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21H.342 The Royal Family  
Fall 2003

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SYLLABUS

21H342

**THE ROYAL FAMILY**

Fall 2003  
TR 2:30-4  
12 units

Prof. Harriet Ritvo

**Subject Description**

An exploration of the changing role of the monarchy in British politics and culture, beginning with the accession of the House of Hanover (later Windsor) in 1714. The dynasty has encountered a series of crises, in which the personal and the political have been inextricably combined: for example, George III's mental illness; the scandalous behavior of his son, George IV; Victoria's withdrawal from public life after the death of Prince Albert; the abdication of Edward VIII; and the public antagonism sparked by sympathy for Diana, Princess of Wales. In addition to readings, materials include portraits, news footage, and films.

**Books**

The following books are available for purchase at the MIT Bookstore (as well as on various websites).

Ralph Alan Griffiths and John Ashton Cannon, The Oxford  
Illustrated History of the British Monarchy

Lytton Strachey,  
Queen Victoria

Sue Townsend, The Queen and I

They are also available at the MIT Library Reserve Room on the ground floor of Building 14.

Additional readings are available in the Reserve Room and on the 21H342 home page. The home page also includes other useful information, such as the syllabus, a selection of images, related links, reading questions and bibliography.

**Assignments**

There will be three formal written assignments, of 2, 4, and 10 pages. They will be due in class on September 9, October 16, and December 4 respectively. Assignment sheets will be given out in class and posted on the website. The final written assignment will include a progress report due November 20 and a class presentation (see the schedule for December 4 and 9).

In addition, informal response papers (1-2 pages) on the readings for each unit will be due in class on the day that the readings are discussed.

There will be no final examination.

### **Schedule**

UNIT 1      Background

R 9/4        Tudors and Stuarts

T 9/9        Royal Pageantry and Royal Politics  
FIRST PAPER DUE

R 9/11      Discussion: Oakland, "The Monarchy"; Cannadine, "The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the 'Invention of Tradition', c.1820-1977"

UNIT 2      German Kings of England

T 9/16      George I and George II

R 9/18      Discussion: G and C 459-484; Thackeray, The First Four Georges, selections

UNIT 3      The Father of his Country

T 9/23      George III

R 9/25      Movie: *The Madness of King George*

T 9/30      Discussion: G and C 484-529; Fanny Burney, Diary, selections

UNIT 4      Style and Scandal

R 10/2      Prince Regent and George IV

T 10/7      Discussion: G and C 530-545; Clark, "Queen Caroline and the Sexual Politics of Popular Culture"; Laqueur, "The Queen Caroline Affair: Politics as Art in the Reign of George IV"

R 10/9      Video: *A Royal Scandal*

UNIT 5      The Mother of her Country

T 10/14 Transition: William  
IV to Victoria

R 10/16 The Young Queen  
SECOND PAPER DUE

T 10/21 Victoria and Albert

R 10/23 Discussion: G and C 545-578; Strachey, chs. 1-6

T 10/28 Empress of India

R 10/30 Discussion: Bagehot, "The Monarchy"

UNIT 6 The Shadow of War

T 11/4 Edward VII and George V

R 11/6 Discussion: G and C 579-600; Jubilee Program;  
Cannadine, "King George V"

UNIT 7 Constitutional Crisis and Recovery

T 11/11 VETERAN'S DAY: NO CLASS

R 11/13 The Abdication of Edward VIII

T 11/18 Discussion: G and C 601-615; Edward Windsor,  
Autobiography, selections

R 11/20 George VI: Their Finest Hour

UNIT 8 The Monarchy in Modern Britain

T 11/25 Elizabeth II

R 11/27 THANKSGIVING: NO CLASS

T 12/2 Discussion: G and C 615-636, Townsend; Charles, Diana  
and the Next Generation

R 12/4 Class presentations  
FINAL PAPER DUE

T 12/9 Class presentations

### **Grading**

Grading will be based on the written assignments (75% distributed according to the length of the papers) and class participation (25%).

### **Revision**

Papers may be revised and handed in for a new grade at any time before the last class meeting. The new grade will replace the old one. Revisions should be handed in along with the marked copy of the original version. They should represent a real rethinking or recasting, not just correction of misspellings,

grammatical errors, and stylistic infelicities. Revisions will be accepted until the last day of classes.

### **Things to Remember**

Written assignments should represent original and individual work.

Assignments are to be handed in on time. If an extension becomes necessary it should be requested ahead of the due date. Otherwise, lateness will be penalized.

Attendance is important. Not all the material to be covered in class is included in the readings. Be sure to bring your copy of the readings to discussion classes.