

Course Last Updated 9/16/2024



Post-war British Popular Culture

Section I: Course Overview

Course Code: CUL311

Subject Area(s): Cultural Studies, Anthropology, History

Prerequisites: One 200-level course or two 100-level courses in Cultural Studies, Anthropology, History, or another relevant subject area

Language of Instruction: English

Total Contact Hours: 45

Credits: 3

Course Fees: N/A

Course Description

This course examines different countercultures and subcultures in Britain from the 1950s to the present day. It introduces the rocker, the punk, the Goth, the New Romantic, the Raver and, Britain's newest counter identity, the Hipster. Although these identities are connected to music and fashion, the course content goes further and locates these identities as part of political movements and of political malaise. The course explores cultures which are based on ethnicity and sexuality such as the black community in Notting Hill during the 1950s, and the gay community of Soho in the 1980s as well as ideas concerning diversity and hate crime. The influence of these subcultures has been extensive, and Britishness would not be what it is today without these subcultures' continued fight for equality. To better understand these subcultures the course is complemented with field studies which help contextualise these subcultures both historically and politically.

Learning Objectives

- Appraise the advantages and disadvantages of globalization on culture and critically assess whether some of its key elements including migration are making culture uniform.
- Explain how Britain's diversity has influenced the national culture.
- Explain the dynamics of power and equity.

- Illustrate how subcultures are inescapably linked to the mainstream and its ongoing sustainability.

Section II: Instructor & Course Details

Instructor Details

Name: TBC

Contact Information: TBC

Term: TBC

Course Day and Time: TBC

Office Hours: TBC

Grading & Assessment

The instructor assesses students' mastery of course learning objectives by using the forms of assessment below. Each of these assessments is weighted toward the final grade. The Assessment Overview section provides further details for each.

Engagement - 20%

Oral Presentation - 10%

Mid-term paper - 30%

Final Research Paper - 40%

Assessment Overview

This section provides a brief description of each form of assessment listed above. Forms of assessment may be slightly modified in the term syllabus.

Engagement (20%): Students are expected to be engaged in class, to have read the [CEA CAPA Engagement Policy](#), and to understand the [Class Engagement Rubric](#) that outlines how engagement is graded.

After the first two field trips, students are required to write a two-page response incorporating academic sources and their personal reaction to the site visited. Attention must be given to the history of the site and thought given to who uses the site now. Is the site connected to ideas of class, ethnicity, age or gender?

In the second half of the semester, students will obtain their participation grades by completing a scavenger hunt in Soho and by creating a recruitment poster for any of the subcultures that we have studied.

Midterm Paper (30%): From a selection of questions the student is required to write a paper on ideas discussed in class so far. Papers should be academically sourced and presented. They should make use of the class discussions and show independent research.

Final Essay (40%): Each student should concentrate on one aspect of Britain's popular culture from the period 1945-2024 linking it to some of the following ideas: imperialism, history,

immigration, art, culture, patriotism, American culture, war and memory. The paper should be independently researched and academically presented. It is important that the students form an original thesis. Sources can include, but cannot be limited to, interviews with Londoners who engage in this aspect of popular culture. Interviews must be supported by respectable academic sources.

Papers should be analytical rather than descriptive, based on a well-defined argument, and supported by specific details from the field classes, class handouts, readings, and students' own observations. Students may also incorporate an analysis of photographs and other visual material. Students should contact the instructor for topic advice and suggestions.

Presentation – Britain in Music (10%): It is often said that Britain is the music centre of the world. In the final week of class each student is required to choose one piece of music that they think encapsulates a feature of a subculture from the years 1951-2024. It is not enough to select a favourite song: there must be rigorous attention to how the song connects with politics, argot, uniform, race, sexuality, drugs and gender. Examples could be 'Anarchy in the UK' by The Sex Pistols, or 'Relax' by Frankie Goes to Hollywood, or 'Do They Know It's Christmas' by Band Aid.

Presentations should last for ten minutes including time for discussion and set-up, on the chosen topic, outlining its significance for British culture and society today and its relation to the key themes of the course. Topics should be determined no later than week 12.

