London is the increasingly multicultural metropolis of what has always been a multicultural island. It is also a place with a deep and varied history—a history that can be read in the very fabric of the city. We will be involved in studying and experiencing London in both of these aspects. Through the Study Group’s academic program, we will work on developing a concrete sense of the physical and cultural contexts of British literature, both medieval and modern, and of why these contexts matter; we will also, I hope, come to an understanding of London’s place—cultural, political, and spiritual—within both Britain itself and its former empire. Along the way, we will have the opportunity to immerse ourselves in the rich and vibrant life of one of the world’s great cities. The London Study Group follows the Colgate calendar from January to early May, with a week-long spring break.

Program Structure and Course Offerings
All students will take four courses. Three of these courses offer credit in the English Department: English 303Y and 389Y, taught by the director, and English 332Y, taught by a theater specialist resident in London. The fourth course will be one of the courses offered as part of the Colgate History Department’s London Study Group, directed by Kira Stevens, which will be in London together with us.

Required Courses

**English 303Y, The Literature of the Middle Ages: Nationality, Language, and Identity in Medieval British Literature** (taught by the director). What do we mean when we speak of British literature? To ask this question is to enter into the current debate over what constitutes British identity—a debate that has generated a good deal of controversy among contemporary British historians and intellectuals, and that has been raised to a new level of urgency by developments in the nationalist movements of Scotland, Wales, and even Cornwall. The roots of this debate extend deep into the Middle Ages, when Britain (and “British” literature) were a patchwork of different nations, cultures, and languages. In this course we will consider the literary topography of medieval Britain, with special attention to the intersection of nation, language, and identity. Readings will include the work of English, Welsh, and Scottish authors.

**English 389Y, Survey of British Fiction** (taught by the director). In this course we will be reading a selection of twentieth-century works set primarily in London, with a special emphasis on how the city figures in the experience and consciousness of fictional characters—and their authors—in the half-century since the end of World War Two. I have not yet finally determined the reading list for this course, but authors under consideration include Virginia Woolf, George Orwell, Joyce Cary, Doris Lessing, Muriel Spark, Graham Greene, Sam Selvon, Martin Amis, Michael Moorcock, Iain Sinclair, Robert McLiam Wilson, Angela Carter, Geoff Nicholson, and Zadie Smith.

**English 332Y, Contemporary London Theater and Culture** (instructor to be determined). For this course students will be seeing and studying about a dozen plays currently in production in London; the focus will be not only on what the specific productions can reveal about contemporary London or British theater and culture, but also on what they can reveal about technical and theoretical aspects of contemporary theater more generally.

In conjunction with the first of these courses, we will be traveling together on a couple of trips. First, we’ll take a brief excursion to Canterbury, birthplace of English Christianity, where we’ll visit Canterbury Cathedral (the destination of Chaucer’s pilgrims in The Canterbury Tales) and St. Augustine’s Abbey, the first important Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical foundation and the home base for the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons.
Later in the term, we’ll head for southwestern England and Wales, where we will spend a week touring a variety of historically and archaeologically important sites—castles, monasteries, hill-forts, and megalithic monuments—which form the backdrop, or even the source, for much of the literature we’ll be reading in English 303Y. This trip will give us the opportunity to consider the relationship between literature and place, and to arrive at a richer understanding of some of the cultural differences (and tensions) that have helped to define the British experience right from the beginning. It will also give us the opportunity to take a break from London’s crowded urban scene and experience some of the most glorious open country in the entire island. Needless to say, London itself has an especially prominent place in the academic program of this study group; in addition to our regular attendance at London theater productions, we will also be visiting together as a part of our coursework a number of sites of historical and literary significance within the city and its environs. Finally, three-day weekends will make it possible for students to take a variety of short trips independent of the larger program.

Classrooms, Libraries, Bookstore
Florida State University’s London Study Centre, a substantial academic complex in the heart of Bloomsbury just a couple of blocks west of the British Museum, will provide the classroom space for two of the English courses, although some of our class meetings will be held at such locations as the Tate Gallery, Greenwich, the Tower of London, and the British Museum. The Florida State complex also houses a modest library and computer facilities, both of which will be available to students. Privileges at various archives and libraries will be arranged as needed for history and literature projects, but for day-to-day purposes, students should plan to use their local branch libraries and the main library for the borough in which they reside. (Students should be prepared, however, to work in their flats; library hours in London are, like many other things, different from those at Colgate.) Students should also count on buying their textbooks here and carrying them over to London. Not only are books cheaper in this country; by buying them here we can ensure that everyone has the same edition, and so will be on the same page, for the close textual work we’ll be doing in class.

Extra Cost to Students
The study group will inevitably entail extra expenses for students. In addition to airfare, there will be the costs of commuting around town (in most cases best done through a tube/bus monthly pass), and of our trip to Wales—not to mention whatever other travel students may wish to undertake on three-day weekends or during Colgate’s spring break. A certain number of theater tickets will be funded through the program, but students may well want to see additional plays (at student ticket prices of around £10-15 or so), and of course London also offers a great wealth of other cultural opportunities, many of which come with a price tag. Housing costs are naturally higher in London than in Hamilton, although Colgate is making arrangements through an agency to provide students with a uniform source of relatively affordable flats near central London. Food, too, will be more expensive in London than in the U.S., and even the most cooperative flatmates will want to eat out rather than cook once in a while. Whatever happens to the rate of exchange between British and U.S. currency, inflation in Britain has been such that the prices of things in general may well seem shocking at first. That said, economy is possible; there’s a lot to do in London that costs little or nothing, from visiting museums to exploring street markets, and if you bring whatever clothing you need, you won’t have to burn through your spending money filling out your wardrobe on Oxford Street. All things considered, the extra expenses of the trip are not in and of themselves a good reason to forego what remains an extraordinary opportunity for intellectual and personal development.

Prerequisites and Selection Criteria
Application to the London Study Group is open to all Colgate students who have completed at least two English courses at the 200 level, or their equivalent. Priority will be given to declared concentrators in English from the class of 2006. Along with the application, academic and administrative references and an
interview with the Study Group director will be required.

**Application Deadline:** Applications are due to Tess Jones in the English Dept. office by November 30, 2003. Inquiries should be directed to Morgan Davies, 301B Lawrence Hall (228-7158).