

V&A Academy

A HISTORY OF LONDON 1066 - 1666



Introduction

Medieval London was a walled city of crowded streets and lanes, open air markets and wooden and stone houses, its inhabitants living perilously and piously amid a skyline of a hundred church spires. With the V&A's collections and curators for inspiration, on this twelve-week course we will explore its dynamic and fascinating history from the Norman Conquest to the Great Fire. A city of learning and richly skilled crafts, during this period London went from being the prosperous capital of an emerging kingdom on the periphery of Christendom to being one of the greatest cities of Europe, the centre of a growing mercantile empire which looked outward to the Atlantic and beyond. Already an ancient city at the dawn of the first millennium, London was firmly locked into a nexus of trade centering on the North Sea, with links to varied lands and peoples of Scandinavia and north-west Europe.

Information

Wednesdays, 24 September – 26 November, 11.00-15.30. Onsite and Online.

Watch lecture recordings on demand, available at the end of each day, until Wednesday 4 March 2026

Your course leader

Mike Berlin is a Lecturer at Birkbeck College, University of London. He is a specialist in the social history of early modern London and has published extensively on the history of London's guilds. Before joining Birkbeck, he was a research officer at the Centre for Metropolitan History, Institute of Historical Research.

Note: V&A Academy programmes are subject to change without notice.

Week 1 – Wednesday 24 September 2025

Capital and Kingdom

- 10.45 Introduction **Mike Berlin**
- 11.00 The King's Chamber: London and the Kingdom **Mike Berlin**
- 12.30 The Tower of London **Tracy Borman**
- 14.30 Mapping London and its Environs **Peter Barber**

Week 2 – Wednesday 1 October 2024

‘The pious city’

- 10.00 Gallery tour (Group A) – *additional ticket holders only*
- 11.00 St. Paul's and London's Churches **John Schofield**
- 12.30 Westminster Abbey and Westminster Hall **Sally Dormer**
- 14.30 Opus Anglicanum **Sally Dormer**
- 15.30 Gallery tour (Group B) – *additional ticket holders only*

Week 3 – Wednesday 8 October 2025

The ‘Splendour of its Citizens’

- 11.00 London and the Black Death **Barney Sloane**
- 12.30 Crafts and Guilds **Matthew Davies**
- 14.30 Immigrant Communities in Late Medieval and Early Modern
London **Mike Berlin**
- 15.45 Meet & Greet **Mike Berlin**

Week 4 – Wednesday 15 October 2025

‘Flower of Cities All’: Renaissance London

- 10.00 Gallery Talk (Group A) – *additional ticket holders only*
- 11.00 Holbein and the Tudor Court **Charlotte Bolland**
- 12.30 Tudor Royal Palaces **Caroline Knight**
- 14.30 Ceremony and the City: Royal Entries and Lord Mayor’s Shows **Mike Berlin**
- 15.30 Gallery Talk (Group B) – *additional ticket holders only*

Week 5 – Wednesday 22 October 2025

‘The unquiet city’: London and the Reformation

- 11.00 London and the Reformation **Mike Berlin**
- 12.30 The Strand Palaces **Paula Henderson**
- 14.30 London Gardens in the 17th Century **Paula Henderson**

Week 6 – Wednesday 29 October 2025

Tudor and Stuart London: Court and City

- 10.00 Gallery Talk (Group A) – *additional ticket holders only*
- 11.00 The Early West End **Mike Berlin**
- 12.30 Shakespeare and the Origins of the Public Theatre **Anouska Lester**
- 14.30 Van Dyck and the Stuart Court **Catharine MacLeod**
- 15.30 Gallery Talk (Group B) – *additional ticket holders only*

Week 7 – Wednesday 5 November 2025

London as a Centre of Conspicuous Consumption

- 11.00 London Furniture 1570–1640 **Nick Humphrey**
- 12.30 Re-discovering the Cheapside Hoard **Hazel Forsyth**
- 14.30 Textiles in Early Modern London TBC

Week 8 – Wednesday 12 November 2025

London's Port and Hinterland

- 10.00 Gallery Talk (Group A)
- 11.00 TBC
- 12.30 The Growth of the East End as a Maritime Suburb **Mike Berlin**
- 14.30 A City of Villages: London's Hinterland **Mike Berlin**
- 15.30 Gallery Talk (Group B)

Week 9 – Wednesday 19 November 2025

'Sink of Ill humours': London and the Kingdom

- 11.00 London and the Civil War **Mike Berlin**
- 12.30 Cheapside Cross **Christine Stevenson**
- 14.30 Temple Bar **Emily Mann**

Week 10 – Wednesday 26 November 2025

Death, Disaster and Recovery

- 10.00 Gallery Talk (Group A) Monuments, Effigies and Death **Nigel Llewellyn**
- 11.00 TBC **Nigel Llewellyn**
- 12.30 Plague and Fire **Vanessa Harding**
- 14.30 The Royal Collection and the Origins of English Collecting **TBC**
- 15.30 Gallery Talk (Group B) Monuments, Effigies and Death **Nigel Llewellyn**

Additional study options

This 10 weeklong online course is part of the London course series over three terms. With our in-person London walking tours you can complement your learning.

A History of London: 1066-1666 - Autumn term (September 2025)

A History of London: 1666-1851 – Spring term (January 2026 start)

London: The Global City 1851 – 2020 - Summer term (April 2026 start)

Walking tours

Hackney Wick & Fish Island Walking Tour: Sense of Place with Colin
– Friday 5 & 12 September

The City of London: Medieval City to Modern Metropolis with Mike –
Friday 17 & 31 October

Shakespeare's London with Mike – Friday 14 November

Stratford Walking Tour: London from the East with Mike - Friday 28
November & 5 December

Spitalfields Walking Tour: Immigration and Creativity with Mike
(Spring term) coming soon

South Kensington Walking Tour with Mike (Summer term) coming
soon

West End Walking Tour with Mike (Summer term) coming soon

Discover all the walking tour events and courses via V&A Academy

V&A Members enjoy priority booking at term launch. [Find out more](#)

Email courses@vam.ac.uk to join a walking tour waiting list if the event shows as sold out.