



Boston University International Programs
London

Boston University British Programmes
British youth culture from 1950 to the present
Spring 2009 IP 402 (*Elective B*)

Instructor information

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Never let the music get in the way of the act.

Kit Lambert, manager of The Who, to the group before every performance.

There was a time when pop music wouldn't have been able to define what being English was all about, but that's changed now. If you draw a line from the Beatles and Kinks in the Sixties, through the Jam and the Smiths in the Seventies and Eighties, to Blur in the Nineties, it would define this thing called Englishness as well as anything.

Damon Albarn of Blur, 1994

Course Outline

Britain has one of the most innovative and vibrant youth cultures in the world. It has come to define post-colonial British identity and it has helped to make London the cultural and commercial capital of Europe. This course will examine the history, sociology, aesthetics and economics of British youth culture, from the early days of jazz and rock 'n' roll, through to Beatlemania, Punk, Britpop, Rave and the latest contemporary developments.

How was British youth culture formed, to what extent is it different from America's and what effect has it had on the wider world? To answer these questions, the course looks at the impact which the black and white cultures of America have had on Britain, as well as charting the influence of Europe, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and indigenous British folk traditions. The unique fusion created from these elements is set in the context of social change in the second half of the 20th century, primarily: class mobility, female independence, black migration, technological progress and the birth of the consumer society.

As well as amplifying the creative relationship between music, fashion, cinema, art and design, the course will assess their links with business and the media, showing how underground cults become mainstream culture and how moral panics are turned into material profits. Taught through lectures, film screenings, audio sessions and group discussion, this course will not only benefit students majoring in the arts and social sciences but also those in business and communications.

PLEASE NOTE: ATTENDANCE AT FILM SCREENINGS AS WELL AS LECTURES IS MANDATORY. A REGISTER WILL BE TAKEN AND THE SAME PROCEDURES AND PENALTIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE APPLY.

Course Objectives

Students will become familiar with the key historical developments and sociological themes within British youth culture. In addition they should:

- Grasp the commercial and social patterns that turn ‘street’ styles into mass phenomena.
- Understand the economic value of the creative industries and strategies for developing them in the global market.
- Reach a deeper understanding of British culture and identity, and its close relationship with that of the United States.

Course content

Lectures are designed to illuminate facts, themes and concepts and to generate discussion. They are NOT a substitute for reading set texts or any other material handed out in class. It is therefore essential that you do the required reading AND that you take notes during lectures. Should you wish to discuss anything with Richard in person, he will usually be available for twenty minutes at the end of each class. Alternatively, please feel free to e-mail him at any time.

Class 1a The Origins of British Youth Culture

‘What Do You Want If You Don’t Want Money?’: Affluence, mass media, the ‘consumer society’ and the invention of the teenager. Jazz, rock ‘n’ roll, rhythm and blues and the American influence on Britain in the 1950s. Early moral panics about juvenile delinquency and the generation gap; plus an introduction to themes in the study of modern youth.

READING: Bill Osgerby, *Youth Media* (Routledge, 2004) Chapter 1

Viewing: *Help!* (1965)

Class 1b Beatlemania, Mod and ‘Swinging London’

From Graceland to Carnaby Street: The fusion of styles and attitudes that created a distinctive British youth culture in the 1960s, with two case studies: The Mod movement – patriotism, class mobility, the reformation of male fashion and the birth of club culture; The Hippy movement – political activism, sexual freedom, drug use and the birth of festival culture.

READING: Bill Osgerby, *Youth Media* (Routledge, 2004) Chapter 2 & 3

Viewing: *Quadrophenia* (1979)

Class 2a The Music Industry

From Performers to Artists: how groups since the Beatles have gained more artistic and commercial control over their work; Svengalis: the rise of the 'creative manager', from Brian Epstein to Simon Cowell, and their influence on production and promotion; The use of art, film, radio, and television from *Ready, Steady Go!* to MTV; The growth of global merchandising and the internet challenge: corporate surge or an industry in crisis?

