Cultural Capital: The History of Popular Culture in London
CAS HI 251 (Elective B)

Instructor Information
A. Name Dr Michael Peplar
B. Day and Time Usually Monday, 1.15pm-5.15pm (times vary – see weekly schedule)
C. Location Prince Consort Room, 43 Harrington Gardens, SW7 4JU
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E. Email mpeplar@bu.edu
F. Office hours By appointment

Course Description
This course will trace the development of popular culture in London from the late seventeenth 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.).

The course is organised chronologically, beginning with the precursors and early origins of modern popular culture and progressing towards the present day, but also thematically by looking at how particular areas of popular culture, such as Music Hall, organised sports or film, have developed over time.

The course assumes no prior knowledge. Throughout the course we will focus on close readings of primary sources (visual, aural and textual) from London’s popular culture, placing these in historical context. Assessment will include formative assignments to practice the application of knowledge and skills developed in class.

Course Objectives
A. General
- The course will enable students to gain a deeper appreciation of the range and diversity of London’s popular culture over time, and of contemporary London, through field trips e.g. a walking tour of London’s entertainment centre, Soho or a visit to a Premier League football stadium.

B. Hub Related
- What do we mean by ‘popular culture’? In this class students will learn to take everyday understandings of popular culture and translate these into more formal academic understandings through consideration of competing theories and by applying these to examples from London’s history (Critical Thinking Outcome 1).
- Drawing on skills developed in class, students will evaluate the validity of historical arguments about popular culture (Critical Thinking Outcome 2).
- Students will learn to compare and contrast modern and pre-modern forms of popular culture and will be invited in both formative and summative assessment to compare London’s
popular culture with that of students’ places of origin (Global Citizenship & Intercultural Literacy Outcome 1).

- Students will evaluate historical evidence in class and in formative and summative assessments and will develop the skill of constructing historical narratives and of defending historical arguments (Historical Consciousness Outcome 1).
- In particular, students will develop the skill of analysing primary source material (such as song lyrics, recorded music, extracts from novels, and episodes of television programmes) and of situating primary sources in historical context (Historical Consciousness Outcome 2).
- To support their developing understanding of London’s popular culture, students will also be introduced through lectures and required reading to relevant aspects of the wider context of the social, economic and cultural history of Britain (Historical Consciousness Outcome 3).

**Methodology (Teaching Pattern)**

There will be a mix of lectures, seminar discussions, in-class assignments, field trips and student presentations.

**Attendance**

*Important note for students on the Internship Programme:*

The rules governing Internship Programme students’ UK visas are strict and require, as a condition of the student’s presence in the United Kingdom, that the student participates fully in all classes and in the placement. If a student does not attend classes or his/her placement as required the student will be considered to be in breach of the visa and can be deported. As the sponsor of our students’ visas, Boston University has the legal obligation to ensure that each student complies with visa requirements.

For that reason Boston University Study Abroad London Programmes requires full attendance in classes and placements. Any student who does not comply with this policy may be sent home from the program at the discretion of the programme directors, and will result in a forfeit of credit and program costs for part or all of the semester.

**Classes**

All Boston University Study Abroad London Programme students are expected to attend each and every class session, tutorial, and field trip in order to fulfill the required course contact hours and receive course credit. Any student that has been absent from two class sessions (whether authorised or unauthorised) will need to meet with the Director to discuss their continued participation on the programme.

*Authorised Absence:*

Students who expect to be absent from any class should notify a member of Academic Affairs and complete an Authorised Absence Approval Form 10 working days in advance of the class date (except in the case of absence due to illness, for which students should submit the Authorised Absence Approval Form with the required doctor’s note as soon as possible). **Please note:**

*Submitting an Authorised Absence Approval Form does not guarantee an authorised absence*

Students may apply for an authorised absence only under the following circumstances:

- Illness, supported by a local London doctor’s note (submitted with Authorised Absence Approval Form).
- Important placement event that clashes with a class (verified by internship supervisor)
- Special circumstances, which have been approved by the Director (see note below).
The Director will only in the most extreme cases allow students to leave the programme early or for a significant break.

*Unauthorised Absence:*  
Any student to miss a class due to an unauthorised absence will receive a 4% grade penalty to their final grade for the course whose class was missed. This grade penalty will be applied by the Academic Affairs office to the final grade at the end of the course. As stated above, any student that has missed two classes will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their participation on the programme as excessive absences may result in a ‘Fail’ in the class and therefore expulsion from the programme.

