

A Thousand Years of the British Monarchy, 1066-2026

The British monarchy has survived centuries of change and crisis to remain a vital part of British politics and public life in the 21st century. This course will examine the history of the monarchy since the Norman Conquest of 1066 to the present-day. Classes will use a range of sources to explore key personalities and events which shaped the evolution of the monarchy over almost a thousand years: the relationship of the crown with aristocrats and ordinary people; the political ideas which justified monarchy and faced the challenges of republicanism, constitutionalism, and nationalism; the consolidation of the English and Scottish monarchies into a single institution at the top of a global empire; and the domestication of monarchy in the modern world. We will consider the impact of the long reign of the late Queen Elizabeth, and the challenges faced by her successor, Charles III.

Class themes:

1. First among equals: medieval kings and their nobles
2. The Tudor and Stewart revolutions: the monarchical state
3. The Stuart crisis: absolutism, constitutionalism, and republicanism
4. Empresses and Emperors: imperial monarchy and its discontents
5. A model family?: domesticating the modern royals

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