

Brit Pop

**Lecturer : Emer McParland
Spring '07**

General Information

This course outlines the major turning points in the history of British Pop music from the beginnings of Rock and Roll (in the 1950's) with the influence of the Blues, through to the modern world of pop, demonstrating the creation of a major world industry, as well as the cultural phenomenon brought about by the birth of this style of music.

Aspects such as the changing social climates, the need for and use of censorship, the connection between the world of fashion and music and politics and music, and the evolution and integration of various music styles from around the world will all be studied using relevant examples of British music.

Resources to be used include vinyl records, CD's, DVD's, videos and music magazines. There will also be organised class outings to relevant music venues. The programme of music to be performed at these venues will enhance the learning experience for the students and reinforce work covered in the classes.

Assignments

Students will be assessed on written work, examinations and oral work. The marks will be divided as follows:

Written work (50%)

an essay or critical analyses due in Week 5 (1000 words) - 20%

an essay or critical analyses due in Week 11 (1500 words) - 15%

a report on the music scene in London today based on the students experiences whilst in London due in Week 13 (500 words) - 15%

Examinations (35%)

take-home due in the Week 3 (10%)

mid-term test given in the Week 7 (10%)

final examination in Week 15 (15%)

Oral Work (15%)

One presentation (to be explained in class)

overall contribution to and participation in the seminars and discussions

Teaching Style

Lectures, presentations and visits.

Attendance Policy

Attendance at all course meetings and co-curricular events is compulsory. Assessment will reflect the individual student's adherence to the attendance policy that allows for one unexcused absence as defined in the Undergraduate Catalogue. Punctuality and participation are also expected and will be considered as part of the overall assessment.

Office Hours

I will generally be available in the faculty room both before and after class and at mutually convenient times. You may leave a note in my mail box in the faculty room if there is a problem.

Excursions

I will arrange three or four such class trips each term to various music venues. These excursions are **mandatory**, the educational content of each trip reinforces the learning objectives.

Libraries

If students have exhausted the Resource Centre and the local borough libraries, they may get permission to use the University of London library.

Weekly Outline

Week 1: Introduction to the course 'Brit Pop' and a brief outline of what is to be covered in the course. An aural appreciation of pop music. The origins of Pop music and its lines of development, with particular reference to the Blues, and other American music forms.

Objectives: To discuss the Blues and its influence on the formation of popular music. To look at the formation of Rock and Roll and the roll played by America. To analyze the British music scene 1950 – 1960.

Week 2: Guest Speaker

Objectives: To discuss and explore the music scene in Britain in the 1960's from the perspective of a film and documentary maker.

Week 3: The life and times of The Beatles

Objectives: To discuss and explore in closer detail, the contribution made to British culture by the Beatles, and to discuss the development of British pop music into the 1960's.

ASSESSMENT 1: Take Home Test due. (10%)

Week 4: The 'other' artists of the 1960's

Objectives: To look at artists in England in the 'Swinging 60's' such as The Who, Cream, The Moody Blues and Cliff Richard, and the space they found in the new world of Pop music.

Week 5: Rock and Alternative Music in the 70's

Objectives: To look at and discuss the world of the rock musicians such as Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd. To look at the alternative music scene rising in Britain and the platform it gave to more explorative artists.

ASSESSMENT 2 : Submit first essay. (20%)

Week 6: Punk, Glam Artists and the rise of Ska

Objectives: To discuss the social and musical explosion created by the Sex Pistols. To analyze the social reasons for Glam music, and the quality of that music. To trace the history of Ska and it's rise in the UK.

Week 7: Mid-term test

ASSESSMENT 3 : Mid-term Test. (10%)

MID TERM BREAK

Week 8: The New Romantics

Objectives: To discuss the New Romantics, their music, their style and their legacy, with particular reference to Wham, Culture Club, Spandau Ballet and Adam and The Ants.

Week 9: Technology in the 1980's, the beginnings of Rap, and the importance of image.

Objectives: To discuss the validity of using computer technology in writing and recording popular music with reference to the Buggles, Frankie Goes to Hollywood, and The Pet Shop Boys. To look at the emergence of rap and discuss the grounds for its creation. To discuss the importance of image with reference to Duran Duran, Wham and The Police.

Week 10: The further advances of technology, and the revival of Brit Pop

Objectives: To analyze the areas of popular music that is highly affected by technology, both in a negative, and a positive way. To look at the opposing style of music that became prevalent in the 90's, with a paring down of the use of technology and its benefits.

Week 11: The role of record producers.

Objectives: To look at the products created in the music industry by record producers, using manufactured pop stars as a basis for discussion.

ASSESSMENT 4 : Submit second essay (15%)

Week 12: Guest speaker

Objectives: To look at the rise of the DJ and the popularity of clubs in the UK.

Week 13: The Media

Objectives: To look at the role of the media with reference to their treatment of pop music 'stars'.

ASSESSMENT 5: Report on the music in London (15%)

Week 14: The many faces of the record industry in London today.

Objectives: To look at and discuss the many different career opportunities in the record industry. To understand why and how the UK music industry has become such a powerful, multi-million pound industry.

Week 15: Final examination.

ASSESSMENT 6 : Final Exam (15%)