If in time, as in place, there were degrees of high and low, I verily believe that the highest of time would be that which passed between the years of 1640 and 1660.

-- Thomas Hobbes.

This seminar provides an opportunity to investigate in detail an early modern society undergoing radical and lasting transformation. It is intended to provide an introduction to graduate-level historical research about early modern Europe in general by means of an exploration of issues that affected the British Isles in particular. The seminar extends over two quarters, and students may either take both quarters in sequence or take just the first quarter as a stand-alone course. In either case, each student is expected to complete a substantial research paper. For History students who take the two-quarter sequence, the paper they write will be their required departmental seminar paper, and it will be submitted to the Department directly (see below). For students taking the Fall Quarter course alone, a shorter paper is expected, to be submitted to me at the end of the quarter.

We shall spend the Fall quarter in weekly sessions devoted to a series of important themes and questions, ranging from magic to the origins of modern finance, which we shall address through a combination of primary and secondary sources. For those continuing into the Winter, that quarter will be spent in a more informal series of meetings to refine students’ research papers. Although the texts we shall be reading concern Britain in the first instance, the issues they deal with extended beyond the limits of the British Isles, and students are welcome to write research papers on non-British topics.

**Scope of the Course**

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Britain – or rather, the archipelago formed by the three separate kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland – was relatively weak, its importance marginal to the great powers of Europe. Its society was largely rural and agricultural. Its people inhabited a Creation replete with natural and supernatural powers. But if you were born in around 1600 and lived to old age then you would see that familiar world changed beyond all recognition. You would experience not one revolution, but
two. You would witness the extraordinary event of a king being put on trial and executed in the name of his people – something never before done in European history. The old order would be overturned and time itself redefined, as revolutionaries declared the onset of a new dispensation in “year zero.” His son, king in his turn, would later be driven from power amid a Dutch invasion. The capital city, London, would enjoy a population expansion of some 300% – despite plagues, war, and a disastrous conflagration – and become the largest commercial center in Christendom. You would observe in that city the very essentials of modernity – of capitalism, industry, empire, and science – in the making. You would see the foundations established for a composite constitutional monarchical state – the “United Kingdom” – that could aspire to global dominance. And among your acquaintances, finally, you might count William Shakespeare, John Milton, Thomas Hobbes, Isaac Newton, John Locke, Henry Purcell, and Sir Christopher Wren.

No wonder, then, that this tumultuous period has attracted historians ever since the seventeenth century itself. The first great work of history in English was arguably the account of the “great rebellion” of the 1640s begun during the events themselves and completed towards the end of the seventeenth century by the Earl of Clarendon, who had himself been a leading participant in the struggle. The historical literature on early modern Britain is consequently extremely rich – perhaps more so than for any other period or place. As well as outlining major processes of the period itself, the course aims to introduce students to some of this literature. There is no more sophisticated area of historiography than this, and students wanting to get acquainted with the traditions of the profession will find no better starting point.

Addressing a period that saw repeated political upheaval, it is unsurprising that until the mid-twentieth century most historians who researched early modern Britain focused on politics. But this changed in the modern era, and the change has accelerated in our own generation. To focus narrowly on high politics nowadays would be to neglect some equally momentous and fascinating questions – and, we now think, to sell the politics themselves short. For example, Isaac Newton created what is often thought of as the foundational text of modern science, his *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, in 1687, just as he was preparing to confront the most notorious of King James II’s judges, Judge Jeffreys, in a struggle over religion and the conduct of the state; and after the revolution of 1688 he was made responsible for hunting down currency counterfeiters in a bid to save the national economy from collapse. To isolate his political and religious commitments from his scientific work would cripple our understanding of both. Throughout the period, culture, religion, and politics intertwined inextricably. So did science and nature. The political narrative is fascinating, to be sure, and often gripping. But it is even more interesting if we integrate the politics with other cultural phenomena – as early-modern people themselves did as a matter of course. We shall endeavor to do that.
Appointments

My office is Harper West 602. My scheduled office hours are 10:00-12:00 on Fridays, but you are welcome to make an appointment for another time. My email is johns@uchicago.edu; my phone number is 702 2334.

