

**HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY**  
**FACULTY OF LETTERS**  
**Department of English Language and Literature**

**Course:** IED 258 (01) British Popular Culture

**Year/Term:** 2014-2015 Spring

**Credit:** 3 / **ECTS:** 5

**Class Hours:** Thursday 09:00-11:50 B8/B03

**Office Hours:** Friday 10:00-12:00

**Aim of the Course:** The aim of the course is to help the student gain the knowledge, skills and competence required to understand, study and analyse contemporary British popular culture with reference to main relevant theoretical concepts. It focuses on a detailed study of British Popular Culture through the discussions of articles and selected texts, both literary and cultural.

**Learning and teaching strategies:** Lecture, discussion, question and answer, preparing/presenting reports, brain storming

**Course Content:** The terms “culture”, “high culture”, “popular culture”, “mass culture” and “subculture” as well as the differences between these terms are explained. Main theories and concepts about popular culture are introduced. The historical development of British popular culture is also dealt with. British popular culture is studied and discussed through the analysis of selected cultural texts and practices.

**Course Outline:**

**Week I:** General Introduction and definitions of key terms and concepts

**Week II:** Terminology (**Folk culture, popular culture, mass culture, high culture, subculture**)  
“What is Popular Culture?” in John Storey’s *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*

**Week III:** Medieval popular culture  
*The Tale of Gamelyn* (medieval popular romance)  
(online text: <http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/tale-of-gamelyn>)  
Smith, Norman R. “Portent Lore and Medieval Popular Culture” in *Popular Culture in the Middle Ages*

**Week IV:** Production/Consumption and the Popular  
“The Culture Industry” Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer  
“Understanding the Popular” in John Fiske’s *Reading the Popular*  
“Advertising the Magic System” Raymond Williams

**Week V:** Hegemony and the Carnavalesque (Gramsci, Bakhtin)  
Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, “Bourgeoisie Hysteria and the Carnavalesque”  
Simon Dentith, “Bakhtin’s Carnival” in *Bakhtinian Thought: An Introductory Reader*

**Week VI: Midterm I**

**WEEK VII:** British Popular culture and cinema  
*Beowulf*, 2013 film

**Week VIII:** Subcultures in Britain  
James A. Winders, “Reggae, Rastafarians and Revolution”

Sinan Akilli, "British 'Yoof' on Drugs: A Reading of Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting* in the Light of Subculture Theory"  
*Trainspotting*, 1996 film  
*The Rastafarians*

**Week IX:** Popularization of the Marginal and Popular Music

Will Straw, "Characterizing Rock Music Culture: The Case of Heavy Metal"  
 Heavy Metal Documentary

Sports and British Popular Culture  
 Pierre Bourdieu, "How Can One be a Sports Fan?"  
 Can Abanazir, "Hooligans? What Hooligans?"

**Week X: Bank Holiday (23 April 2015)**

**Week XI: Midterm II**

**Week XII:** British Food and Drink Culture

John C. Everitt, "Bitter-Sweet Conversions: Changing Times for the British Pub"  
 Burçin Erol, "British Colonial Expansion and the Expansion of British Food Culture 1500-1800"

**Week XIII:** Television and Popular Culture

Robert H. Spier, "We are What We Watch, We Watch What We are"

**Week XIV:** Popular Fiction

Sinan Akilli, "Spinning Yarns of Imperial (Ad)venture: G. A. Henty's Promotion of British Imperial Ideology in African Adventure Novels"  
 Interview from the TV program Think Tank. "Do We Need the Western Canon?"  
<http://www.pbs.org/thinktank/transcript533.html>

**\*There may be changes to the course outline.**

**Text Book:** The primary texts will be provided by the instructor.

**Course Requirements and Method:** It is essential for students to read the assigned material before class meetings because the course will be conducted in the form of class discussions and references to the texts will be made necessary. The background material will be introduced in class, but the students should not rely only on class material and are advised to do reading of the secondary sources in their spare time (If there is no time, make time!). Needless to say each student should have his/her own text that will be brought to class.

**Attendance:** Attendance is compulsory, those who fail to come to class more than **11 hours** will get **F1**. Moreover, punctual attendance is required at every class meeting.

**Assessment:** 25% Midterm I  
 25% Midterm II  
 50% Final

**25%** of the marks will be deducted for incorrect English. The lowest passing mark is **50**.

### Suggested Reading List

\*This list is recommendatory only. There are many other books and articles available at the Beytepe Library and Bilkent Library, in addition to the vast number of online articles.

Brottman, Nikita. *High Theory, Low Culture*. New York: Palgrave, 2005.

Fiske, John. *Understanding Popular Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1989.

Hermes, Joke. *Re-reading Popular Culture*. Malden: Blackwell, 2005.

Huebel, Harry Russell. *Things in the Driver's Seat: Readings in Popular Culture*. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1972.

Steinberg, Shirley R. *Contemporary Youth Culture: An International Encyclopedia*. Westport: Greenwood, 2008.

Warshaw, Robert. *The Immediate Experience: Movies, Comics, Theatres & Other Aspects of Popular Culture*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2001.