should country house curators/owners chase non-traditional visitors?
• What is the future of the country house?

Suggested reading:
Mirabel Cecil and David Mlinaric, Mlinaric on Decorating (London: Frances Lincoln, 2008), pp. 8-13, 42-63, 100-125, 152-171
Contemporary Cultures of Display, ed. by Emma Barker (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 200-228
John Cornforth, Country houses in Britain, can they survive?: an independent report (London: Country Life for the British Tourist Authority, 1974)
Jeremy Cragg, ‘Room for improvement: The re-arrangement of room furnishings at Erdig.’ Apollo, April 2002, 36-40
John Fowler, The Invention of the Country-House Style, ed. by Helen Hughes (Dorset: Donhead for English Heritage, 2005), pp. 13-20, 52-58
David Lowenthal, The Past is a Foreign Country (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985)


Jo Moore, "An empty and rather embarrassing white elephant": The re-furnishing of Montacute House; *Apollo*, April 2002, 17-22


The *Treasure Houses of Britain: Five Hundred Years of Private Patronage and Art Collecting* (Washington and London: Yale University Press, 1985)

The *National Trust. The Next Hundred Years*, ed. by Howard Newby (London: National Trust, 1995), pp. 117-134