Requirements and Grading

Attendance

In the Fall Quarter, the class meets on Mondays at 11:30. Attendance at these meetings is expected. In the Winter Quarter, things will be less formal, and we may adopt a different format depending on what students feel to be most useful to them. We shall decide that in due course. You are always automatically excused if you are ill or have other pressing, unforeseeable commitments: you do not need a doctor’s note or any other documentation. Just try to let me know what’s happening.

The Research Paper

Students may take this course as a one-quarter, stand-alone class or as a two-quarter Seminar. In either case, the objective is to produce a substantial piece of written work, based in original research on primary materials. The standard expected obviously differs depending on whether the paper is written over one or two quarters. There is no categorical limit on length, but for those writing a one-quarter paper a good rule of thumb would be to aim for about 20 pages. For those writing a two-quarter seminar paper, the best approach is to consider this as the first draft of a potentially publishable journal article. Such articles typically run to around 7-10,000 words (roughly 30-50 pages), so this would be a reasonable length to aim for in your paper.

The research paper should be based on primary sources and framed with reference to relevant historiography. Although this class is devoted to British issues, the paper need not be on a British topic: you are free to address other early-modern countries if you prefer. As with graduate-level coursework in general, you should make the system work for you. You could, for example, use this as an opportunity to think through the themes for a possible future dissertation; or you could draft a chapter; or you could experiment with a topic unrelated to your dissertation work. You are encouraged to come up with your own topics, but please do meet with me personally to discuss your subjects, approaches, sources, etc., either at office hours or by arrangement at some other time. One cautionary note: it is generally unwise to return to some topic that you have addressed in pre-Chicago work, because doing so means missing an opportunity.
Please note:

- Cite sources appropriately for a formal academic paper. (I do not mind what particular set of conventions you use for references, as long as you are consistent.) When in doubt, the *Chicago Manual of Style* is an exhaustive guide to such matters.
- Include a bibliography.
- Remember to make use of both primary and secondary literature. That is, your thesis should advance or correct the current state of knowledge, and the essay should draw on primary evidence to make its case. (The distinction between “primary” and “secondary” sources depends on the question being asked, so for some students a modern text may count as a primary source; but in general I expect students to make use of early-modern materials.)
- All papers should be submitted electronically. One-quarter papers are submitted to me, either by email or via the Canvas site. Two-quarter seminar papers are submitted to the Department of History via the Canvas site.
- Please, for papers submitted to me, give the file a filename that clearly includes your first and last names – e.g., johnsmithBritainfinal.docx. Please do not simply title it “final paper,” as I get perhaps 100 final papers each year.

**Deadlines**

For one-quarter papers the deadline is 4:00pm on December 9, 2019. This deadline is specific to this class. Papers should be submitted to me in electronic form.

For two-quarter papers the deadline is 4:00pm on March 20, 2020. This is a departmental deadline, and students will submit their seminar papers directly to the History Department via Canvas.

There are also two intermediary deadlines within Fall Quarter. These are intended to help students keep on a schedule that will allow them to meet their formal deadlines:

All students should have a first notion of a project they would like to pursue, in the form of a one-page document, by November 4. Seminar-paper writers should also be ready to consider who may be asked to act as second reader.

All students should have a more extended plan on which they are prepared to make a presentation on November 25. We shall hold a workshop for discussing projects on that date, so students should have a fairly robust idea of what they want to work on, what sources they mean to use, etc.

