



Boston University International Programs
London

Boston University British Programmes
Cultural Capital: The History of Popular Culture in London
CAS HI 320 (*Elective B*)
Spring 2011

Instructor Information

A. Name	Dr Michael Peplar
B. Day and Time	Mondays, 1.15pm-5.15pm (times may vary – see weekly schedule)
C. Location	Alexander room, 43 Harrington Gardens, SW7 4JU
D. Telephone	020 7244 6255
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F. Webpage	www.bu-london.co.uk/academic/hi320
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Course Description

In this history course we will trace the development of popular culture in London from the late eighteenth century to the present day. The course will be concerned with popular cultural ‘texts’ (books, songs, films, television programmes etc.) as well as popular cultural sites – the spaces in which cultural texts are shown or produced (cinemas, music halls, football stadia etc.). After some discussion of cultural theory, the course is organised chronologically, beginning with the precursors and early origins of modern popular culture and progressing towards the present day.

Course Objectives

- The course aims to give students an introduction to the history of popular culture in London.
- Students will be introduced to ways of thinking about popular culture through consideration of relevant theories and debates.
- Students will also be introduced to the wider context of the social, economic and cultural history of Britain in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Methodology (Teaching Pattern)

There will be a mixture of lectures, seminar discussions, field visits and student presentations.

Reading

Set text: Stephen Inwood, *A History of London*, Macmillan, London, 1998 (available at BU London Library).

Required reading is noted below in the Course Chronology. It is essential that all students read and reflect upon the relevant Preparatory Reading *before* each class. Follow-up Reading should be completed before the next class.

Required readings will be posted on the course webpage:

<http://www.bu-london.co.uk/academic/hi320> (you must be logged in to view materials).

Supplementary and Secondary Reading:

The following texts are useful for expanding upon the required reading, for researching seminar papers and for preparing for the final examination.

All books are available in the BU London Library at 43 Harrington Gardens.

Section 1

On Popular Culture generally:

Iain Chambers, *Popular Culture: The Metropolitan Experience*, Routledge, London, 1986

John Docker, *Postmodernism and Popular Culture: A Cultural History*, Cambridge University Press, 1994

John Fiske, *Understanding Popular Culture*, Routledge, London and New York, 1990

Herbert Gans, *Popular Culture and High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste*, Basic Books, New York, 1999

JM Golby and AW Purdue, *The Civilisation of the Crowd: Popular Culture in England 1750-1900*, 2nd edition, Sutton, Stroud, 1999

Joanne Hollows, *Feminism, Femininity and Popular Culture*, Manchester University Press, 2000

Angela McRobbie, *Postmodernism and Popular Culture*, Routledge, London, 1994

Angela McRobbie, *In the Culture Society: Art Fashion and Popular Music*, Routledge, London 1999

John Storey, *Cultural Studies and the Study of Popular Culture*, 2nd edition, Edinburgh University Press, 2003

John Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, 4th edition, Pearson, Harlow, 2006

Dominic Strinati, *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*, 2nd edition, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2004

Section 2

On London:

Peter Ackroyd, *London: The Biography*, Vintage, London, 2001

John Horrell, *Popular Culture in London c. 1890-1918*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2001

Stephen Inwood, *City of Cities*, Macmillan, London, 2005

Joe Kerr & Andrew Gibson (eds), *London: From Punk to Blair*, Reaktion Books, London, 2003

Jon E. Lewis, *London: The Autobiography – 2,000 Years of the Capital's History by Those Who Saw it Happen*, Constable & Robinson, London, 2008

Roy Porter, *London: A Social History*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, 1994

Jerry White, *London in the Nineteenth Century*, Vintage, London, 2008

Jerry White, *London in the Twentieth Century*, Vintage, London, 2008

Section 3

On particular areas of (Popular) Culture:

Peter Ackroyd, *Dickens' London – An Imaginative Vision*, Headline Books, London, 1987