Active Learning

Experiential learning is an essential component of education abroad, and participation in field studies is a required part of coursework. In this course, students explore the city in which they are studying using a variety of methods. This provides the opportunity to gain nuance and perspective on the host context and course content, as well as to collect information and resources for assigned papers, projects, and presentations.

The assigned field component(s) are:

- **Museum of London Docklands**
- **Shoreditch**
- **Abbey Road**
- **Camden**
- **Soho**

Students are also strongly encouraged to participate in co-curricular program activities.

Readings and Resources

The below readings and resources are representative of what will be assigned as required in this course but may vary slightly in the term syllabus.

All students are given access to the online library of the University of New Haven (UNH), accessible [here](#), and are expected to comply with [UNH Policies](#) regarding library usage.

Wherever possible, required readings are made accessible through the online library or Canvas. Students are responsible for obtaining all required readings.

Each course utilizes Canvas as its LMS. Students are expected to check Canvas regularly for updates and deadlines. Canvas is also the primary platform for contacting your instructor in case of questions or concerns about the course.

Required Readings

Sandbrook, D. (2015). *Never had it so good: A history of Britain from Suez to the Beatles*. London: Abacus.

Selected Readings

- Cacciottolo, M. (2012). Punks of '77: Still angry after all these years? Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-17397222>
- Gelder, K. (2005). *The subcultures reader*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Gopnik, A. (2012). A point of view: Why are the beatles so popular 50 Years on? Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-18449107>
- Orwell, G. (2000). *Decline of the english murder: And other essays*. London: Penguin.
- Welsh, I. (2016). Is there such a thing as national culture? Retrieved from <http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2012/08/20/irvine-welsh-is-there-such-a-thing-as-national-culture/>
- White, J. (2016). *London in the Twentieth Century: A city and its people*. London: Bodley Head.

Recommended Readings

- Andrew Marr, *A History of Modern Britain* (London: Macmillan, 2008).
- Boy George, *Take it Like a Man: The Autobiography of Boy George* (London: Harper Collins, 2012)
- Christopher Breward, *Fashioning London: Clothing and the Modern Metropolis* (Oxford: Berg, 2004).
- Décharné, Max *Teddy Boys: Post-War Britain and the First Youth Revolution* (Profile: London, 2023)
- Derek Jarman, *At Your Own Risk: A Saint's Testament* (London: Vintage, 1993)
- Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Routledge, 1995).
- DJ Target, *Grime Kids: The Inside Story of the Global Grime Takeover* (Trapeze: London, 2018)
- Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had it So Good: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* (London: Abacus, 2006).
- Dominic Sandbrook, *Seasons in the Sun: The Battle for Britain 1974-1979* (London: Allen Lane, 2012).
- Dominic Sandbrook, *State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain 1970-1974* (London: Allen Lane, 2010).
- Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London: LittleBrown, 2006).
- Ed Glinert, *The London Compendium* (London: Penguin, 2004).
- Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.)
- Erica Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London's West End* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).
- Hancox, Dan *Inner City Pressure: The Story of Grime* (William Collins: London, 2019)
- Ian Inglis (ed.) *Popular Music and Television in Britain* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010)
- James Hampshire, *Citizenship and Belonging Immigration and the Politics of Demographic Governance in Postwar Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).
- Jeremy Paxman, *The English: A Portrait of the People* (London: Penguin, 2007)
- Jerry White, *London in the Twentieth Century: A City and its People* (London: Penguin, 2001).

John Benson, *Affluence and Authority: A Social History of Twentieth Century Britain* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2005)

John Harris, *The Last Party: Britpop, Blair and the Demise of English Rock* (London: Harper Perennial, 2004)

Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918 – 1957* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

Mike Phillips and Trevor Phillips, *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-Racial Britain* (London: HarperCollins, 1999)

Nick Tiratsoo, ed., *From Blitz to Blair: A New History of Britain since 1939* (London: Phoenix, 1998).

Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (London: Routledge, 2002).

Peter Ackroyd, *London: The Biography* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2000).