Extensions to deadlines are at my discretion, and are given readily for unpredictable issues like illnesses or job interviews (you do not need to provide evidence; just let me know of the problem). They are not readily given for foreseeable scheduling problems, particularly deadlines in other classes; handling these is your responsibility. But in the end I am more interested in your doing good work than in your hitting some arbitrary deadline. It is vital, however, for students to avoid letting coursework drag on
into succeeding quarters. For that reason, for Fall-quarter work there is an absolute deadline of day one of the Winter quarter. Unless you have some major reason to delay beyond that point – and approval from me for the extension – papers not submitted by then will not be graded.

Readings

This is not a "survey class": it does not aim to provide one sequential narrative of events. Instead, we shall explore in depth a series of particular topics in the history of the period. Many of these topics are not specific to any one of the four sub-periods that professionals in the field conventionally accept (that is, pre-1642, 1642-1660, 1660-1688, and post-1688). Although our progress will be broadly chronological, we shall find ourselves repeatedly ranging across the whole period. At the same time, one of the joys of researching this period is that for the first time in European history the primary-source documentation is rich enough for us to follow events day by day, and we shall take advantage of that fact. I hope to tailor the course to suit the interests of participants, so the subjects listed in this syllabus are to be treated as provisional.

Recommended texts

I do not require students to buy any books. That said, two fine narrative histories covering parts of the period, and which may be reckoned models of their kind, are M. Braddick's *God’s Fury, England’s Fire* (2009) and Tim Harris's *Restoration: Charles II and his kingdoms, 1660-1685* (2006). If you are interested in exploring the issues of the course further, you may wish to buy copies. I have not ordered them from SemCoop because I have found that the Coop has had difficulty in getting hold of them. They can generally be found on Abebooks or Amazon quite cheaply.

Secondary Sources

The literature on early modern Britain is very large, and much of it is of high quality. Indeed, one of the reasons to study this topic is to encounter a field that has such a rich historiographical tradition. The recommendations given here inevitably reflect my own tastes. If you walk down the relevant stacks in the Regenstein, you will find a wealth of excellent material on every aspect of the subject. I encourage you to explore.

There is not really a definitive single volume covering the whole period. I personally like Jonathan Scott’s *England’s Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context* (2000), which offers a fresh perspective written with real vim. But Scott is a controversial figure, and you should not feel shy about disagreeing with his contentions. A more conventional text is Mark Kishlansky’s *A Monarchy Transformed: Britain 1603-1714* (1997). Kishlansky’s narrative is reliable and respectable, but it is limited to politics, and politics defined in a rather traditional way. If you can cope with multiple volumes, the trilogy by Tim Harris entitled *Rebellion, Restoration, and Revolution* offers an up-to-date narrative. It covers the whole seventeenth century, with the strange omission of 1642-59.
Otherwise it is a matter of picking works on specific periods. Here are some of my own choices.

We shall not venture much into the Tudor period (1485-1603) in this course, as our focus will be on the Stuart era of 1603-1714. But two authoritative guides to the sixteenth-century history that in many ways shaped what followed in the seventeenth are S. Brigden’s *New Worlds, Lost Worlds: The Rule of the Tudors, 1485-1603* (2000) and P. Williams’s *The Later Tudors: England 1547-1603* (1995).

For the period 1603-60, in some ways the definitive chronicle of political events is still S.R. Gardiner’s *History of England* (becoming the *History of the Great Civil War* and then the *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate* as appropriate), in many volumes, published initially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Gardiner was rather a marginal figure in the historical profession, and some of his interpretations have not lasted. His series really is a chronicle rather than a history in the modern sense. But the narrative he presents is exhaustive, if a bit dogged in parts, and modern historians still pay tribute to his work as providing something approaching an ultimate reference point. This is not a work to read from beginning to end, then, but it is still worth consulting on specific points.

Among the many modern histories of the civil war years themselves, I would go for Braddick’s *God’s Fury, England’s Fire*, mentioned above. It does a particularly good job of integrating the political, religious, and military developments with social and cultural trends. It is also very acute as a piece of historiography. Braddick has also edited a high-quality *Oxford Handbook of the English Revolution* (2015). Very recently, David Como has published *Radical Parliamentarians and the English Civil War* (2018), which is a fascinating close-quarters account of one factional group.