*Lateness*  
Students arriving more than 15 minutes after the posted class start time will be marked as late. Any student with irregular class attendance (more than two late arrivals to class) will be required to meet with the Associate Director for Academic Affairs and if the lateness continues, may have his/her final grade penalised.

**Course Assessment**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weightage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Group Seminar Presentation</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance, Participation &amp; Assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
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1. The mid-term exam will test your factual knowledge and your skill in analysing primary source material. It will be a one-hour class exercise with c. 20 questions requiring short answers (e.g. multiple choice; some one-word answers; some short paragraphs).

2. There will be an end-of-course 2-hour final examination worth 30% of your final grade. You will be asked to write one long essay to demonstrate your engagement with ideas and examples from across the breadth of the course and which is designed to help you develop your critical thinking; plus two further shorter essays on specific popular cultural forms or topics. The essays will ask you to use primary and secondary sources to develop historical arguments. 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.

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. You should situate the text in as wide a historical context as possible and, where possible, compare and contrast with examples from your culture of origin. Presentations will take place in Session 9. Topics for seminar presentations should be agreed with the tutor by Session 5. Presentations should last between 15 and 20 minutes, including time for questions. You should submit slides and notes from your presentation to the tutor at Session 9.

4. Class attendance, participation and assignments will form part of the final grade. Evidence of having read and reflected upon the course texts will be rewarded, as will good performance in in-class assignments and formative presentations.

**Grading**
The following Boston University table explains the grading system that is used by most faculty members on Boston University’s Study Abroad London Programmes.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Honour Points</th>
<th>Usual %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>93-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>89-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>85-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>81-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>77-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>69-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>65-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>60-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>Unmarked</td>
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</tbody>
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**Grading Criteria**

*Incomplete* or I grades are not permitted because of the obvious difficulty in making up missed work once the student has left the country. All work must be completed on time. We also do not allow *Audits* (AU), *Withdrawals* (W), or *Pass/Fail* (P) grades.

The grades reflect the quality of the work. Lecturers and students should use the following criteria for an understanding of what each grade means.

**A** This exceptional grade is assigned only to work that has persistently outstanding quality in both substance and presentation. The student must demonstrate a sustained capacity for independent thought and extensive study, producing rigorous and convincing analyses in well-ordered prose.

**A-** Awarded to work that is clearly focused and analytical, and based on wide reading. The student must cover all the principal points of a question and systematically develop a persuasive overall thesis, allowing for one or two venial omissions or inapt expressions.

**B+, B, B-** This range of grades indicates that the student has shown some evidence of original thought and intellectual initiative. The student has cited sources beyond the class materials, and shown a degree of originality in perception and/or approach to the subject. The work will show thoughtful management of material, and a good grasp of the issues. The differences between a B+, a straight B and a B- may reflect poor presentation of the material, or mistakes in punctuation, spelling and grammar.

**C+, C, C-** Work in this grade range is satisfactory, but uninspiring. If the work is simply a recitation of the class materials or discussions, and shows no sign of genuine intellectual engagement with the issues, it cannot deserve a higher grade. Should an essay fail to provide a clear answer to the question as set, or argue a position coherently, the grade will fall within this range.

Quality of presentation can lift such work into the upper levels of this grade range. Work of this quality which is poorly presented, and riddled with errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation, will fall into the lower end of the range. To earn a C grade, the work must demonstrate that the student is familiar with the primary course material, be written well enough to be readily understood, be relevant to the assignment, and, of course, be the student’s own work except where properly cited.

**D** A marginal pass can be given where some but not all the elements of the course have been completed satisfactorily.
Failing grades indicate the work is seriously flawed in one or more ways:

- Obvious lack of familiarity with the material
- So poorly written as to defy understanding
- So brief and insubstantial that it fails to properly address the subject
- Material presented is not relevant to the assignment
- Demonstrates evidence of plagiarism (see following section in Academic Conduct Code)

Please refer to the Academic Handbook for detailed grading criteria and policies on plagiarism: [http://www.bu.edu/london/current-semester](http://www.bu.edu/london/current-semester)

*Final Grades are subject to deductions by the Academic Affairs Office due to unauthorised absences.*

**Course Chronology**

**Session One: Introduction to London’s Popular Culture**

*Introduction* to course syllabus and assessment

**Seminar Discussion:** What do you already know about London’s Popular Culture?

**Seminar discussion:** Storey reading

**Lecture 1:** London - ‘First City of Modern Popular Culture’?

**Primary Source Seminar:** ‘Bartholomew Fair’

**Preparatory Reading:**

2. ‘Bartholomew Fair’, description, from *The Gentlemen’s Magazine*, 1764

**Session Two: Fieldtrip to Museum of London**

Visit to the Museum of London and guided tour of *Expanding City* Galleries.