Peter Bailey, *Music Hall – The Business of Pleasure*, Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1986

Andy Bennett, *Cultures of Popular Music*, Open University Press, 2001

Barry J. Faulk, *Music Hall and Modernity – The Late Victorian Discovery of Modernity*, Ohio University Press, Athens, Ohio, 2004

Susie Gilbert, *Opera for Everybody – The Story of English National Opera*

Jeffrey Hill, *Sport, Leisure and Culture in Twentieth Century Britain*, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2002

John Hill, *Sex, Class and Realism: British Cinema 1956-63*, BFI, London, 1986

Brian Longhurst, *Popular Music and Society*, Polity press, Cambridge, 2007
 Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 2nd edition, 2010
 Roger Sabin (ed), *Punk Rock or What? The Cultural Legacy of Punk*, Routledge, London and New York, 1999
 Jon Savage, *England's Dreaming – Anarchy, Sex Pistols, Punk Rock and Beyond*, Faber and Faber, London 2001
 Brian Southall, *Sex Pistols, 90 Days at EMI*, Bobcat Books, London, 2007
 John Springhall. *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panic: Penny Gaffs to Gangsta Rap, 1830-1996*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1998
 Ben Thompson, *Sunshine on Putt: The Golden Age of British Comedy from Vic Reeves to The Office*, Fourth Estate, London, 2004

Students will benefit from reading a general introduction to nineteenth century British history, for example, Michael Lynch, *An Introduction to Nineteenth Century British History 1800-1914*.

Course Assessment

Mid-term Quiz	20%
Final Examination	40%
Seminar Presentation	30%
Attendance and Participation	10%

1. The Mid-term Quiz will test your factual knowledge. It will be a one-hour class exercise with c. 20 questions requiring short answers (some multiple choice; some one-word answers; some short paragraphs).

2. There will be an end-of-course 2-hour unseen final examination worth 40% of your final grade. You will need to answer one required general question on popular culture and one further question (from a selection) on specific popular cultural forms or topics. The grade you receive for the final examination will be based upon:

- The relevance of your answer to the question/topic set
- Clarity of expression and continuity
- Evidence of reading and thought related to the question/topic
- Quality of the arguments presented
- Merit will be given for evidence of reading from the Supplementary and Secondary Reading list.

3. You will also be required, as part of a pair, to make a seminar presentation in which you introduce, comment on and contextualize at least one specific popular cultural text. Presentations will take place in Session 9. Topics for seminar presentations should be agreed with the tutor by Session 6. Presentations should last between 15 and 20 minutes, including time for questions. Both content and presentation skills will be assessed. You should submit slides and notes from your presentation to the tutor at Session 9.

4. Class attendance and participation will form part of the final grade. Evidence of having read and reflected upon the course texts will be rewarded.

Grading

Please refer to the Academic Handbook for detailed grading criteria and information on plagiarism:

<http://www.bu-london.co.uk/files/images/ACADEMICHANDBOOKSP11.pdf>

Course Chronology

21 February Session One: Introduction: What is Popular Culture?

Introduction to syllabus and assessment.

Seminar Discussion on the meaning of 'culture'

Lecture 1: Debates and theoretical positions within the study of Popular Culture

Lecture 2: London - first 'City of Popular Culture'?

Lecture 3: Pre-modern Popular Culture

Follow-up Reading: (1) JM Golby and AW Purdue, *The Civilisation of the Crowd*, Chapter 1
(2) John Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, Chapter 1

28 February Session Two: Victorian Popular Culture (1)

Review Storey reading in class

Lecture 4: Popular Literature in Victorian London

Fieldtrip: Dickens' London Walk with Andy Charlton

Preparatory Reading: Inwood, Chapter 17 'Ragged London'; Start reading Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*

Follow-up Reading: Continue reading Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*

7 March Session Three: Victorian Popular Culture (2)

Seminar discussion: Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*

Preparation: Please research one adaptation of *Oliver Twist*

Lecture 5: Early Popular Music and Music Hall

Screening: BBC TV *Tipping The Velvet* extract

Follow-up Reading: Barry J Faulk, *Music Hall and Modernity*, extracts

14 March Session Four: Popular Culture and Mass Society (1)

In groups of two or three, please view a London-based feature film before this class and prepare a five-minute review to be delivered in class.

