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PROGRAM(S):

[London - Study London](#)

[London - Theater Studies](#)

[London - Health Practice & Policy](#)

DISCIPLINE(S):

Sociology

Cultural Studies

TERMS OFFERED:

Fall, Spring, Summer

CREDITS:

3

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION:

English

PREREQUISITES:

None

DESCRIPTION:

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. This course should not only benefit students majoring in the arts and social sciences but also those majoring in business and communications.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

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.

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

Lectures (including Powerpoint projections and other audio/visual material), seminar discussions, film screenings, student presentations plus guided tours to Soho, Abbey Road and Brighton. Throughout the course you should consider the following themes 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?

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

Attendance and class participation (15%), midterm research assignment (30%), oral presentation (15%), final exam (40%). NOTE: Lectures are designed to illuminate themes 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 as well as taking notes during lectures.

CONTENT:

Week 1 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.

Week 2 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.

Week 3 The Fashion Industry, Glam Rock and sexual politics

From Catwalk to Shopping Mall: The 'boutique revolution' and the challenge to 'haute couture' fashion houses; The rise of female designers from Mary Quant to Stella McCartney; The iconography of youth: 'Supermodels' and the cult of celebrity. Designer labels and global branding: the commodification of 'street style' or a new internationalism? Plus: David Bowie, Glam Rock and the reformation of masculinity and sexuality in the 1970s & 80s.

Week 4 Punk Rock, Feminism and the Reaction to Commercial Incorporation

The Punk Movement: Radical entrepreneurs from Maclaren to Branson and the revival of 'pirate' radio, independent labels and music journalism; plus the rise of female artists and their impact on perceptions of women from Siouxsie & the Banshees to the Spice Girls and Lady Gaga. The Skinhead movement: macho working-class style, racist politics and football hooliganism.

Week 5 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.

Week 6 London Field Trip, Soho and Abbey Road, details to be announced

Week 7 CLASS PRESENTATIONS 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. Details to be announced.

Week 8 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; the use of film and television from Ready, Steady Go! to MTV and You Tube to promote music.

Week 9 Trends in Contemporary Youth Culture 1: Technology

The impact of social media on patterns of socialising and consumption; globalisation versus 'glocalisation' in the worldwide transmission of Hip-Hop; 'flashmobbing' in Britain and the US. Plus, 'mashed up': the detribalisation of youth cultures since the 1990s.

Week 10 The Triumph of Dance Culture

'God Is A DJ': The rise of Techno-based 'EDM' – from House to Grime and Dubstep - and more liberal attitudes to recreational drug use in Britain. The creation of 'Superfestivals', 'Superclubs,' and the DJ - a post-modern star? Media/State attempts to control 'Rave' culture and the 'Freedom to Party' movement; 'Balearic Beat' and the European 'Easyjet' rave scene.

Week 11 Britpop and the Political Incorporation of Youth Culture

Mad For It: The rise of 'Britpop' and the Mod revival in music and fashion in the 1990s; the reaction to American influence;; Arise, Sir Mick: The use and abuse of pop music by political parties and pressure groups from the 1960s to the 2012 London Olympics. Youth culture as patriotism & 'national heritage'.

Week 12 Brighton Field Trip, details to be announced

Week 13 Trends in Contemporary British Youth Culture 2: The 'Greying of Youth Culture'

Mind the Gap: the promotion of a 'late youth' market by corporations and advertisers, and the colonisation of youth culture by middle-aged consumers; the familial transmission of youth culture, and teenage strategies to maintain the generation gap. Plus exam revision seminar.

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Richard Weight, *Mod: A Very British Style* (Random House, 2013)
- Selections from Bill Osgerby, *Youth Media* (Routledge, 2004) and Andy Bennet (ed.), *Ageing and Youth Cultures: Music, Style and Identity* (Routledge, 2012)

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

General

- Bennett, Andy, *Cultures of Popular Music* (OUP, 2001).
- Melly, George, *Revolt Into Style: The Pop Arts in Britain* (1970).
- Bill Osgerby, *Youth in Britain since 1945* (Blackwell, 1998)
- Shapiro, Harry, *Waiting for the Man: The Influence of Drugs and Popular Music* (2nd Ed., Helter Skelter, 1999)

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

- 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)

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)

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)

NOTES:

This course is offered during the regular semester and in the summer. For summer sections, the course schedule is condensed, but the content, learning outcomes, and contact hours are the same.

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