**Seminar:** Discussion of museum visit

**Preparatory Reading:** Stephen Inwood, *A History of London*, Chapter 7 ‘The Pleasures of London’

**Session Three: Towards Victorian Popular Culture (1) Theatre & Music Hall**

**Lecture 2:** Origins of Public Theatre in London (guest lecture by Dr Aleks Sierz)

**Lecture 3:** Introduction to Music Hall

**Screening:** BBC TV *The Story of Music Hall* extract

**Primary Source Seminar:** *Following In Father’s Footsteps* (Music Hall song lyrics, distributed in class)

**Preparatory Reading:** Stephen Inwood, *City of Cities*, Chapter 21 ‘A City of Showmen’, particularly sections on Music Hall (pp.432-445) on Blackboard

**Session Four: Towards Victorian Popular Culture (2): Popular Literature**

**Lecture 4:** Popular Literature in Victorian London

**Seminar discussion:** Dickens chapters and Inwood chapters
Screening: *Oliver!*, director Carol Reed, 1968, extracts

Seminar discussion: Adaptations of *Oliver Twist*

Preparatory Reading:
2. Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* extracts from *Bentley’s Miscellany* Vol 1 (1837) pp. 105-115; 218-230; 326-338; 430-441

Preparatory work: Research and be prepared to answer questions on an adaptation of *Oliver Twist*

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Session Five: Popular Culture and Mass Society (1): Cinema

Assignment: In pairs, please view a London-based feature film before this class and prepare a 7-10 minute review to be delivered in class. Notes on how to produce a successful review are posted on Blackboard.

Lecture 5: Introduction to London and Cinema
Seminar: Student Film Reviews
Seminar: London on Film exercise – applying theoretical perspectives to students’ film choices
Seminar: Discussion of Inwood Chapter 21

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Session Six: Popular Culture and Mass Society (2): Organised Sport

Field trip: Chelsea Football Club stadium and museum
Lecture 6: The Development of Organized Sports in Britain
Seminar Discussion: McKibbin Chapter 9 and Horral Chapter 11
Midterm Quiz Preparation
Preparatory Reading:

Final Presentation subjects should be agreed by today

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Session Seven: Soho and Popular Culture

MID-TERM QUIZ - room tbc
Screening: Extracts from *Look At Life: Swingin’ London* and *Coffee Bars* (1960s short films)
Field trip: Walking tour of Soho including Carnaby Street (guest lecturer Dr Richard Weight)

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Session Eight: 1960s ‘Swinging London’ and after

Lecture 7: ‘Swinging London’ and Popular Culture
Seminar Discussion: Discuss Inwood Chapter 25 & 26
Lecture 8: From Punk to Britpop
Preparatory Reading:
Inwood, Chapter 25 ‘Postwar London’ esp. pp 852-867 and Chapter 26 ‘A Divided City’ esp. pp 900-924
Session Nine: London and Television

Assignment: In pairs please view a London-based television programme before class and prepare a 7-10 minute review to be delivered in class.

Seminar: Student television reviews
Lecture 9: London on Television
Exam preparation
Preparatory Reading: Chapter on contemporary British television industry – details tbc

Session Ten: Review and Presentations

Student Final Presentations
Seminar discussion: Re-reading John Storey, Cultural Theory and Popular Culture, Chapter 1
Course Review
Preparatory Reading: Please re-read John Story, Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction, Chapter 1

Reading


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.

Additional reading may be found on Blackboard: https://lms.bu.edu

Supplementary and Secondary Reading:
The following texts are useful for expanding upon the required reading, for researching student presentations and for preparing for the final examination.

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

On Popular Culture generally:
Joanne Hollows, Feminism, Femininity and Popular Culture, Manchester University Press, 2000
Lynda Nead, The Tiger in the Smoke: Art and Culture in Post-war Britain, Yale University Press, 2017

**On London:**

**On particular areas of (Popular) Culture:**
Jeffrey Hill, *Sport, Leisure and Culture in Twentieth Century Britain*, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2002  

**Terms and Conditions**
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.