



**LNDN COLT 3311
POSTWAR BRITISH POPULAR CULTURE**

CAPA LONDON PROGRAM



Course Description

In the 1940s George Orwell and others feared that England was becoming too Americanised. In a few years their predictions came true when rock 'n' roll music first hit the British Isles. A new breed of people, affluent and impressionable, first appeared at this time: the teenagers. And these kids just wanted to dance. At early showings of the film *Rock Around the Clock* there were riots as cinema ushers tried to stop the rockers dancing in the aisle. Youth counterculture was born. And yet Orwell should not have been too concerned about an American invasion because there was something essentially British about British rock 'n' roll music especially in the hands of singers like Tommy Steele and Cliff Richard.

This course examines different countercultures and subcultures in Britain from the 1950s to the present day. We will be introduced to the rocker, the punk, the Goth, the New Romantic, the Raver and, Britain's newest counteridentity, the Hipster. Historically, subcultures appear to resist ideas of **globalization**, though, perhaps in the present day with the internet there is a sense of subcultural identities as global rather than local. Of course, these identities are connected to music, but we will go further and locate these identities as part of political movements and of political malaise. For instance, it could be argued that the many countercultures of the 1980s (the New Romantic, the Raver etc.) are modes of resistance against the Conservative Government led by Margaret Thatcher. The famous band The Smiths wrote songs of protest against the policies of Thatcher who, they thought, divided the nation between the rich and the poor. In this interplay of music, politics and class we can observe the complex **social dynamics** of the 1980s.

By the mid 1990s, and with the rise of the opposition, New Labour, British music had become more optimistic mirroring the excitement many felt as Conservative rule came to an end. After Thatcher there were attempts to embrace **diversity**. 90's Britpop is interwoven with politics and the artwork of the Young British Artists (YBAs) such as Tracey Emin and Chris Ofili. In the 90s Britain was thought to be the music and art centre of the world.

While these identities are based on fashion and music, we will also look at cultures which are based on ethnicity and sexuality. For instance we will learn about 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 trips which will take us to important **urban environments** in the city and beyond. Some of these sites like Soho and Shoreditch still harbour these subcultures but both are struggling against the homogenizing effects of **globalization**, while at other sites it is hard to find any traces of these subcultures. For instance there is little evidence that the Punk movement started in the King's Road, so, instead we will make a pilgrimage to the grave of Malcolm McLaren, the inventor of Punk. These field trips will help contextualise these subcultures both historically and politically.

Course Aims

This course is designed to introduce students to popular culture in Britain since 1945.

To understand what popular culture means, and how subcultures and countercultures resist or support this definition. Students will learn about the **social dynamics** of subcultures and their relationship to the mainstream.

To enable students to appreciate that popular cultures are closely connected to politics, class and ethnicity, and to allow students to have an understanding of postwar politics and **social dynamics**.

We will be studying many different texts: academic essays, autobiography, newspaper reports, films and music videos. This course will enable students to develop the ability to read across different genres and still engage in critical and scholarly debate.

Academic essays will encourage students to source and analyze information in a well-structured form, while the reflective papers will allow students an opportunity to develop their own voice.

Field Studies will enable the students to analyze the **urban environment** and how it shelters (or repels) subcultural groups. Also students will be able to witness the direct results of **globalization** at these sites.

Requirements and Prerequisites

None

Learning Outcomes

- a. To understand the advantages and disadvantages of **globalization** on culture. To question whether **globalization** is making culture the same the world over.
- b. To appreciate how subcultures are linked to the **urban environment** and that many subcultures are city-based.
- c. To recognize that Britain's **diversity** has influenced the national culture, but to understand that there are still inequalities
- d. To demonstrate through **social dynamics** that subcultures are inescapably linked to the mainstream.

Developmental Outcomes

Students should demonstrate: responsibility & accountability, independence & interdependence, goal orientation, self-confidence, resilience, appreciation of differences.

Class Methodology

Reflective Essays
Academic Essays
Films
Lectures
Field Studies
Readings

Field Components

CAPA provides the unique opportunity to learn about the city through direct, guided experience. Participation in field activities for this course is required. You will actively explore the Global City in which you are currently living. Furthermore, you will have the chance to collect useful information that will be an invaluable resource for the essays/papers/projects assigned in this course.