READING: Bill Osgerby, *Youth Media* (Routledge, 2004) Chapter 4 & 5

Viewing: *Small Faces* (1996)

Class 2a FIELD VISIT: Abbey Road Details to be announced

Class 3 Skinhead, Punk and the Reaction to Commercialism

Resistance Through Rituals: the return of class conflict in 1970s youth cults: The Skinhead movement from Rude Boy to Oi!: macho working-class style, racist politics and football hooliganism; The Punk Movement: Radical entrepreneurs from Maclaren to Branson and the revival of live music, 'pirate' radio, independent labels and music journalism; plus the rise of female artists and their impact on perceptions of women.

READING: Bill Osgerby, *Youth Media* (Routledge, 2004) Chapter 6 & 7

Viewing: *The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle* (2003)

Class 4 Reggae and the Rise of Black British Youth Cultures

From Consumption to Integration: the emergence of a distinctive black British youth culture in the 1970s and its effect on racial integration in the UK. Reggae, Ska and the Caribbean influence, including the Two Tone movement; Bhangra and the beginning of Asian British youth culture; 'Minority' entrepreneurs and the marketing of black music and style.

READING: Bill Osgerby, *Youth in Britain since 1945* (Blackwell, 1998), Chapter 9, pp.117-136 and Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (Routledge, 1979), Chapters 2-4, pp. 23-70 (HANDOUTS)

Viewing: *Babylon* (1981)

Class 5a CLASS PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION AND SUBMISSION OF

MIDTERM PROJECT on the following topic: Invent an American group or solo artist, outlining their music, dress and graphic style plus their human profile (i.e. personal histories and creative influences). Utilising a budget of \$150 000, devise a 12-month strategy and business plan for selling your act in the UK, in the process analysing what you think is different about British and American youth culture.

Viewing: *Velvet Goldmine* (1998)

Class 5b The Fashion Industry

From Catwalk to Shopping Mall: The ready-to-wear retail revolution and the challenge to 'haute couture' fashion houses; The rise of female designers from Mary Quant to Stella McCartney; The iconography of youth: photographers, style magazines, 'Supermodels' and the cult of celebrity; Designer labels and global branding: the commodification of 'street style' or a new internationalism?

READING: Bill Osgerby, *Youth Media* (Routledge, 2004) Chapter 8
Viewing: *This Is England* (2007)

Class 6a Glam Rock, Disco and New Romanticism

The Great Escape: hedonism in the 1980s and the emergence of modern dance culture. The influence of gay style on pop cults from David Bowie to Boy George and its impact on British masculinity; 'Hang The DJ': 'New Wave' post-Punk style from Goth to Indie and the reaction to disco.

READING: Bill Osgerby, *Youth Media* (Routledge, 2004) Chapter 9
Viewing: *Twenty-Four Hour Party People* (2002)

Class 6b FIELD VISIT: Soho Details to be announced

Class 7 The Triumph of Dance Culture

'God Is A DJ': Hip-Hop, House, Techno, Garage & Jungle: an Anglo-American dialogue and its influence on British society. The rise of 'Superfestivals', 'Superclubs,' and the DJ - a post-modern star? The influence of recreational drugs on the 'Rave Generation', media/State attempts to control it and the 'Freedom to Party' movement; 'Balearic Beat' and the Mediterranean rave scene.

READING: Bill Osgerby, *Youth Media* (Routledge, 2004) Chapter 10
Viewing: *Human Traffic* (1999)

Class 8 Britpop and Dance/Rock Fusion

Mad For It: The rise of 'Madchester' and the 'Rave 'n' Roll' dance/rock crossover in the 1990s, including the Acid Jazz movement; Britpop and the Mod revival: Blur, Oasis and the reaction to American influence; the 'New Lad' phenomenon and 'Girl Power'; Arise, Sir Bob: The use and abuse of pop music by political parties and pressure groups.

Viewing: *Trainspotting* (1996)

Class 9 Trends in Contemporary British Youth Culture

Towards a Global Youth or a Luxury of Affluent Societies? The long-term effects of the internet and other new media on the music and fashion industries; Death of the Teenager? the colonisation of youth culture by middle-aged consumers and its implications for the meaning of youth. Recent cults, including nu-Rave, Grime and Dubstep.

