



Boston University International Programs
London

Cultural Capital: The History of Popular Culture in London

Michael Peplar
Fall 2008
CAS HI xxx

Placement Phase – Elective B

I. CLASS DESCRIPTION: CAS HI xxx Cultural Capital: The History of Popular Culture in London

Credit Hours: Four

II. INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

A. Name	Dr Michael Peplar
B. Location	Director of Studies Office, Harrington Gardens
C. Office Telephone	020 7244 2914
D. Email	mpeplar@bu.edu
E. Office Hours	Friday 2-4pm or by appointment

III. COURSE DESCRIPTION

London's contemporary popular culture is vibrant, varied and dynamic. It draws upon the city's heritage as the world's first city of popular culture, its rich contemporary cultural diversity and its traditions of creativity and innovation. London's contemporary popular culture is an integral part of what goes to make it a leading global city. 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 of and early origins of popular culture and progressing to the present day.

IV. 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.

V. METHODOLOGY (TEACHING PATTERN)

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

VI. READING

Required Reading:

Required reading is noted in section XI. Course Chronology. It is essential that all students read and reflect upon the relevant Preparatory Reading **before** each class.

Additional/Supplementary/Secondary Reading:

On Popular Culture generally:

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

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

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

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

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

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

VII. COURSE ASSESSMENT

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

The Mid-term Quiz will test your factual knowledge.

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/to be discussed
- Clarity of expression and continuity
- Evidence of reading and thought related to the question/topic
- Quality of the arguments presented

You will also be required to make a seminar presentation in which you introduce, comment on and contextualize at least one specific cultural text. This presentation will take place in Session 9. Topics for seminar presentations must be agreed by Session 6. Students may opt to present singly or in pairs. Presentations should last between 10 and 15 minutes. Both content and presentation skills will be assessed.

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

VIII. PLAGIARISM

Simply stated, plagiarism is taking another's work and presenting it as your own. Dictionary definitions of plagiarism frequently include terms such as theft or steal. Plagiarism is, in fact, intellectual theft. It is one of the most serious forms of academic misconduct. Plagiarism committed by a student will certainly result in course failure and may result in suspension or dismissal. In the professional world it can ruin a career.

Boston University's Code of Student Responsibilities states:

All students are responsible for having read the Boston University statement on plagiarism, which is available in the Academic Conduct Code. Students are advised that the penalty against students on a Boston University program for cheating on examinations or for plagiarism may be "expulsion from the program or the University or such other penalty as may be recommended by the Committee on Student Academic Conduct, subject to approval by the dean."

The value of any grade, credit, honour or degree received by a student presupposes that all work submitted by a student is his or her own. A student who uses or relies upon the work of others or who, except under conditions expressly permitted by the instructor, furnishes assistance to another student, violates the standards of the University. Students must insist upon academic

honesty and integrity from their fellow students and must report promptly any case of alleged violation of academic conduct. Failure to do so is a violation of this code.

Plagiarism can take many forms, including the reproduction of published material without acknowledgement, or representing work done by others as your own. This includes the increasingly common practice of purchasing and downloading work from Internet "paper mills." Students should be extremely careful when submitting work for this course that all work is correctly sourced. Print-outs of web sites that have been used in research may be required by the lecturer in cases of a grade dispute and all web site based reference material should be kept by the student until after the end of the semester.

VIII. Course Chronology

Session One: Introduction: What is Popular Culture?

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

Seminar Discussion on the meaning of 'culture'

Lecture 2: How London emerges as the world's first 'City of Popular Culture'

Preparatory Reading: 1. Raymond Williams, *Keywords*, extracts. 2. Stephen Inwood, *A History of London*, Macmillan, London, 2000 Chapter 11.

Session Two: Early Victorian Popular Culture

Popular literature, music and theatre in early Victorian London.

Lecture 3: Popular Literature in early Victorian London

Seminar discussion: Dickens and early Victorian London.

Lecture 4: Early Popular Music and Music Hall

Screening: BBC TV *The Good Old Days*

Preparatory Reading: 1. Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* 2. Inwood, Chapters 16 and 17.

Session Three: Popular Culture and Mass Society (1)

Lecture 5: Introduction to London and Cinema

Preparatory Reading: 1. Inwood, Chapter 21 2. Oral history extracts

Please view a London-based feature film before this class and prepare a five-minute review to be delivered in class.

Session Four: Popular Culture and Mass Society (2)

London and Organized Sports

Lecture 6: Organized Sports and the Sports Industries in Britain

Field trip: Chelsea FC Stadium and Museum

Preparatory Reading: Alan Tomlinson, 'Sport, Leisure and Style' in David Morley and Kevin Robins (eds), *British Cultural Studies*, Oxford University Press, 2001

Session Five: Popular Culture in Wartime London

Lecture 7: Developments in Popular Culture 1914-18 and 1939-45 and the Significance of War to C20th British Popular Culture

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

Field trip: Winston Churchill's Britain At War Museum

Session Six: Popular Culture After the Wars (1945-60)

Lecture 8: 'Angry Young Men': The Turn to Working Class Culture

MID-TERM QUIZ (in class)

Seminar Presentations subjects must be agreed by today.

Preparatory Reading: Inwood, Chapter 25

Session Seven : 'Swinging London' and its Aftermath

Lecture 9: 'Swinging London' and Popular Culture

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

Field trip: Walking tour of the Kings Road or Carnaby Street

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

Session Eight: Post-‘Swinging London’: Punk and the Thatcher Years

Lecture 10: London in Decline?

Preparatory Reading: Inwood, Chapter 26

Session Nine: Cool Londinium? London and Popular Culture After 1990 plus Course Review

Lecture 11: Multi-culturalism and Postmodern Popular Culture

Student Presentations

Course Review and Exam Preparation

IX. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

****Attendance at all classes and visits is mandatory. Students missing lectures without a doctor’s letter or authorisation from the Director’s Office will automatically be docked a + or - 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 (mpeplar@bu.edu) 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.

This course is intended to be interesting and challenging and it is hoped all students will enjoy it.