Field classes form an important element of the course; attendance at these classes is mandatory. Field classes present a valuable opportunity for students to immerse themselves in the varied spaces and places of contemporary Britain and provide direct interaction with a wide range of **culturally diverse environments**. In these classes we will learn about the forces which have structured, and continue to influence, British culture, politics and society. We will interpret the sites we visit through class discussion as well as in written work. Field studies for this course include: walking tours in Soho and Camden and one that follows the footsteps of the Beatles in London. We will also visit the Museum of Childhood, the Victoria and Albert Museum and Somerset House..

Please Note: Students are responsible for ensuring that they arrive at field studies classes on time. I will email directions to field study sites in advance of the class – please consult the Transport for London website to plan your travel arrangements: <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/>

The assigned field component(s) are:

See below in weekly schedule.

Students are also strongly encouraged to participate in **co-curricular** program activities, as they can provide further information on the subcultures which we study in class.

Assessments

Weekly Responses	20%
Midterm Paper	30%
Final Essay	40%
Presentation	10%

Weekly Responses 2 pages double-spaced

Due Weeks 3, 5, 10 and 13

After some field trip 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?

Midterm Paper 4 pages double spaced

Due: – Week 6

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 6 pages double-spaced**Due: - Week 14**

Each student should concentrate on one aspect of Britain's popular culture from the period 1945-2013 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 and readings, and your own observations. You may also incorporate an analysis of photographs and other visual material. Please feel free to contact me for topic advice and suggestions.

Presentation – Britain in Music In Class**Due: - Week 14**

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 popular culture in the years 1951-2013. It is not enough to select a favourite song: there must be rigorous attention to how the song connects with politics, memory, identity, race, sexuality and gender. Examples could be 'God Save the Queen' by The Sex Pistols, or 'Relax' by Frankie Goes to Hollywood, or 'Do They Know It's Christmas' by Band Aid. Other examples could include soundtracks from British films such as *Chariots of Fire*, or TV programmes such as *Dr Who*. Students could also record their own sounds which they think are typically British (noise from the underground, the hubbub of a pub) but, again, they must be academically framed.

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**.

Assessment/Grading Policy

Descriptor	Alpha	UK	US	GPA
Excellent	A	75+	93+	4.0
	A-	70-74	90-92	3.7
Good	B+	66-69	87-89	3.3
	B	63-65	83-86	3.0
	B-	60-62	80-82	2.7
Average	C+	56-59	77-79	2.3
	C	53-55	73-76	2.0
Below Average / Poor	C-	50-52	70-72	1.7
	D+	46-49	67-69	1.3
	D	40-45	60-66	0.7 1.0
Fail	F	<40	<60	0

Grade Breakdown and Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Assessment Task	Grade %	Learning Outcomes	Due Date
Reflective Papers	20%	a, b, c, d	After 4 trips
Oral Presentation 1 X 8 min	10%	a, b, c, d	Week 7

Mid-term exam	30%	a, b, c, d	Week 14
Final Research Paper	40%	a, b, c, d	Week 14

Required Readings:

Required readings will be distributed in class or through email. It is imperative that all readings are undertaken before the next class. Readings will be newspaper articles, short stories, interviews, youtube videos and academic articles. A knowledge of George Orwell's *1984* will also be useful.

Recommended Reading(s):

This is just a selection from a long list:

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

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

Boy George, *Take it Like a Man: The Autobiography of Boy George* (London: Harper Collins, 2012)

Christopher Beward, *Fashioning London: Clothing and the Modern Metropolis* (Oxford: Berg, 2004).

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

Ed Glinert, *The London Compendium* (London: Penguin, 2004).

James Hampshire, *Citizenship and Belonging Immigration and the Politics of Demographic Governance in Postwar Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

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

Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Routledge, 1995).

Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.)

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

Ian Inglis (ed.) *Popular Music and Television in Britain* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010)

Derek Jarman, *At Your Own Risk: A Saint's Testament* (London: Vintage, 1993)

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

Andrew Marr, *A History of Modern Britain* (London: Macmillan, 2008).