Viewing *Bullet Boy* (2005)

Learning and Teaching Methods

A combination of lectures, discussion, screenings, individual reading, a field trip and everyday experience of London life. THROUGHOUT THE COURSE YOU SHOULD CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING THEMES/QUESTIONS IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND HOW COMMERCE, CULTURE AND IDENTITY INTERACT:

- The tension between individual persona and collective identity in the membership of youth cults. Can the 'tribe' be a path to self-realisation?
- The extent to which advertisers and the media shape/create youth cults in order to stimulate demand.

- Does youth culture challenge social divisions of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity and nationality and, if so, does commercialisation neutralise that challenge?
- How do new technologies affect the relationship between producers and consumers in the music and fashion industries?
- The extent to which the generation gap is narrowing now that youth culture has been experienced in some form by most people.
- What are the differences and similarities between British and American youth culture?

Course Requirements And Assessment

There are FOUR components. More information on what is required for each one is contained in the Study Guide below.

1) Class participation	15%
2) Midterm project (minimum 1000 words, plus graphics)	30%
3) Oral presentation based on project (approximately 5 minutes)	15%
4) Final examination (2hours 30minutes)	40%

Required Reading

This book MUST be read in order to gain a basic understanding of the course.

- **Bill Osgerby, *Youth Media* (Routledge, 2004)**

Supplementary Reading

Referring to a selection of these books will deepen your understanding and enjoyment of the course. Always look at the bibliographies of any books you refer to; you will discover many useful texts and links that are not, for reasons of space, listed here.

General

Bennett, Andy, *Cultures of Popular Music* (OUP, 2001). Useful collection of sociological essays on different aspects of British youth culture.

Melly, George, *Revolt Into Style: The Pop Arts in Britain* (1970). Seminal history by a jazz musician of the origins of British youth culture.

Bill Osgerby, *Youth in Britain since 1945* (Blackwell, 1998) Excellent

historical/sociological overview of the subject, companion volume to the set text

Shapiro, Harry, *Waiting for the Man: The Influence of Drugs and Popular Music* (2nd Ed., Helter Skelter, 1999)

Themes

Class

Davis, John, *Youth and the Condition of Britain: Images of Adolescent Conflict* (Continuum, 1990)

Hall, Stuart and Jefferson, Tony, *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Postwar Britain* (Routledge, 1993)

Hebdige, Dick, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (Routledge, 1979)

Gender & Sexuality

MacRobbie, Angela, *Feminism and Youth Culture* (Routledge, 1998)

Padel, Ruth, *I'm A Man: Sex, Gods and Rock 'n' Roll* (Faber, 2000)
Reynolds, Simon, *The Sex Revolts: Gender, Rebellion and Rock 'n' Roll* (Serpent's Tail, 1995)
Savage, Jon, *Time Travel: Pop, Media and Sexuality from the Sex Pistols to Nirvana, 1977-96* (Vintage, 1997)

Race

Tulloch, Carol, 'Black Style in Britain', in Carol Tulloch (ed.) *Black Style* (V&A, 2004)
Hebdige, Dick, *Cut 'N' Mix : Culture, Identity and Caribbean Music* (Routledge, 1987)
Hyder, Rehan, *Brimful of Asia: Negotiating Ethnicity on the UK Music Scene* (Ashgate, 2004)
Jones, Simon, *Black Culture, White Youth: The Reggae Tradition from JA to UK* (Macmillan, 1988)

Fashion

Breward, Christopher, *Fashion* (Oxford, 2003)
MacRobbie, Angela, *In The Culture Society: Art, Fashion and Popular Music* (Routledge, 1999)
MacRobbie, Angela, *British Fashion Design: Rag Trade or Image Industry?* (Routledge, 1998)
Tungate, Mark, *Fashion Brands: Branding Style From Armani to Zara* (Kogan Page, 2004)

Music & Other Media

Bugge, Christian, 'Selling Youth in the Age of Affluence: Marketing to Youth in Britain since 1959,' in Black and Pemberton, *An Affluent Society? Britain's Post-War 'Golden Age' Revisited* (Ashgate, 2004)
Donnelly, K.J., *Pop Music in British Cinema* (BFI, 2001)
Mundy, John, *Popular Music on Screen* (Manchester University Press, 1999)
Napier-Bell, Simon, *Black Vinyl, White Powder:* (Ebury, 2002). A manager's inside account of the British music industry
Passman, Donald S., *All You Need to Know About the Music Business* (4th UK Ed., Penguin, 2004)

