

COURSE SYLLABUS



Subcultures: Fashion, Lifestyles, Music, and More SOC 276/3

Spring 2017

Mondays 11:30 – 14:15

Lecturer: Melinda Reidinger, Ph.D.

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Office hours: Wednesdays 12-13:00 or by appointment

Semester Credits	3	Language of Instruction	English
ECTS	6	Level	Introductory
Length	15 weeks	Pre-requisites	None
Contact hours	42 hours	Course type	HSC/PS, JC Elective

1. Course Description

Provides critical insights into contemporary and 20th century literary, artistic, lifestyle, musical, and social subcultures. Multidisciplinary perspectives from cultural and media studies, as well as classic sociological theories are used to explore the roots and branches of subcultural phenomena. With an emphasis on both socioeconomics and symbolism we will use the seminal readings to help interpret “alternative” cultural practices and certain emerging cultural and lifestyle trends.

2. Student Learning Outcomes

Aided with research tools from various scholarly perspectives, students will learn how to

- conceptualize and contextualize types of subcultures
- learn to interpret them according to various theoretical models
- apply critical imagination in decoding subcultural artifacts
- sharpen critical thinking, argumentative skills, and cultural reading skills
- and practice presenting the results of individual research to their peers.

3. Course Materials (Reading/Viewing/Listening)

Required Materials (all available online in Course Materials or as handouts):

- Atkinson, Michael. “Tattoo Enthusiasts: Subculture or Figuration?” in Gelder [*The Subcultures Reader*, 2005] pp. 326-340.
- Benjamin, Walter. “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”, ed. Hannah Arendt. New York: Schocken/Random House.
- Ceschi, Alessandro. “Walls of Rome” (YouTube). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fbTHSiykm2s>.
- Clark, Dylan. “The Death and Life of Punk, the Last Subculture” in Muggleton and Weinzierl [*The Post- Subcultures Reader*, 2003, pp.223-236.
- Cohen, Albert K. “A General Theory of Subcultures” in Gelder [*The Subcultures Reader*, 2005]. pp. 50-59.
- Cohen, Phil. “Subcultural Conflict and Working-Class Community” in Gelder [*The Subcultures Reader*, 2005]. pp. 86-93.

