

“Landeskunde – Britain Today & Other Aspects” with Dr Gordon Charles Ross

You might have heard about boring British history and culture classes consisting of long films about society and the class system, or boring lectures about historical facts or wars - knowledge you will have forgotten a few months later and will never ever use again in daily life. This course was different. It was not about kings and queens, it was about British people, the people of today. Basically, it was about things you do not learn in history books, things that show you how to enjoy yourself in GREAT Britain.

We started the course with a short introduction by Mr Ross on general facts and knowledge on Britain; facts you need to know – at least when you are studying English. One of those facts is the difference between Great Britain, which comprises England, Scotland and Wales, and the United Kingdom, consisting of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Or did you know that Birmingham is the second biggest city in the UK?

Afterwards, the course continued with presentations on different topics and different aspects of culture, which were based on Kate Fox’s book *Watching the English*. Each presentation tried to provide its audience with the most important information on how to have a nice time in Britain and about how to come along with the Britons. The topics we dealt with ranged from “surviving the *Alltag*”, humour, and social life to food and drink, the importance of sport, speaking the lingo, and last but not least sex. What we learned was not to be too earnest, not to jump queues, and that the British do not have sex lives – instead, they make do with hot water bottles.

In the end, every student was free to choose whether he or she wanted to write an essay or a survival guide as final exam – on whatever topic he or she wished to. The essays should be written in the standard format whereas the survival guides were totally open to creativity.

To put it all in a nutshell, this course helps you survive in the United Kingdom.

TTFN*! :)

Christina Oldenburger

* = 'Ta- Ta for now!' (=Good bye, see you later!)