Jeremy Paxman, *The English: A Portrait of the People* (London: Penguin, 2007)

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

Erica Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London's West End* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

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

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

Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had it So Good: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* (London: Abacus, 2006).

Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London: LittleBrown, 2006).

Dominic Sandbrook, *State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain 1970-1974* (London: Allen Lane, 2010).

Dominic Sandbrook, *Seasons in the Sun: The Battle for Britain 1974-1979* (London: Allen Lane, 2012).

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

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

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

Jerry White, *London in the Twentieth Century: A City and its People* (London:Penguin,2001).

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

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/

Weekly Course Schedule

Week One: Course Introduction and 1950s: The Birth of the Teenager

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.

Required 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)

Week Two: Field Trip- The Museum of Childhood and Hipsterville

For our first field trip we will visit the Museum of Childhood at Bethnal Green to look at its collection of twentieth-century toys and see how the cult of the teenager was born in the 1940s and 50s.

We will then go on a walking tour of Shoreditch to see the territory of the hipsters and also street art by Banksy.

Required Reading:

'Rock and Roll Babies' from Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had it So Good*, pp. 454-512

Week Three: 1960s: Beatlemania, Mods and Rockers

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 also watch *Quadrophenia* (Franc Roddam, 1979), the story of a disillusioned Mod.

Required Reading:

'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>

'From Swinging London to the Coolest City in the World' in Jerry White, *London in the 20th Century* (London: Vintage, 2008) pp. 341-351

Week Four: Field Trip: Abbey Road and Camden

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.

Week Five: The 60s Protest Song: Field Trip: Victoria and Albert Museum

After a lecture on the 60s Protest Song and some discussion of The Beatles and The Rolling Stones we will visit the new exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum called 'You Say You Want a Revolution? Records and Rebels 1966-70'

Required Reading

'Not talkin' bout a Revolution: Where are all the Protest Songs?' by Jonathan Loxmoore and Christine Ellis at

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2016/feb/22/protest-songs-folk-music-nancy-kerr-martin-carthy>

Week Six: 'God Save the Queen': Sex Pistols and Punk in the 1970s

In this session we move to the 1970s and discuss the social landscape of the time, and the outrage that was Punk.

Required Reading:

'Anarchy in the UK' from Dominic Sandbrook, *Seasons in the Sun: The Battle for Britain 1974-1979* (London: Allen Lane, 2012).

'Punks of '77: Still angry after all those years?' by Mario Cacciottolo on <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-17397222>

Week Seven: Fall Break

Week Eight: AIDS and the New Romantics of the 1980s: Would you let you in?

In this session we will examine the links between AIDS and the subcultures created in the 1980s. We will also look at gay and lesbian activism from this time, discuss **diversity** and hate crime.

Required Readings:

Selected readings from Derek Jarman, *At Your Own Risk: A Saint's Testament* (London: Vintage, 1993)

'The 1980s: The Age of AIDS' from Neil Miller, *Out of the Past: Gay and Lesbian History from 1869 to the Present* (London: Vintage, 1995) pp. 439-462

Week Nine: Soho Tour: Rock 'n' Roll and Gay Counterculture

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.

Required Readings:

Selections from Neil Bartlett, *Who Was That Man? A Present for Mr Oscar Wilde* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1988)

'Cosmopolitan Soho' in Judith R Walkowitz, *Nights Out: Life in Cosmopolitan London* (London: Yale University Press, 2012)

Week Ten: Ravers: Ebenezer Goode

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 *Human Traffic* (1999) about a group of ravers and addicts in the 1980s.

Required Readings:

'God is a DJ' from Bill Brewster and Frank Broughton, *Last Night a DJ Saved my Life: The History of the Disc Jockey* (New York: Grove Press, 2000) pp. 384-410

'A Second Summer of Love' by Luke Bainbridge at <http://www.theguardian.com/music/2008/apr/20/electronicmusic.culture>

Selections from Irvine Welsh, *Trainspotting* (various editions)

'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/>

Week Eleven: 1990s Britpop, Art and Politics

The 1990s culture of Britpop is often remembered as the time of The Spice Girls but in this lecture I will demonstrate how The Spice Girls effectively ended Britpop. We will also investigate the strong **social dynamics** of New Labour, Britpop and The Young British Artists.

