

Popular culture and society in 1960s Britain

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Course outline:

The sixties are often depicted as the golden age of British popular music. In the early 1960s, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, The Who and The Kinks set the foundations of what would be called the “British Invasion”: a string of pop music acts from the United Kingdom which experienced tremendous worldwide success.

British lyricists created reflective commentary on British life, articulating their own visions of national traditions such as class, monarchy, or national traditions. Thus, both through their lyrics and their musical styles, bands not only reflected British symbols, but also produced social commentary on British society, politics, culture and fashion.

Throughout this course, we will be looking at some of the most famous songs of the decade to try and see what they can reveal about British society. The aim is thus to provide students with a detailed knowledge of Britain in the sixties, and to show them how popular music can be studied as a reflection, but also as a driving force of the evolutions in Britain's culture ("Swinging London", Pop art), subcultures (Mods, Rockers, Teddy Bears), society (sexual revolution, economic difficulties), and politics (Conservative and Labour governments' responses to these evolutions).

Discography:

The Beatles: *Please Please Me* (Parlophone, 1963)

The Beatles: *Revolver* (Parlophone, 1966)

The Beatles: *The Beatles* (Parlophone, 1968)

The Kinks: *The Kinks Are The Village Green Preservation Society* (Pye Records, 1968)

The Kinks: *Arthur, Or The Rise And Fall Of The British Empire* (Pye Records, 1969)

The Rolling Stones: *Beggars Banquet* (Decca, 1968)

The Who: *My Generation* (Brunswick, 1965)

Reading list:

CHARLOT (Monica) (dir). *The Wilson Years*. Paris, Ophrys, 1998, 191p.

DONNELLY (Mark). *Sixties Britain: Culture, Society and Politics*. London, Pearson, 2005, 230p.

MACDONALD (Ian). *Revolution in the Head: The Beatles' Records and the Sixties*. London, Pimlico, 2005, 514p.

MARWICK (Arthur). *British Society Since 1945*. London, Penguin, 2003, 503p.

Schedule:

Date	Topic	Documents
11/01	Introduction The emergence of youth culture and subcultures	The Who: <i>My Generation</i>
18/01	"	Film: <i>Quadrophenia</i> (Franc Roddam)
25/01	Swinging London: a very British popular culture (TV, film, music, fashion...)	The Kinks: <i>Dedicated Follower of Fashion</i>
01/02	"	TV Shows: <i>The Prisoner, The Avengers, Coronation street...</i>
08/02	The hippie movement and the politics of counterculture	The Rolling Stones: <i>Sympathy For The Devil</i>
15/02	"	The Beatles: <i>All you need is love / Revolution</i>
22/02	A text study	Dick Hebdige: <i>Subculture, The Meaning of Style</i>
01/03	Winter break - No class	
08/03	Britain's moral evolutions: towards a more tolerant society	The Beatles: <i>I Wanna Hold Your Hand</i>
15/03	"	The Beatles: <i>Back In The USSR</i>
22/03	Prosperity and crises: Britain's socio - economic evolutions	The Kinks: <i>Autumn Almanac</i>
29/03	"	The Beatles: <i>Taxman</i>
05/04	Revisions and text study	Young & Willmott: <i>Family and Kinship in East London</i>