- Esposito, Rashaun. "The Artistic Construction of a Counter-Culture" 2005 for www.graffiti.org. <https://www.graffiti.org/faq/esposito.html>
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- Frank, Thomas. *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (excerpt by author). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Geiling, Natasha. "Prague's Famous Lennon Wall: Is it Over, or Reborn?" in *Smithsonian*. 21 November, 2014. <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/pragues-famous-john-lennon-wall-it-over-or-just-reborn-180953415/?no-ist>
- Greif, Mark. "The Hipster in the Mirror". *New York Times*. 14 November, 2010. http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/14/books/review/Greif-t.html?_r=
- Harris, Stephen. "What is Cheaper than Nothing at All?"
- Hebdige, Dick. *Subculture: the Meaning of Style*. New York: Routledge. 1988.
- Hollander, Jocelyn, and Einwohner, Rachel. "Conceptualizing Resistance." *Sociological Forum* 19:4 (December 2004), pp. 533-553.
- Huq, Rupa, "Selling, Selling Out, Or Resisting Dominant Discourses: Rap and the Uses of Hip-hop Culture" pp. 110-134 in *Beyond Subculture. Pop, Youth and Identity in a Postcolonial World*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Jurková, Zuzana et al. *Prague Soundscapes*. Prague: Karolinum Press. 2014.
- Klein, Naomi. "Culture Jamming," in *No Logo*. London: Flamingo, 2001.
- Machovec, Martin (ed.) *Views From the Inside*. Czech Underground Literature and Culture (1948-1989). Praha: FFUK, 2006.
- Michel, Arthur Holland. "The Age of Drone Vandalism Begins with an Epic NYC Tag" in *Wired*. 30 April, 2015. <http://www.wired.com/2015/04/age-drone-vandalism-begins-epic-nyc-tag/>
- Miller, Liam. "Not All Graffiti is Vandalism – Let's Rethink the Public Space Debate" in *The Conversation*. 27 March, 2015. <https://theconversation.com/not-all-graffiti-is-vandalism-lets-rethink-the-public-space-debate-38972>
- Miller, Timothy, "The Roots of the 1960s Communal Revival." *American Studies (with American studies International)* 33:2 (Fall 1992), pp. 74-93.
- Muggleton, David and Weinzierl, Rupert. *The Post-Subcultures Reader*. New York: Berg, 2003.
- Oldiesfan1968 "The Story of the Concert at Altamont, 1969". <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQzNtYsf5D4>
- Overstreet, Martina. *In Graffiti We Trust*. Praha: Mlada Fronta, 2005.
- Park Robert E. "Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment" in Gelder [*The Subcultures Reader*, 2005]. pp. 25-34.
- Ramet, Sabrina Petra (ed.). *Rocking the State*. Oxford: Westview Press, 1994.
- Reidinger, Melinda. "Czech Alternative Music Playlist" (YouTube) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2duKwzGYypp&list=PLU8xytruqqfETnDGgDbRetKZIpcP6qpDZ>
- Reynolds, Simon. *Notes on the Noughties: When will Hip Hop Hurry up and Die?* (*Guardian* online, 2009)
- Reynolds, Simon. *Rip It Up and Start Again*. New York: Penguin, 2005.
- Roszak, Theodore. "Counterfeit Identity" in *The Making of a Counter Culture*. New York: Doubleday and Company, 1969.
- Saint John, Graham. "Post-Rave Technotribalism and the Carnival of Protest" in *The Post-Subcultures Reader*, David Muggleton & Rupert Weinzierl, eds. Oxford: Berg. 2003. pp. 65-82.
- Stickney, John. *Streets, Actions, Alternatives, Raps* (excerpt). New York: 1970.
- (still seeking this one) Stoppard, Tom. *Rock n' Roll* [play/live recording].
- Winge, Theresa M., "Constructing Neo-Tribal identities Through Dress: Modern Primitives and Body Modifications"

4. Teaching methodology

Part of the class will consist of lectures and slide presentations, primarily by the lecturer, but there will also be four brief presentations required by students during the semester and a longer research paper + presentation at the end. Some class sessions will begin with quizzes on the readings, and reading comprehension or research exercises will be assigned as homework. Sometimes we will view films and other visual materials together, and we will listen to music during the class as well as outside of it.

5. Course Schedule

Week 1 (Feb. 13): Introduction to Subculture Studies, the Chicago School

Description: Definition of subcultures and survey of the subcultural landscape; sociology and cities; the Chicago School; discussion of class expectations

Readings: in-class readings (handouts of Robert E. Park and Albert K. Cohen's articles)

Assignments/Deadlines: none

Week 2 (Feb. 20): Cultural Studies and the Birmingham School

Description: The cultural studies tradition, and subculture as a function of social class and generational conflict

Readings: Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style* pp.73-133; Phil Cohen: "Subcultural Conflict and Working-Class Community" [1972] in Gelder.

Case Studies: *Quadrophenia* [1979]. Available on YouTube.

Assignments/Deadlines: Quiz on Park, Albert K. Cohen, Dick Hebdige, and Phil Cohen. Choose a subculture to present next week to the class with a partner (subject to my approval).

Week 3 (Feb. 27): Resistance and Co-optation

Description: Subculture as resistance to the mainstream culture; co-optation by commerce. We will also discuss the question of "hipsters".

Readings: Jocelyn Hollander and Rachel Einwohner "Conceptualizing Resistance"; Thomas Frank *The Conquest of Cool* (excerpt); Mark Greif "The Hipster in the Mirror".