Robert Winder, *Bloody Foreigners: The Story of Immigration to Britain* (London: Abacus, 2005).

Roger Sabin, *Punk Rock: So What?: The Cultural Legacy of Punk* (London: Routledge, 1999)

Sheila Rowbotham, *A Century of Women: The History of Women in Britain and the United States* (London: 1999).

Sue Tilley, *Leigh Bowery: The Life and Times of an Icon* (New York: Open Road, 1997)

Susan Kingsley Kent, *Gender and Power in Britain, 1640-1990* (London, Routledge, 1998).

Wendy Webster, *Imagining Home: Gender, 'Race' and National Identity, 1945 -1964* (London: UCL Press, 1998).

Useful Websites for British History & Contemporary Culture

Victoria and Albert Museum <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/exhibitions/exhibition-from-club-to-catwalk-london-fashion-in-the-80s/>

BBC history <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/>

The Times Online <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/>

The Guardian <http://www.guardian.co.uk/>

The Museum of London <http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/london-wall/>

The Museum of Childhood <http://www.museumofchildhood.org.uk/>

The Design Museum <http://designmuseum.org/>

Tate Blog: Youth and Art <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/blogs/tate-debate-what-importance-youth-art>

British Life, Culture, and Customs <http://projectbritain.com/>

Life in the UK test (British citizenship test) www.lifeintheuk.net/test/.

Course Calendar

Session 1	
Topics	COURSE INTRODUCTION AND 1950S: THE BIRTH OF THE TEENAGER
Activity	Introduction to the main themes of the course, and an examination of Britishness We will begin our historical examination with a look at the invention of the teenager, and the Americanisation of British culture after World War Two.

Readings and Assignments	<p>Readings: ‘The Teenage Consumer’ from Dominic Sandbrook, Never Had it So Good: A History of Britain From Suez to the Beatles (London: Little Brown) pp.409-453 ‘The Decline of the English Murder’ by George Orwell in George Orwell, Collected Essays (Penguin: London, 2000)</p>
--------------------------	--

Session 2	
Topics	FIELD STUDY: HIPSTERVILLE AND STREET ARTISTS
Activity	We will then go on a walking tour of Shoreditch to see the territory of the hipsters and examine how the 21st century subculture changed an urban environment and also see street art by Banksy.
Readings and Assignments	<p>Readings: ‘Rock and Roll Babies’ from Dominic Sandbrook, Never Had it So Good, pp. 454-512</p>

Session 3	
Topics	1960S: BEATLEMANIA, MODS AND ROCKERS
Activity	In this session we will examine the rise of rock ‘n’ roll, and skiffle in the 1950s and 1960s and we will investigate the legacy of The Beatles. We will look at three of the earliest youth cultures in Britain: The Teddy Boys, The Rockers and The Mods.
Readings and Assignments	<p>Readings: ‘A Point of View: Why are The Beatles so Popular 50 Years On’ by Adam Gopnik on http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-18449107 ‘Girls and Subcultures’ by Gelder and Thornton Time 1966 article “The Swinging City” ‘From Swinging London to the Coolest City in the World’ in Jerry White, London in the 20th Century (London: Vintage, 2008) pp. 341-351</p>

Session 4	
Topics	FIELD STUDY: ABBEY ROAD AND CAMDEN
Activity	In our second field trip we will go to see the iconic zebra crossing from the Beatles Abbey Road, and then walk to Camden Town, famous for its subcultures and music scene
Readings and Assignments	

Session 5	
Topics	THE MODS CONTINUED AND THE SWINGING 60S
Activity	Today we will finish watching Quadrophenia and then discuss 1966, when London was declared the Swinging City
Readings and Assignments	<p>Readings: ‘You Can Walk Across it on the Grass’ Piri Halasz TIME 1988</p>

Session 6	
Topics	FIELD STUDY: FASHION CITY AT MUSEUM OF LONDON DOCKLANDS
Activity	This new exhibition shows how immigrant tailors were at the forefront of Swinging 60s fashion
Readings and Assignments	

