

INTRODUCTION TO BRITAIN

Országismeret Nagy-Britannia Course Code: BBLAN00300

LECTURE COURSE FOR PART TIME STUDENTS PPCU FALL 2026

Lecturer: Balogh Beatrix

Time and place: Three longer class sessions: **12 September (Saturday) 13.15-17.15**
16 October (Friday) 14.30-18.45 and 4 December (Friday) 17.00-19.30 in room 502.

Availability: Before and after class sessions or via email: Balogh.beatrix@btk.ppke.hu

Purpose: To present a comprehensive survey of the contemporary social, political, and cultural reality of the UK, to familiarize students with the key concepts of the British Constitution and political life, and to teach the special expressions and vocabulary necessary for a fluent discourse on such topics

Compulsory Textbook: K. Pintér: *Introduction to Britain*, 3rd revised edition, PPKE 2014, university textbook. Will be posted to Teams.

Requirements: kollokvium (see *at attendance and evaluation*)

CLASS	DATE	LECTURE TOPICS
Session 1		Introduction , study goals, useful tips; Geography and its impact, regions and their characteristics, geographical objects and their significance. Constituent Countries of the UK. The Peoples of the British Isles: Celts, Picts, Britons, Angles and Saxons. Scotland: regions, cities, traditions, distinctive institutions. The 'radical devolution ' and 'independence vote'. The 'less radical' devolutions: Wales and Northern Ireland Northern Ireland: Catholics v. Protestants, origin of the conflict ('The Troubles'), distinctive features. Constituent countries and post-Brexit developments. <u>Reading:</u> Chapters I. – V. of textbook
Session 2		System of government Part I: "The Ever-Changing Constitution"; constitutional monarchy, Crown and Parliament, the House of Commons and the House of Lords. System of government Part II: the Cabinet, elections (HM's new government after the 2024 elections), major parties and their policies, and the civil service. The legal system: precedent law, courts, judge, jury, barristers, solicitors. <u>Reading:</u> Chapters VI – VIII. of textbook
Session 3		Demography, ethnicities, and religion. Current demographic trends and post-Brexit Immigration crisis. Old immigration and multi-racial society. Religiosity, Protestant v Catholic, non-Christian churches. Education: state and independent schools, university system <u>Reading:</u> Chapters IX – XI. of textbook
Home Study Session:		Review lecture notes and set texts. Master key concepts and facts. Locate topographic elements, regions, cities, educational institutions on a good map. Read a short article (online) of your choice about any of the above topics on your own.

Recommended Readings:

Jancsó-Pintér-Suba-Surányi-Szántó: *Cultural Relations*, Akadémiai, 2010; with succinct introductory texts on the four largest English-speaking countries: Britain, the USA, Canada and Australia. The special advantage of the book is that it consists of short introductory texts followed by a number of comprehension and vocabulary exercises, all of them designed specifically for Hungarian students of English. It is, of course, less comprehensive on Britain than the textbook, but it gives students a great opportunity to practice the relevant vocabulary and concepts.

We also recommend that you keep up with the news from and about the UK.

Attendance and evaluation:

1. It is a survey course advertised to Part Time (correspondence) students. Attending the lectures is highly recommended. Not only do the lectures provide comprehensive overviews highlighting the key facts and their relevance to contemporary Britain but they also offer an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the historical, political, and cultural concepts (and vocabulary) and their contemporary relevance.
2. Compulsory texts should be reviewed preferably before the class sessions so that students can make a full advantage of the otherwise limited contact hours.
3. The exam questions will be based partly on the compulsory texts, partly on the material covered by the lectures.
4. Credits for the course can be earned by successfully completing a written test in the exam period. The test will most likely consist of an outline map (see requirements on homepage); concept/facts questions about the topics covered by lectures; gapfills that require the understanding and skilful application of key concepts; and a comprehension exercise followed by a short essay question related to the excerpt.