Case Studies: presentations (as below)

Assignments/Deadlines: describe a subculture that emerged between 1945 and 1990 (it may or may not still be extant) and describe in about 500 words what it is, how well it fits the criteria provided in our first session (also on the handout), and how well it fits some of the theories we have read about. Present your findings to your classmates (5 minutes).

Some that you might consider are: Teddy Boys/Girls, rude boys, skinheads, Goths, beatniks, *stilyagi* (USSR), Rastafarians, the Hell's Angels, or casuals/suedeheads – but that is by no means an exhaustive list! Don't choose hippies, because we'll be covering them in considerably more detail later.

Week 4 (March 6): The Roots and Birth of the 1960s U.S. Counterculture

Description: historical predecessors to the hippie counterculture, its early development and mass media perceptions of it; communes; psychedelic drugs; "scenes".

Readings: Miller, Timothy, "The Roots of the 1960s Communal Revival"; Roszak, Theodore, "Counterfeit Identity" .

Case Studies (In-Class Viewing)

- Harry Reasoner, "The Hippie Temptation" (*60 Minutes*, 1967)
- Excerpts from *Psych-Out* (American International Films, 1968)
- *Commune* (2005)

Assignments/Deadlines: Quiz on Hollander & Einwohner, Frank, Miller, and Roszak; choose a performer/scene to present next week with a partner (subject to my approval: only one presentation of any one band/scene).

Week 5 (March 13): The Peak and Decline of the 1960s U.S. Counterculture

Description: What caused the decline of the hippie counterculture? What were its legacies?

Readings: Stickney, John. Selections from *Streets, Actions, Alternatives, Raps* (on NEO), and "The Curse of the Hippie Parents"

Case Studies (In-Class Viewing)

- "The Story of the Altamont Rock Concert" (YouTube)
- Recommended for home: *Gimme Shelter* (1970)

Assignments/Deadlines: Choose a band/performer or musical "scene" from the 1960s and write about 500 words to describe it, then upload this to NEO. You will also present it with your partner to the class (5 minutes). You may use but *not* copy and paste basic info from online sources (i.e., discography, basic bio facts and band history), but the analysis must be your own original thoughts on how the band reflects this subculture. Some to consider include New York: Bob Dylan, Peter Paul & Mary, Phil Ochs, Judy Collins, The Lovin' Spoonful, The Fugs, The Velvet Underground, Pearls Before Swine, Ritchie Havens, Joni Mitchell, or the "Greenwich Village Scene"

- San Francisco: The Charlatans (U.S.), The Great Society, The Jefferson Airplane, Big Brother & the Holding Company, The Quicksilver Messenger Service, Country Joe & the Fish, The Grateful Dead, Moby Grape, Sopwith Camel **OR** THE "Ballroom Scene" at the Fillmore and Avalon Ballrooms and elsewhere in the Bay Area
- Los Angeles: The Mothers of Invention, Captain Beefheart, The Doors, Love, The Seeds **OR** the "Sunset Strip" scene
- The "Red Dog Saloon" psychedelic scene in the Nevada desert
- Texas: The Thirteenth Floor Elevators, The Golden Dawn (serious psychedelic drug music – especially check out their "Roller Coaster"
- Detroit: MC5 (revolutionary hippies)
- London: Pink Floyd, The Move, The Soft Machine, The Incredible String Band

Week 6 (March 20): Descendants of the 60s Counterculture: Glam, Punk, and Post-

Punk

Description: Was punk (and its close younger siblings new wave and hardcore, along with British equivalents *oi* and post-punk) a descendant of or a radical change from 1960s counterculture?

Readings: Dylan Clark, "The Death and Life of Punk, the Last Subculture"; Simon Reynolds, *Rip It Up and Start Again* (selections).