Genres

Mod

Barnes, Richard, *Mods!* (Plexus, 1991)
Hewitt, Paolo, *The Soul Stylists: Six Decades of Modernism from Mods to Casuals* (Mainstream, 2003)
Rawlings, Terry, *Mod: A Very British Phenomenon* (Omnibus, 2000)

Punk

Savage, Jon, *England's Dreaming: Anarchy, Sex Pistols, Punk Rock and Beyond* (Faber, 1992)

Reggae and Ska

Bradley, Lloyd, *Bass Culture: When Reggae Was King* (Penguin, 2001)
Thompson, Dave, *Wheels out of Gear: 2 Tone, The Specials and a world in flame* (Helter Skelter, 2004)

New Wave

Reynolds, Simon, *Rip It Up and Start Again: Postpunk 1978-84* (Faber, 2005)

Britpop

Harris, John, *The Last Party: Britpop, Blair and the Demise of English Rock* (Fourth Estate, 2003)

Hip-Hop

Chang, Jeff, *Can't Stop, Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* (Ebury, 2005)

Rave

Bill Brewster and Frank Broughton, *Last Night A DJ Saved My Life* (Headline, 1999)

Garratt, Sheryl, *Adventures In Wonderland: A Decade of Club Culture* (Headline, 1998)

Collin, Matthew, *Altered State: The Story of Ecstasy Culture and Acid House* (2nd Ed., Serpent's Tail, 1998)

Reynolds, Simon, *Energy Flash: Journey Through Rave Music and Dance Culture* (Picador, 1998)

Grading

Please refer to the Academic Handbook for detailed grading criteria and information on plagiarism (http://www.bu-london.co.uk/files/images/ACADEMICHANDBOOKF08_1.pdf).

Assessment

1) Attendance and participation in class

15%

Please note that TWO UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES FROM ANY CLASS OR FIELD TRIP WILL AUTOMATICALLY RESULT IN AN ENTIRE GRADE REDUCTION (e.g. if you have earned an 'A' grade for the course it will become a 'B'). Three or more will result in a further reduction and a possible fail. Persistent lateness will also be penalised. If you have good reason to be late or absent (ie. illness) you MUST report it to BU prior to class in order for your lecturer to be informed in good time.

Contribution to discussion is one of the best methods of learning and it is an important part of your overall grade. While sympathetic account is taken of personality differences, YOU WILL BE EXPECTED TO DEMONSTRATE AN ENQUIRING APPROACH TO THE TOPIC UNDER DISCUSSION IN EACH CLASS.

This may take the form of simply asking a question about something you want to know or do not understand. You may also have a comment to make based on your own knowledge and experience. Or, you may disagree with what your fellow students or lecturer is saying. Feel free at all times to question what is being said in class. But remember! You will be in a better position to contribute if you have prepared properly. It is therefore essential that you do the required reading and viewing set out in the list above.

2) Midterm project (minimum 1000 words + illustrative material) 30%

‘Invent an American group or solo artist, outlining their music, dress and graphic style plus their human profile (i.e. personal histories and creative influences). Utilising a budget of \$150 000, devise a 12-month strategy and business plan for selling your act in the UK, in the process analysing what you think is different about British and American youth culture’.

The mid-term project will assess how you are grasping the central themes of the course so that any problems can be addressed prior to sitting the final exam. **YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO HAVE A PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF MARKETING.** This is an exercise designed for you to demonstrate, in an imaginative way, your historical/sociological and practical commercial understanding of the differences and similarities between British and American youth culture. Illustrative material could include Powerpoint slides, graphs, statistics and original artwork. Your lecturer is available to advise you on how to approach it.

3) Oral presentation based on project (approximately 5 minutes) 15%

The aim of the presentation is twofold: to test your ability to crystallise large amounts of information and complex ideas into a form that engages and informs an audience who do not necessarily possess your knowledge. It is also designed to generate class discussion. If you are listening to a presentation, you may politely interrupt to comment on or question what your fellow student is saying. This or and/or a contribution to any discussion that ensues will substantially improve your grade for this part of the course. You should use visual material as part of your presentation, the quality of which will affect your grade. Read the guidelines below: ‘*Giving A Presentation*’.