Trying to identify the “causes” of the civil war/civil wars/rebellion/revolution (all these terms carry their own baggage) used to be an industry in its own right, launched by Lawrence Stone’s *Causes of the English Revolution* (1972); of its many products I like best Ann Hughes’s *Causes of the English Civil War* (2nd ed., 1998). If you get really satiated on this topic, you may find Blair Worden’s *The English Civil Wars 1640-1660* (2009) sympathetic: it ends up arguing that the whole thing was accidental and pointless.

For the Restoration, I would opt for Harris’s *Restoration* (above), which offers a sensible, even-handed, and well-informed narrative. The same author’s *Revolution* (2006) then extends the same approach to the Glorious Revolution of 1688. A more controversial treatment of this, the second revolution of the period, is Steve Pincus’s *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (2009). In contrast to Worden’s account of what used to be called the English Revolution, Pincus’s book contends that the events of 1688 not only constituted the real revolution of the period, but had huge causes and consequences. He argues that they inaugurated the age of modern politics and economics in which we still live.
Among works dealing with more social or cultural themes – works, that is, which historians not particularly devoted to early modern Britain itself should find lastingly interesting – I particularly recommend these. It is, again, a very partial and personal list of favorites:

- Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England, 1500-1700* (2000);
- D. Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric, and Politics, 1627-1660* (1999);
- C. Tomalin, *Samuel Pepys: The Unequalled Self* (2002);
- D.R. Como, *Blown by the Spirit: Puritanism and the Emergence of an Antinomian Underground in Pre-Civil-War England* (2004);
- Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down* (orig. 1972; many later impressions);

**Primary Sources**

Mid-seventeenth century England offers an unusually rich trove of accessible primary sources. This is thanks partly to the efforts of a London bookseller named George Thomason. With extraordinary foresight, Thomason decided at the start of the Civil War to collect every tract he could find – printed and manuscript alike – during the coming years of turmoil. He kept at the task for two decades. As a result, an extraordinarily detailed mass of evidence has descended to us about every aspect of life in revolutionary England. Now housed in the British Library, the so-called *Thomason Tracts* have been integrated into an enormous endeavor to microfilm, and now digitize, all early modern printed works produced in England or English. This is accessible on the Internet as *Early English Books Online* (EEBO), alongside an even larger project to digitize eighteenth-century works (*Eighteenth-century Collections Online*, or ECCO). Both EEBO and ECCO can be reached in the database section of the UC Library online catalogue. If you look at the browsing screen of EEBO, you will see a link to the Thomason Tracts on the top right, between “Authors” and “Periodicals.” For a flavor of the culture of the period, you cannot do better than to venture into these files for any time from 1640 and simply “follow your nose.” Unfortunately, it isn’t straightforward to browse chronologically, as the tracts are organized by volume and the broadsides were extracted into a separate list. But you can usually zero in on short periods of time: for example, the *Agreement of the People* cited below is volume 412, item 21, and the other items in that volume were found by Thomason in the same period of days.

It is also worth noting the “Periodicals” link in the EEBO site. The seventeenth century was the period when printed periodicals came into being, for a variety of topics – news, science, literary reviews, etc. Prolific, fast-changing, and characterized by a febrile
mixture of claim and counter-claim, the world of periodical print is one of the distinctive innovations of the period. The EEBO site allows you to follow this world chronologically, as a citizen of London might have done at the time. Another resource is the digitized Burney Collection of newsprint, which is also accessible through the 'databases' section of the library’s website (search for Burney).