Case Studies:

Prof. Giarelli's Punk Playlist

Field Trip to MeetFactory)

Assignments/Deadlines: Choose a band and post a description of their significance for post-1960s musical and subcultural developments on NEO. This time, you are NOT required to present this with a partner because we are taking a field trip. You ARE required to write a few comments on the field trip on the forum on NEO as part of your attendance requirement for this day.

Some that you might consider: The Velvet Underground, The Stooges (with Iggy Stooze/Pop), New York Dolls, The Slits, The Sex Pistols and/or PiL, The Ramones, The Buzzcocks, 999, The Clash, Black Flag, Bad Religion, Dead Kennedys, Circle Jerks, Minor Threat, MDC (Millions of Dead Cops), Patti Smith, Germs, X, Bad Brains, Joy Division, Talking Heads, The Cure, Gang of Four, Siouxsie and the Banshees....

Week 7 (March 27): Music as Resistance in Czechoslovakia: The Plastic People of the Universe

Description: The history of the Plastic People of the Universe and other dissident musical artists, the underground scene and its influence on Charter 77.

Readings: Machovec, Martin (ed.). *Views From the Inside. Czech Underground Literature and Culture (1948-1989)*. Ramet, Sabrina Petra (ed.). *Rocking the State*.

Case Studies (In-Class Listening and Viewing): Plastic People of the Universe, DG307, Pražský výběr.

Recommended: *Free To Rock* (documentary film, 2015).

Assignments/Deadlines: Quiz on materials from weeks 5, 6, 7.

Week 8 (April 3) The Czech Alternative Scene After the Velvet Revolution.

Description: Discussion of contemporary trends in popular and alternative music scenes in the Czech Republic; consideration of the relevance of "underground" as a category in a free society.

Reading: Zuzana Jurková, et al., "Music As Goods" in *Prague Soundscapes*, pp. 169-212.

Case Studies: My YouTube playlist of Czech Alternative Music; Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (in-class reading, also available on NEO).

Assignments/Deadlines: Choose a band and post/bring in your review

Name five Czech bands you have listened to, online or in concerts, from the recommended listening or on your own. What was the pre- and post-1989 situation for this group if they are old enough to have been playing back then? What genre might you describe them as belonging to, and how would you characterize their style?

How do you think Czech bands compare to US bands of the last quarter century? What might be the similarity and differences in their music and in their contemporary scenes?

1. Write a 500 word review (as in Session 5) contextualizing one or perhaps two Czech bands with its scene. Some to consider include: The Matadors, Zuby Nehty/Dybduk, Stromboli, Tatabojs, Raduza, Gipsy.cz, Gaia Messiah, Vypsana Fixa, Oldrich Janota, UJD, Cechomor, Yellow Sisters, BBP, New Kids Underground, Birds Build Underground, Priesnitz, Jablkon, Rudovous, Budoar stare damy, Jeste jsme se nedohodli, Chadima, Richter, Jasna paka, Psi vojaci, Silvie Krobova, Abraxas, Prazsky Vyber, Zrni, Tygro, Cirkus Problem, Gate Crusher, Psychohlina, Traband, Place Kocka, Znouzectnost...

A few labels to "Czech" out: indiesrec.cz, Blackpoint, tamizdat, guerrilla.cz

Week 9 (April 10): Hip-hop and Rave Subcultures, 1980s-90s

Description: Growth of the breakdancing/hip-hop subculture and its entry into the mainstream. How does Reynolds view the rave subculture of the 90s?

Reading:

Reynolds, Simon, "In Our Angelhood: Rave as Counterculture and Spiritual Revolution"; St. John, Graham, "Post-Rave Technotribalism and the Carnival of Protest"; Huq, Rupa, "Selling, Selling Out"

Case Studies (In-Class Viewing)

The Freshest Kids: A History of the B-Boy

Assignments/Deadlines: Quiz on materials from session 9 and 10

April 17: NO CLASS — Spring Break.

