England: Age of Shakespeare (1564-1616)

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History and culture of England in the golden age of Elizabeth and the early years of James I. We will examine political, religious changes and the life of people at the noble and humble levels using videos and PowerPoint lectures.

Videos may be shown in part and the remainder summarized and expanded on in the lecture. This will also depend on overlap between the two video sources.

Tentative Outline

1. Introduction - Setting the Stage. Elizabethan Government: Advisers, Privy Council, Parliament, Foreign Policy; Shakespeare's parents and Shakespeare's education
   Video: Set in a Dangerous World — 1568-88
   Wrightson (11) Elizabethan "Monarchical Republic": Political Participation: Elizabeth I and her Councilors (0-15:37)
2. Economics of Tudor England
   Video: Life in Shakespeare's London—East
   Video: Life in Shakespeare's London—West
4. Religion in Late Tudor England: Elizabeth and Conspiracies; Mary Queen of Scots
   Wrightson (10) The Elizabethan Confessional State: Conformity, Papists and Puritans
5. Entertainment and popular Institutions at the end of the 16th century
   Video: The Ties that Bound
   A look at the institutions, habits, and attitudes designed to promote meaning and community in England, including popular religion, paternalism, extended family ties, and the support of one's neighbors.
6. Crisis in Late Tudor England
   Video: Heart and Stomach of a Queen — 1566-1603
7. England and the world
   Video: The Land and Its People in 1603
   The economic and social changes experienced by the English people since 1485—beginning with unprecedented stresses on the Great Chain of Being.
   Wrightson (12) Economic Expansion, 1560-1640: Agriculture
8. The Court, Aristocracy and gentry in 1603
   Video: Private Life—The Elite.
   Wrightson (13) A Polarizing Society, 1560-1640: Tenancy
   Video: Private Life—The Commoners
   Education, courtship, marriage and day-to-day living—are dealt with as they are experienced at the other end of the "Chain."
10. Law and Order
  Video: Order and Disorder
Toward the end of the sixteenth century, English men and women are convinced that disorder, poverty, and crime are on the rise. This lecture examines whether they were right and how the system functioned to address these issues.
Wrightson (15) Crime and the Law

11. Urbanization, colonization
  Video: Towns, Trade, and Colonization
England begins its movement out of the countryside—not only into towns, but to fledgling colonies that form an alternative for those who cannot make a go of it in England or conform to its rigid religious and social structure.

12. Culture
  Video: The Elizabethan and Jacobean Age
Wrightson (17) Education and Literacy
A look at the tremendous flowering of English culture at the turn into the seventeenth century, including what is possibly the greatest achievement of the age—the development of the English language itself—and the reaction of authorities to this powerful and thus dangerous tool.

13. James I, transition and coming crisis
  Video: Establishing the Stuart Dynasty—1603—25
The problems that James I inherits from the Tudors will eventually overwhelm the early Stuart state and produce the British Civil Wars. This lecture introduces five enduring areas of tension—sovereignty, financing the government, war and foreign policy, religion, and local control|—with a focus on the first two.

General References


Bucholz, Robert and Newton Key, Early Modern England 1485-1714: A Narrative History Blackwell, 2004


Video
Professor Robert Bucholz A History of England from the Tudors to the Stuarts Great Courses (identified as Video in outline).

Professor Keith Wrightson Hist 251: Early Modern England: Politics, Religion, and Society Under the Tudors and Stuarts Open Yale Courses http://oyc.yale.edu/history/hist-251#overview