This was also a period of radical creativity in literature, the sciences, and the arts. In fact, a comparison of, say, Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* with Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* would tell you as much about what really changed in this era as any narrative of political events. These works were products of their time, of course, and we shall try to read them as such, using resources like the Thomason Tracts to place Milton and others in context. Many projects exist to make available the enormous volume of archival sources that allow us to understand these activities. Gateways to some of them exist at http://earlymodernweb.org/, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/, and the guides produced by various universities: especially Yale (http://guides.library.yale.edu/earlymodernbritish) and Oxford (http://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/content.php?pid=124943&sid=1280980). We shall refer to some specific collections in the course of our meetings.

**Sessions**

The class meets on Mondays at 11:30-2:20 in Wieboldt Hall 103. (Give yourself a bit of extra time to find it on the first day.)

For each week I have listed some recommended readings. You are not required to read all of these for every session. I have starred certain titles with an asterisk (*); these you are expected to have read before class. The other items are important texts on the various subjects, and we may well refer to them in class, but you can exercise your own judgment in deciding how many of them to read for any given week. Students wanting to write papers on topics related to one of these themes will find these suggestions to be good starting points.

1. **October 7, 2019**  
   **Introduction to the Course**

   This will be an introductory meeting. We shall look at the syllabus and make any changes that we may feel necessary. The syllabus may well be altered to take account of students’ preferences, so if you are interested in particular topics then please come along prepared to say so. No reading need be done beforehand.

2. **October 14, 2019**  
   **Life in a Fallen World**

   We begin by considering some general aspects of everyday life. This was a period when the vast majority of people thought of themselves as occupying an immobile Earth at the
center of the cosmos, in which hidden links of sympathy and antipathy connected objects across the natural and social orders. They believed that their lives took place as small moments within a vast unfolding of “providence” – the plan ordained by God for the history of Creation from Genesis to Apocalypse. Residing in this world had implications for every aspect of life: faith, work, charity, moral conduct, care of the self and for others, and, not least, political action. And enormous changes took place in the manners, customs, beliefs, and “selves” of humdrum people in this century.

To understand the events of the period we need to begin by understanding how seventeenth-century people saw Creation and their place in it. Luckily for us, we have two very revealing primary documents to draw on. The first is the trove of writings produced by the turner (that is, low-level woodworker) Nehemiah Wallington in the 1620s-50s. And the second is perhaps the greatest of all personal diaries, that of the Restoration naval administrator Samuel Pepys (pronounced “Peeps”). Both are extraordinary documents, and yet there are vast differences between them. How and why did such a radically revealing and person work as Pepys’s – the prototype, in effect, for all later introspective “self-writing” – come to be written here and now?

* Samuel Pepys, Diary (11 vols. Eds. Latham and Matthews). Read at least the month of April, 1663 (vol. 4, pp. 90-118), and one other month that you should choose yourself, noting whatever you find puzzling, striking, interesting or incomprehensible. (The most dramatic periods are probably those of the plague in 1665 and the great fire in 1666, but in some ways it may be more revealing to opt for more normal times.) NB: the edition to use is the Latham and Matthews one, and the paperback if possible; earlier versions were always heavily bowdlerized to omit risqué bits. The online text is not to be used because it is based on such an edition.


There is no one secondary text that fully captures the transition that we are exploring here, but a fairly recent work of social history that covers some of the ground is K. Wrightson, Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain (2000) – see especially chapters 13 and 14 (pp.289-330).
The early modern world was pervaded by magical forces. Sympathies and antipathies operated throughout the processes of nature, and correspondences formed obscure ("occult") links between apparently disparate creatures. To know these mysteries, and to be able to "operate" with them, was to be powerful – or dangerous. Not least, in an age of chronic ill-health punctuated by catastrophic epidemics, magic offered ways to intervene in the human body itself. Magic thus explains a good deal of the actions that people undertook. Magical beliefs were not mere "superstitions" – a term that changed its meaning radically in this century. They were often the products of the most sophisticated and profound reasoning. How did people live in a world both magical and, at the same time, mechanical? Where did the limits of acceptable action lie? Why were cunning-men tolerated and witches both hunted down and routinely consulted? And why did the reign of magic end – if, indeed, it really did end?