Week 11 (April 24): Graffiti and Street Art

Description: Field trip to Prague graffiti and street art sites (bring spray paint!!!)

Reading: "Prague's Famous John Lennon Wall"; "The Artistic Construction of a Counter-Culture"; "Not All Graffiti is Vandalism"; "The Age of Drone Vandalism"

Assignments/Deadlines: Proposal for final research project: describe your subject in a few sentences + provide two scholarly sources and a few journalistic or other sources

Case Studies (In-Class Viewing): "Walls of Rome", by Alessandro Ceschi

May 1: NO CLASS – State Holiday.

Week 12 (May 8): 21st Century Subcultures: Modern Primitives and Body Projects

Description: How do subcultures based around body modifications differ than previous ones? What are "modern primitives" trying to prove? What do they have in common with ancestral (sub)cultures? What other subcultures might fit the model of a "figuration"?

Reading: Teresa Winge, "Constructing Neo-Tribal Identities Through Dress: Modern Primitives and Body Modification"; Michael Atkinson, "Tattoo Enthusiasts: Subculture or Figuration?"

Case Studies/Viewing: TBA

Assignments/Deadlines: 2-page research project outline due

Week 13 (May 15): Culture Jamming AND Review for Final Exam

Description:

Reading: AdBusters magazine (available in hard copy at the library); Naomi Klein, "Culture Jamming"; Stephen Harris, "What is Cheaper than Nothing at All?"

Case Studies/In Class Viewing: *Czech Dream* by Vít Klusák and Filip Remunda

Assignments/Deadlines: paper outlines will be returned with comments; you need to bring in your own spoof ad to share with the class.

Week 14 (May 22): Final Paper and Final Paper Presentations due in class

Week 15 (May 29): Final Exam

6. Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workloads)

Assignment	Workload (average)	Weight in Final Grade	Evaluated Student Learning Outcomes
Class participation: Discussions of readings, weekly quizzes on assignments, band reviews	30	10%	Be mentally present (no social media or texting in class). Bring the week's assigned material to class, either printed or in electronic form. Be able to answer questions about that material. You are responsible for mastering material from missed classes. The best participation grade goes to the best critical observers.
Quizzes (4)	20	20%	Show critical understanding of assigned reading, listening and viewing.
Reviews and Spoof Ad (5, worth 5 pts each)	20	25%	Demonstrates synthetic processing of material and creative presentation
Final Exam	30	25%	Tests your ability to apply theoretical ideas in readings to specific case studies, as well as to place subcultures in accurate historical contexts.
Final Paper + Presentation	50	20%	Research paper on the topic of subcultures (app. 2000 words), MLA /APA format. Evaluation is based on your critical skills, applying knowledge of the subject proven by quoting authors covering the topic before you. <i>You must use library databases like EBSCO or JSTOR to find scholarly rather than popular sources; Wikipedia is not acceptable as a source.</i> Guidance for research will be provided upon request. The work should resonate with materials covered in class: apply the terminology offered. A 10-minute presentation is an integral part of the final project.
TOTAL	150 hours	100%	

7. Detailed Description of the Assignments

- Reviews and Spoof Ad:** You will be asked to compose 500 word summaries of certain bands or scenes associated with subcultures, and to create a spoof ad in a photo processing program to demonstrate mastery of the concept of culture jamming. To receive full credit, the written part must be turned in to NEO by 11:30 am on the day of class. Late assignments lose points. You cannot make up a missed presentation unless your absence has been excused by the dean. Spoof ads can be humorous or critical, but they will not receive credit if they violate AAU's standards (i.e.: no anti-Semitic, racist, or other seriously offensive content.) There are five of these assignments, so they are each worth 25% of this component of your grade.
- Final Paper:** You will need to go beyond the course readings to write about some aspect of a subculture we have studied or a different one of your choosing. Newly-emerging subcultures (post 1995) are especially encouraged. The topic must be approved by the instructor, and it is absolutely essential to use refereed scholarly

sources from EBSCO or JSTOR library databases. Papers using only Wikipedia and popular websites cannot get more than a C. The paper must do more than merely *describe* the subculture studied; it must apply the theoretical ideas introduced in the class to analyze it and come to conclusions.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Clear, meaningful research question/thesis	25
Use of respectable scholarly sources	25
Ability to synthesize and theorize about subcultures using theories and terminology from the course	25
Writing quality, style, and persuasiveness	25