If you intend using film clips you must practice these with Academic Affairs staff before the start of class.

Lecture 6: Introduction to London and Cinema

Oral History extracts

Preparatory Reading: 1. Inwood, Chapter 21

Follow-up Reading: John Hill, 'Cinema', in Jane Stokes and Anna Reading (eds) *The Media in Britain*, Palgrave 1999

21 March Session Five: Popular Culture and Mass Society (2)

London and Organized Sports

Lecture 7: Organized Sports and the Sports Industries in Britain

Field trip: Chelsea FC Stadium and Museum

Preparatory Reading: Jeffrey Hill, *Leisure & Culture in Twentieth Century Britain*, Introduction pp1-18

Follow-up Reading: Andrew Horrell, *Popular Culture in London*, Chapter 11

**** Double Session ** 28 March Session Six and Seven: Popular Culture in and after the World Wars**

9.45am Meet at Tottenham Court Road Tube station (south-west exit) for Walking Tour of Soho with Dr Richard Weight

MID-TERM QUIZ (1 hour in class)

Lecture 8: The Second World War and The Turn to Working Class Culture after 1945

Lecture 9: London on Television

Screening: Extracts from *Look At Life: Swingin' London*

Preparatory Reading: Stephen Inwood, Chapters 22, 23, and 24

Follow-up Reading: Jerry White, *London in the Twentieth Century*, extracts

Seminar Presentation subjects should be agreed by today.

4 April ** No Class**

Reading: Inwood, Chapter 25 and 26

Reading: Richard Weight, *Patriots*, Part 5 'Swingers', pp 357-399

11 April Session Eight: 'Swinging London' and Post-'Swinging-London': Towards Postmodern Popular Culture?

Preparation: Watch and be prepared to comment on at least one London-based TV programme

Lecture 10: 'Swinging London' and Popular Culture

Lecture 11: From Punk to Britpop

Lecture 12: Contemporary Popular Culture

Follow-up Reading: Jon Savage, 'Introduction', *England's Dreaming*, Faber and Faber, 2001

18 April Session Nine: Student Presentations plus Course Review

Student Presentations (8 presentations)

You must confirm any audio-visual needs with Academic Affairs staff by Friday 15 April and must practice using the relevant audio-visual aids with Academic Affairs staff by the morning of 18 April.

Course Review and Exam Preparation **Preparatory Reading:** Please re-read John Story, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, Chapter 1

* **Contingency Class Date: Wednesday 20 April.** Students are obligated to keep this date free to attend class should any class dates need to be rescheduled.

Final Exam Thursday 21 April. Exam times and locations will be posted on the BU London website and in the Student Newsletter two weeks before exam dates.

Terms and Conditions

**Attendance at all classes and visits is mandatory. Students missing lectures without a local London doctor's letter or authorisation from the Director's Office will automatically be docked a – or a + from their final grade. Persistent lateness will also be penalised in the final grade. A register of attendance will be taken at the beginning of each session, and marks will be awarded for attendance. Absence can be conveyed either by advising a senior member of staff in the Academic Affairs Office with a request that the information be passed on to me; or by emailing Michael Peplar [REDACTED] prior to class. Leaving it to another class member to convey messages will not be acceptable. Appointments for interviews for internships should not conflict with attendance at classes. **

Any student who is unable to attend a class, or take part in an assignment because of religious reasons, must give notice of the fact in advance. He/she will be required to make up for time lost. In this situation arrangements must be made with another student for class notes to be shared.

If you have problems with the availability of reading materials (all of which should be in the library) please contact me either through the Academic Affairs Office or via e-mail.