4) Final examination (2hours 30minutes) 40%

The unseen examination is taken at the end of the semester. It consists of three sections:

- 1) FOUR questions that test your basic historical knowledge of British youth culture. Minimum three sentences for each answer (**20%** of your exam grade).
- 2) ONE essay, chosen from three, which tests your historical knowledge and your understanding of the sociological basis of youth culture within a given theme. Minimum 1200 words, four sides of an A4 page. (**50%** of your exam grade).
- 3) ONE essay, chosen from two, that tests your understanding of the commercial basis of youth culture. Minimum 900 words, three sides of an A4 page. (**30%** of your exam grade).

Read the guidelines below: ‘*Writing An Essay/Examination Answer*’.

Giving a Presentation

A presentation is NOT a hurried read-through of your paper. It is a summary of your knowledge, ideas and conclusions about your chosen subject, which should generate discussion. Follow these basic points:

1. Decide what your main points are and make a list of them (in the time you have available, four is usually sufficient).
2. Provide an example and/or a quote that illuminates each one.
3. Mention a public debate about at least one area of your subject and say which view you take and why.

4. Be prepared to answer comments/questions from your fellow students and lecturer and join in any discussion that follows. But don't be afraid to move your presentation on once you think an intervention has run its natural course. **YOU ARE IN CHARGE!**
5. In the conclusion of your talk, relate your research to the wider themes that have been discussed on the course.
6. Speak clearly and don't rush your talk. We are interested in what you have to say!

Writing An Essay/Examination Answer

Depending on the subject of your major, you may not be used to writing a discursive analytical essay. This should not adversely affect your grade, but ignoring the points below will do so. You are expected to write grammatically correct prose that employs accurate spelling. Please write your essay in 1.5 spacing and leave sufficient margins for my comments.

Preparation

1. Select a topic that really interests you. The more you are personally engaged in it, the more you will enjoy doing it.
- 2.. Take accurate notes during your reading/internet research, including page numbers and URLs as you **MUST** cite references properly in your essay.
- 3.. Write down the broad themes which you think are relevant to the question.
- 4.. Define your argument briefly.
- 5.. List the points you will use to develop your argument, and examples that you want to substantiate them with.

Writing

1. Your **introduction** should state the central argument clearly and concisely. It can be up to three or four sentences. Do not generalise and develop chatty comments to lead up to your thesis. **Get to the point immediately.**
2. Give each of the subsequent paragraphs an initial introductory sentence, followed by a development and expansion of the point in a way that is directly relevant to the question. Paragraphs should lead on to each other through a logical argument. **Repetition of your points should be avoided.**
- 3.. Avoid a descriptive essay/examination answer which simply lists points asked for by the question. Write an **argumentative** essay/examination answer which debates the problems raised by the question. This means **analysing** something with a view to offering an **interpretation** of its meaning. Therefore, avoid writing 'this was good/successful/wrong/a failure.' Instead, argue **why and how** something is positive or not.
- 4.. Your conclusion should say how your argument has developed, i.e. whether it has been modified or affirmed. It should not simply re-state the introduction. It is also your final chance to **stamp your personal outlook on the essay**, with an original, apposite point and/or turn of phrase.

Style

1. . **NEVER** use the first person 'I' to convey your views.

- 2.. Whenever possible, use an example and/or an authoritative quote in order to illustrate a point. Do not simply re-state it. The quotation must be grammatically continuous with your essay, transcribed accurately with the source cited in full.
3. Make sure you transcribe names, dates and statistics accurately.
4. . Use past, present and future tenses accurately and consistently.
5. Avoid abbreviations.
6. Employ the formal language of debate. Do not write in a conversational style and therefore avoid anecdote and slang vocabulary and phrases.
7. Avoid rhetorical questions.
8. Avoid qualifying phrases such as `it is almost as if` or `it would seem that`.
9. Note the difference between `its` which is the possessive and `it`s` which is the abbreviation for `it is`.
10. Avoid cliché such as `fashion is another kind of uniform`.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO READ THIS SYLLABUS PROPERLY.
ENJOY THE COURSE AND THE REST OF YOUR STAY IN LONDON.

Richard Weight