Session 7	
Topics	Midterm Break

Session 8	
Topics	'GOD SAVE THE QUEEN': SEX PISTOLS AND PUNK IN THE 1970S
Activity	In this session we move to the 1970s and discuss the social landscape of the time, and the outrage that was Punk.
Readings and Assignments	Readings: 'Punks of '77: Still angry after all those years?' by Mario Cacciottolo on http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-17397222

Session 9	
Topics	FIELD STUDY: THE GRAVE OF MALCOLM MCLAREN AT HIGHGATE CEMETERY.
Activity	Today we will visit the grave of Malcolm McLaren, the manager of The Sex Pistols and the godfather of many other subcultures. We will also see the grave of George Michael.
Readings and Assignments	Readings: 'Luncheon on the Grass with Manet and Bow Wow Wow: Still Disturbing After All These Years' by Ian Chapman in Music in Art Vol 35, 2010

Session 10	
Topics	NEW ROMANTICS AND GOTHS OF THE 1980S: WOULD YOU LET YOU IN?
Activity	In this session we will start to examine the subcultures that arose under Margaret Thatcher. The first of these are The New Romantics and Goth. We will also discuss hate crime, now and in the present day. We will watch the BBC Drama Murdered for Being Different
Readings and Assignments	Readings: 'The Rites and Rights of Subcultures' Richard Maguire in CAPA Occasional Papers

Session 11	
Topics	SOHO SCAVENGER HUNT: ROCK 'N' ROLL AND GAY COUNTERCULTURE
Activity	In this fieldtrip we will tour Soho, and visit landmarks which have influenced popular culture: from London's first cappuccinos, to the birthplace of Rock 'n' Roll, to scenes of gay activism. Here, we see the negative effects of globalization as Soho is being ripped apart to make it more tourist-friendly.
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Cosmopolitan Soho' in Judith R Walkowitz, Nights Out: Life in Cosmopolitan London (London: Yale University Press, 2012)

Session 12	
Topics	RAVE: EVERYTHING STARTS WITH AN E
Activity	In this class we will explore the subculture of Rave. In the late 1980s rave music was born, and some think it was the start of the separation of culture from politics. We will watch a Rave film. Either Weekenders OR Human Traffic OR Eden OR Beats

Readings and Assignments	Readings: Is There Such a Thing as National Culture?' by Irvine Welsh at http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2012/08/20/irvine-welsh-is-there-such-a-thing-as-national-culture/
--------------------------	--

Session 13	
Topics	21ST CENTURY SUBCULTURES; CHAV, GRIME AND UK DRILL
Activity	After looking at the Chav subculture we examine subcultures that were predominantly created by black people such as the Jamaican Rude Boys, Garage in the 1990s, to Grime and UK Drill in the 2000s
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Grime: A beginner's guide' by Taylor Hodges at http://www.highsnobiety.com/2015/04/23/best-grime-tracks/ Five things you need to know about Grime' by Taylor Hodges at http://www.highsnobiety.com/2015/05/14/grime-facts/

Session 14	
Topics	PRESENTATION DAY
Activity	In our final sessions students will present their iconic 'Sound of Britain'
Readings and Assignments	

Session 15	
Topics	PRESENTATION DAY (Continued)
Activity	In our final sessions students will present their iconic 'Sound of Britain'
Readings and Assignments	

Section III: Academic Policies and Standards

Academic Policies

Students are expected to review and understand all CEA CAPA student policies, including our [Academic Policies](#) and [Engagement Policy](#). CEA CAPA reserves the right to change, update, revise, or amend existing policies and/or procedures at any time. Additional requirements that may be associated with a specific course or program are addressed in the term syllabus.

Student Learning & Development Objectives

CEA CAPA has identified [Student Learning and Development Objectives \(SLDOs\)](#) for all programs in all locations: content in context, navigating differences, power and equity, critical thinking and intellectual curiosity, career and professional development, and sustainability and migration.

These are meta-level learning objectives that transcend coursework and are infused across all elements of program delivery, beyond specifics of course offerings, addressing student learning holistically and framing it a larger learning context.