- **Final Exam:** Though there will still be factual questions as on the midterm exam, this exam will lean more heavily toward essay questions designed to get you to apply theoretical concepts to the material studied and to come up with your own conclusions.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Mastery of assigned reading/viewing/listening	50
Ability to apply theoretical concepts in arriving at conclusions	50

8. General Requirements and School Policies

- **ATTENDANCE:** In a course that meets just 14 times, any more than 2 absences, *no matter what the reason*, cannot help but affect your full participation. Thus you get to up to two excused absences for whatever reason — illness, job, religious event, whatever. Any more than that — again for whatever reason — will result in incremental deductions from your final grade. Thus a third absence would reduce a final A to an A-, a fifth to a B+, a sixth to a B, etc. *This policy is non-negotiable, and also applies if you begin the course late.*
- **All papers** must be submitted online to the Neo portal.
- **LAPTOPS/TABLETS** ARE ALLOWED ONLY FOR ACCESSING ASSIGNED CLASS MATERIALS. SOCIAL MEDIA AND EMAIL WINDOWS MUST *ALWAYS* BE CLOSED FOR ENTIRE DURATION OF CLASS EXCEPT FOR BREAK. **One warning will be issued, and any further violation will result in an absence marked for that class session.**
- **CELL PHONES** MUST BE TURNED OFF FOR ENTIRE DURATION OF CLASS EXCEPT FOR BREAK.
- **Missed exams** can only be made up on presentation of a doctor-certified medical excuse. **Missing a partner presentation** results in a failing grade for the missing person unless they have been excused by their dean.
- All coursework is governed by AAU academic rules, and students are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work. All students are expected to be familiar with the AAU academic rules available in the Student Handbook.
- **Communication:** The university and lecturers will use only the student's university email address for communication. Students are responsible for checking their university email accounts regularly.
- **Cheating and plagiarism:** AAU strictly enforces its policy against cheating and plagiarism. Full policy is available in the Student Handbook.

Briefly: Cheating and plagiarism results in a failing grade for the assignment at minimum and may lead to suspension from the university. All submitted assignments will be checked by TurnItIn for originality.

To prevent any misunderstanding, plagiarism is defined:

PLAGIARISM – “the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one’s own original work.”

- Taken from the Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2nd Edition, Random House, New York, 1993. For further explanation, see www.plagiarism.org.

- **Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities or other health issues that affect their studies need to inform their lecturers as soon as possible to discuss reasonable accommodation.

9. Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage	Description
A	95 – 100	Excellent performance. The student has shown originality and displayed an exceptional grasp of the material and a deep analytical understanding of the subject.
A-	90 – 94	
B+	87 – 89	Good performance. The student has mastered the material, understands the subject well and has shown some originality of thought and/or considerable effort.
B	83 – 86	
B-	80 – 82	
C+	77 – 79	Fair performance. The student has acquired an acceptable understanding of the material and essential subject matter of the course, but has not succeeded in translating this understanding into consistently creative or original work.
C	73 – 76	
C-	70 – 72	
D+	65 – 70	Poor. The student has shown some understanding of the material and subject matter covered during the course. The student’s work, however, has not shown enough effort or understanding to allow for a passing grade in School Required Courses. It does qualify as a passing mark for the General College Courses and Electives.
D	60 – 64	
F	0 - 59	Fail. The student has not succeeded in mastering the subject matter covered in the course.

Approved by: School of Humanities and Social Sciences