* R. Scot, *The Discovery of Witchcraft* (1583), a1^1-b3^v (prefatory material), 1-10 (Book I), 163-201 (Book XIII). [NB: for the file on Canvas I have used an edition from 1665 because the original printing used black letter (gothic), which is hard going for modern readers.]


* The casebooks of Simon Forman and Richard Napier, at [http://www.magicandmedicine.hps.cam.ac.uk/](http://www.magicandmedicine.hps.cam.ac.uk/). These are not at all easy to read, but you should sample the site, however briefly, to get a flavor of the beliefs of the time. For assistance, see Lauren Kassell, *Medicine and Magic in Elizabethan London: Simon Forman: Astrologer, Alchemist, and Physician* (2005), Chapter 6, “How to read the casebooks.”


4. **October 28, 2019**  

**Pasts and Futures**

Virtually all early modern people believed that their lifespans occupied a brief period in a timeline that ran from the Creation of the world to its dissolution, and that a divine design called *Providence* structured this flow of history. How did they decide where to place themselves in this scale of time? For people who lived their lives steeped in Providence, confident that the world was not more than a few thousand years old and that it would not endure much longer, this was an all-important question, because (as John Bunyan put it) when the End came, you would be asked not whether you believed, but “were you a doer, or a talker only?” Millennialism, or Chiliasm, was a belief that led to action. Here we shall ask how early moderns investigated the past and future; how they sought to resolve doubts and reconcile divergent claims; and what they thought they should do about the imminence of the end times. Among our topics will be antiquarianism, the management of historically sacred landscapes and ruins, the charting of history, the use of different
kinds of evidence, historical relativism, and the radical repudiation of past precedents insisted upon by people like Winstanley. We shall also consider the origin of attempts to use mathematics to calculate futures, which made possible the development of finance.

Sir Thomas Browne, *Hydriotaphia, or Urne-Buriall* (1658). There are many editions: the one I have put on the Canvas site is the original, without the work it was issued with (which goes by the excellent title *The Garden of Cyrus. Or, The Quincunciall, Lozenge, or Net-work Plantations of the Ancients, Artificially Naturally, Mystically Considered* – it’s an astonishing text in its own right, and I urge you to look it up if you ever have some free time). But there are many others, most recently that in S. Greenblatt and R. Targoff (eds.), *Religio Medici and Urne-Buriall* (2012), 93-139.

C. Webster, *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine, and Reform 1626–1660* (1975), 1-31 (Chapter 1).

D. Rosenberg and A. Grafton, *Cartographies of Time* (2010), 70-95 (Chapter 3).


5. **November 4, 2019**  **Print, its Publics, and Political Authority**

One of the most striking characteristics of seventeenth-century Britain is the emergence of a persisting “public sphere.” For the first time, many people came to believe that the readers of books, periodicals, and newspapers, considered en masse, constituted a “public” with real authority over matters in dispute – and that authority might even be legitimate. When it came to matters that had always been regarded as the province of restricted groups – the king and his counsellors for politics, the clerisy for religion, the physicians for medicine, and so on – the implications were profound. The roots, chronology, and impact of this development are not easy to trace in detail, but the contrast between 1600 and 1700 is very stark. Although the public arguably came into its own only in the Restoration, it was the upheaval of the 1640s-50s that saw a surge in the production and circulation of printed texts, and it was this period that saw the authority of the reading public become an ineradicable element in British culture.

* J. Milton, *Areopagitica* (1644). [I have put the original on the Canvas site, plus a modern-typography version that you will probably find easier to read.]