Required Reading:

Chapters from John Harris, *The Last Party: Britpop, Blair and the Demise of English Rock* (Harper Perennial: London, 2004) pp. 3-102

Week Twelve: Brighton Trip

This afternoon we will take the train to Brighton, the battlefield beaches of the Mods and Rockers. We will visit scenes from the film *Quadrophenia* and explore the Lanes, home to independent businesses and hippie enterprises. Brighton is also home to the biggest LGBT community outside London. You could even have a swim!

Week Thirteen: Kill the Hipsters and Kiss all the Chavs

In this session we will look at the newest member of British counterculture and try and discover who he/she really is, and if they are motivated in this age of political apathy.

Required Readings:

'Kill All Hipsters' by Rhian E Jones in *Strike Magazine*. Available on www.strikemag.org/kill-all-hipsters/

'Hipsters are Agents of Social Change' by Anna Leach on <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/jan/21/hipsters-gay-people>

'Why the Hipster Must Die' by Christian Lorentzen on http://www.timeout.com/newyork/things-to-do/why-the-hipster-must-die?package_id=26445

Week Fourteen: Presentation Day

In our final sessions students will present their iconic 'Sound of Britain'.

Attendance, Participation & Student Responsibilities

Attendance: CAPA has a mandatory attendance policy. Attendance is taken at the beginning of every class. Unauthorized absence from class will result in a reduction of the final grade and potentially a failure for the course.

Missing classes for medical reasons: If you need to miss a class for medical reasons or for a family emergency, **you must send an e-mail** to let the Associate Director of Academic Affairs (ADAA) know at least one hour in advance of your class or meeting at the following e-mail: excused.absence@capa.org. Note that calling the CAPA Centre (0207 370 7389) is acceptable only if you do not temporarily have access to the internet. An e-mail is still required as quickly as you can get access to the internet again. You will need to provide evidence of the reason for your absence. Unexcused absences will result in a grade reduction. In the event of a missed class or field trip, it is your responsibility to contact your instructor and make up any missed assignments.

Class Participation: Students are expected to participate actively and critically in class discussions, and the participation portion of the class will be graded accordingly. Students must read assignments **BEFORE** the class, and come in on time. Participation is a vital part of your grade: students are expected to participate orally in seminars and in online forums and discussions in a critical and evaluative manner; to interact with the faculty and fellow students with respect and tolerance; and to actively engage in discussion. Derogatory or inflammatory comments about the cultures, perspectives or attitudes of others in the class will not be tolerated.

Academic Integrity: A high level of responsibility and academic honesty is expected. Because the value of an academic course depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student, it is imperative that a student demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work and class behavior. Plagiarism and cheating will result in dismissal from the program. See the Handbook of CAPA Academic Policies for more information and resources on plagiarism.

Use of electronic equipment in class: All devices such as laptops, i-pods, i-pads, netbooks, notebooks and tablets, smartphones, cell phones, etc. are **NOT** allowed unless you have express permission from the faculty or you have been instructed to do so. If you require an accommodation to use any type of electronic equipment, inform the Associate Director of Academic Affairs at the beginning of Term.

Use of Electronic Translators: In Language courses students are NOT allowed to use electronic translators for writing texts in the target language: those submitting compositions and texts of whatever kind translated in such a fashion will receive a final F grade for the course.

Late Submission: Late submission of papers, projects, journal entries, pieces of homework and portfolios is only permitted with prior approval. A request must be made to the relevant Faculty member no later than two days prior to the due date. Late submission without prior approval will result in a full alpha grade penalty. In either case, work cannot be submitted after feedback has been provided to the rest of the class on the relevant assessment or one week after the due date whichever comes first, after which point a grade of F will be given for the assessment.

Behaviour during Examinations: During examinations, you must do your own work. Unless specifically instructed by the lecturer or instructor, talking during an exam is not permitted, nor may you compare papers, copy from others, or collaborate in any way. Any failure to abide by examination rules will result in failure of the exam, and may lead to failure of the course and disciplinary action.