



Boston University Study Abroad **London**

British Youth Culture from 1950 to the Present **CAS HI 250 (*Elective B*)**

Course 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/EDM 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?

How is generational identity created and maintained? Through the prism of youth movements in the United Kingdom, you will investigate how underground cults become mainstream culture in the context of changing attitudes to nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and class.

Block One introduces how consumer society, mass media and a post-war 'generation gap' spawned a new concept of 'youth culture' (coined by American sociologist Talcott Parsons) as a range of personal choices built around a specific generational identity.

Block Two focuses on the societal trends which have altered definitions of youth since the 1960s - from advertisers' concept of the 'teenager' (14-24) to that of today's 'late youth' (34-44) and examines the changing content of the global youth market.

Course Objectives

Aesthetic Exploration Learning Outcome 1

Students will understand youth culture as a set of associated arts forms through the consumption of which youth express their identity.

1. Fashion (for example, does Britain's historically more formal and flamboyant styles reflect a great class consciousness, but also lower levels of homophobia in a more secular society, as David Bowie believed)
2. Music (for example, how black American music from soul to hip-hop has spoken to British youth as a source of rebellion against social prejudice – a 'rage from the underground' as Roger Daltrey of The Who once explained his love of rhythm and blues)
3. Art and design (for example, how distinctive black and white graphics expressed the identity and values of participants in Britain's first multi-racial youth culture, Two Tone and their opposition to the skinhead movement)

By evaluating and contextualising notable historic and contemporary British youth movements, students will be equipped to analyse their world-wide artistic and commercial legacies in three key areas of enquiry:

1. Patterns of consumption: the things people buy (for example, is Adidas a more popular brand than Nike because it is German and not American?)

2. Lifestyle choices: the things people do (for example, does the higher British consumption of certain recreational drugs reflect the fact that Electronic Dance Music became a mass movement in Europe twenty years before it did in America?)
3. Social and political values: the things people believe (for example, to what extent can the legacy of Hippy as an environmental/anti-consumerist movement to be found in today's vegetarian/vegan trends and in the yoga/mindfulness industry?)

Students will explore the social and psychological context in which different styles of music, fashion and language have been created, disseminated and experience in London and the United Kingdom. They will additionally identify the extent to which youth cultures challenge social, economic and political divisions and evaluate whether commercialisation neutralises that challenge.

Aesthetic Exploration Learning Outcome 2

Students will develop both an aesthetic and a critical acuity, focusing on key terms commonly used in the commercial and intellectual study of fashion, music, language and technology in order to assess the origins, meanings and legacies of youth culture. Students will apply this acuity in the interpretation of movements in fashion and music, looking at the nature of cultural production through the careers and influence of key British artists and designers, including You Tube 'influencers'.

Aesthetic Exploration Learning Outcome 3

Students will formulate their knowledge and awareness of youth culture as it is expressed through the artistic media of music and fashion in London and in the United Kingdom. They will construct and collate a portfolio of quantitative and qualitative analytic enquiry to extend their intellectual grasp of different genres within the framework of British cultural history, that enables them also to explore their own ideas and responses to printed, visual and physical texts.

Their individual research skills are augmented by a group exercise prior to their examination, in which they will share data on changing definitions of youth, selecting what they find most useful from all sets in order to respond to the examination question. This will further enhance the collaborative skills they have developed in their investigation of and presentation on the concept of 'youth culture.'

Social Inquiry 1 Learning Outcome 1

Students will learn and apply the key sociological terms and themes of youth culture in order to assess how commerce, culture and identity have interacted in modern Britain. Students will discuss and research the patterns of consumption, lifestyle choices and social/political values that turn underground cults into mainstream culture and moral panics into material profits.

By recognising how and why certain fashions, lifestyles and values are created and utilised in the United Kingdom, students will navigate difference in their daily lives as more informed community members and consumers. Students will identify the tension between individual persona and collective identity in the membership of youth tribes and analyse how youth cultures challenge prevailing ideas about class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race and nationality. They will also interrogate the extent to which advertisers shape youth cults in order to stimulate demand; and conversely how, as a result of both the digital revolution and 'familial transmission', youth cults have become 'detribalised' as young people create more eclectic styles from the information now available to them online and from within the family.

From this intellectual foundation, they will analyse the extent to which youth cultures have represented or driven social change, both in the United Kingdom and in London, through the recognised economic value of the creative industries and through accompanying socio-political developments, which enable the challenge of youth movements to be incorporated into reformed and popularly accepted definitions of, for example, gender relationships.

Additional Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Classify the key differences and similarities between British and American society and their impact on the evolution of each youth culture.
- Indicate the applicability of British youth culture and global trends to further business and communications coursework as well as to courses in the arts and social sciences.

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.

| Grade | Honour Points | Usual % |
|-------|---------------|----------|
| A | 4.0 | 93-100 |
| A- | 3.7 | 89-92 |
| B+ | 3.3 | 85-88 |
| B | 3.0 | 81-84 |
| B- | 2.7 | 77-80 |
| C+ | 2.3 | 73-76 |
| C | 2.0 | 69-72 |
| C- | 1.7 | 65-68 |
| D | 1.0 | 60-64 |
| F | 0.0 | Unmarked |

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.

F The failing grade indicates 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. This can be accessed via Blackboard Learn: <http://learn.bu.edu>

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

Attendance Policies

Classes

All Boston University London Programme students are expected to attend every class session, seminar, and field trip to fulfil 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 Directors to discuss their continued participation on the programme.

Authorised Absence:

The Authorised Absence Approval Request Form is available through the Academic Affairs section of the BU London Personal Page: <https://fm.bu-london.co.uk/fmi/webd/>

Please note: Submitting an Authorised Absence Approval Request Form does not guarantee an authorised absence

Students who expect in advance to be absent from any class should notify a member of Academic Affairs and complete an Authorised Absence Approval Request Form ten working days in advance of the class date.

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

- **Illness (first day of sickness):** If a student is too ill to attend class, the student must notify Academic Affairs as soon as possible by submitting an Authorised Absence Approval Request Form in advance of the class. If it is the student's first absence of the semester (from any class) a doctor's note is not required.
- **Illness (multiple days):** If a student is missing more than one class day due to illness, the student must complete an Authorised Absence Approval Request Form

and a sick note from a local doctor excusing their absence from class. Once well enough, the student will need to meet with Academic Affairs.

- Important placement event that clashes with a class (verified by internship supervisor).
- Special circumstances which have been approved by the Directors (see note below).

The Directors 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 Academic Affairs to discuss their participation on the programme as excessive absences may result in a 'Fail' in the class and therefore expulsion from the programme.

Religious Holidays

Boston University's Office of the University Registrar states:

'The University, in scheduling classes on religious holidays and observances, intends that students observing those traditions be given ample opportunity to make up work. Faculty members who wish to observe religious holidays will arrange for another faculty member to meet their classes or for cancelled classes to be rescheduled.'

Special Accommodations

Each student will need to contact the Disability & Access Services to request accommodations for the semester they are abroad. Students are advised by BU-DAS not to expect the same accommodations as they receive on campus.

BU London can only uphold special accommodations if we have received the appropriate documentation from the BU-DAS. We cannot accept letters from other universities/centres.

All disabilities need to be known to the DAS in Boston if they are to be used as a reason for requiring a change in conditions, i.e. reduced internship hours or special accommodations for the internship schedule.

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 Academic Affairs and if the lateness continues, may have their final grade penalised.