* Braddick, *God’s Fury*, 439-64.
In the 1640s, the British Isles descended into warfare and chaos. When the forces of King Charles I had been defeated, many in Parliament’s victorious New Model Army interpreted their triumph as providential: clearly, God had ordained their success in order to free Britons from tyranny. But to what end? As traditional authority dissolved, so a dizzying array of groups advanced new ideologies and faiths to fill the vacuum. Promulgated by London’s printers, they contended to replace the old regime in church and state. The most important of these groups were the Levellers. Arising in London, they made common cause with soldiers in the New Model, hoping to impose a settlement that would drastically alter the old “Norman” constitution. In a church in Putney, they and their soldier allies confronted their generals, Cromwell and Ireton, in a series of debates over their Agreement of the People. These debates were recorded in detail; they provide an extraordinarily vivid image of seventeenth-century people struggling to forge a new political order.

The Leveller program was defeated, but the problem of settlement remained. With Charles I tried and executed, and the bishops and lords abolished along with the monarchy, the remnants of the Long Parliament and their military supporters declared a new republic, starting in what their coins announced to be “the first year of liberty.” But they struggled to create a commonwealth that would last, in the face of general unpopularity. Throughout the 1650s repeated efforts were made to solve this problem. The two most lastingly influential contributions would be foundational documents of modern political thought: Thomas Hobbes’s Leviathan and James Harrington’s Commonwealth of Oceana. But these were just two among a panoply of pamphlets, tracts, and libels from authors at all levels of society. Here we will sample a range of contributions to this ferment.

* C. Hill, The world turned upside down: radical ideas during the English revolution (1972), 57-72.
* An Agreement of the People (1647).
7. **November 18, 2019  Experimenting with Nature and Society**

Nature was at the heart of the seventeenth century upheavals in more than one sense. New approaches to natural knowledge implied that not just academic philosophers and physicians, but the unlicensed laity, might arrive at truths hitherto unsuspected, and that those truths might lead to power. Explorations and discoveries revealed new worlds, from which empires might be made, but which at the same time challenged traditional understandings of Creation. The telescope and microscope suggested new and unsettling views of the place of humanity in the natural order. In the civil war and interregnum, broad attempts had been made under the leadership of an émigré Pole, Samuel Hartlib, to reform agriculture, the economy, and society on the basis of a state-sponsored effort in natural philosophy. After the Restoration Hartlib’s efforts were abandoned, but instead a group of gentlemen formed the Royal Society for the Promotion of Natural Knowledge, at which a new, experimental approach would be pursued at regular weekly meetings. The idea was partly to provide a peaceful way of tackling questions about the natural world, which would no longer fuel civil conflicts. From this approach would develop the experimental science that has been so central to modernity.


8. **November 25, 2019  Projects Workshop**

This being Thanksgiving Week, we shall pause to talk about any issues arising from students’ projects. This is your chance to come and brainstorm problems to do with conceptualization, structuring, research strategies, time management – whatever concerns may have cropped up so far.
In 1688, James II, the Catholic son of Charles I who had come to the throne after his brother Charles II died in 1685, was driven from power. An invading army from the Netherlands landed in the West Country, and James’s apparently formidable military dissolved in the face of the threat. Once again revolution was at hand. William of Orange found himself the rather reluctant occupier of an empty throne. It has been claimed that this transition – the so-called “Glorious Revolution” in fact constituted the real revolution of the seventeenth century, and, moreover, that it was the world’s first distinctively modern revolution. Central to that claim is an argument that the change of regimes in 1688 resulted in a transformation in political economy. “Political economy” was itself a new discipline in this period, and James had adopted one form of it in a bid to produce a military empire. William and Mary adopted a very different form, based on manufacturing and the arguments about property developed by John Locke, which became the basis of Britain’s industrial growth in the new century. Here we will look at the nature and implications of the revolution in 1688, and in particular ask whether modern political economy did originate then.

* J. Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (many editions), Second treatise.
D. Defoe, *An Essay on Projects* (1697), Introduction [and sample the rest].