60s Culture: Beatles, Merseypoets and the Visual Arts in Liverpool

CEPD940  5 credit module (equivalent to 2.5 ECTS)

1. Module Leader

Julie Robson

Biography. Tutor in Art and Architecture at the University of Liverpool, Continuing Education. Freelance art historian, gallery educator and lecturer since 1992, I studied Art History and English Literature at the University of Nottingham, Masters Degree in Contemporary Art at University of Liverpool and have been contributing to the International Summer School since its beginning.

2. Module Description

During the 1960s, Liverpool became a centre of avant garde activity, not only through the music of the Beatles and the rise of ‘Merseybeat’, but also through the alternative arts and music scene which was focused on the area near to the University campus, Liverpool Art School and the Everyman Theatre. This module will examine social and historical background to the cultural phenomenon and its effect on shaping Liverpool in the 21st century, particularly through marketing and its thriving tourist industry.

3. Module Aims

This module aims to:

- To develop confidence in understanding and communicating complex ideas
- To develop skills in research, collaborative learning and producing and delivering presentations.
- To introduce students to the history and development of Liverpool’s distinctive music and arts scene in the 1960s and to examine the contribution of 60s culture to the regeneration, rebranding and marketing of Liverpool as a tourist attraction in the 21st century

4. Content

The following topics will be considered on the module:

- Context: social and historical background
- Analysis of the work and legacy of key musicians, artists and writers
- Critical reception of groups, artists etc associated with the Mersey Scene
- Contribution of Liverpool’s music and art to the rebranding of the city, World Heritage Site inscription and the impact the Capital of Culture award in 2008
- The rise of Liverpool’s tourist industry and marketing of the city in the 21st century

5. Module structure
The module will be delivered over a three-week period in six two hour sessions (four hours per week, total 12 hours contact time).

The module will consist of classroom-based seminars and workshops with a site visit to a local museum which includes a walking tour of some of Liverpool's public art connected to the course content. Each session will begin with an interactive slide-presentation, followed by group discussion and a workshop. Students will be expected to participate fully and actively throughout the sessions.

6. Teaching methods

The teaching approach will include the following:
- Taught sessions
- Small group working
- Group discussions
- Presentations
- Workshops
- Site visit

7. Assessment:

Assessment will be by:
- Group presentation (worth 25% of the overall mark)
- Written essay/reflection of 750-850 words (worth 75% of the overall mark)

Standard University policies apply with regard to late submission of assessments. There is no re-assessment opportunity.

8. Course structure:

The course will be interactive in nature, with the sessions highly focused on understanding, interpretation and expression: encouraging students to put theory into practice throughout.

The Indicative schedule is as follows:

Session One: *Liverpool Gateway to the World*

The course begins with an introduction to the historical and social development of the city of Liverpool, with a focus on the post-war years. Students will learn about the significance of the city’s trans-Atlantic links and the impact of American art and culture on musicians and artists in the city.

Session Two: *Beat City*

This session focuses on the musical career of the Beatles. We will discuss the various influences that contributed to their unique sound and will examine some of the songs in depth: the inspiration for their subjects, their structure and arrangements. We will also
discuss the ‘Beatlemania’ phenomenon, the marketing of the group’s image and the impact that the group had on art and culture in the 1960s.
Session Three:  
**Liverpool Centre of the Creative Universe**  
Following World War II, many artists, writers and musicians in Europe looked for new ways of expressing their angst, and also began to incorporate new materials and processes into their works. We will discuss the influence of Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art, Conceptual Art on the emerging artists in 1960s Liverpool. We will also explore the music, poetry and performance art of the ‘counter-culture’ focused on the Liverpool 8 area.

Session Four:  
**City Walk and Museum of Liverpool Visit**  
Meeting at the university, we will walk down to the Pier Head and discuss some examples of public art on the way. At the Museum of Liverpool, students will take part in gallery workshops based on selected objects from the current displays.

Session Five:  
**Capital of Culture: the Rebirth of a City**  
Following its designation as European Capital of Culture in 2008, Liverpool has celebrated its regeneration and rebirth as an international tourist destination. We will assess the contribution of Merseybeat and the continuing attraction of Beatles and 60s culture to this rebranding of the city.

Session Six:  
**Presentations and Plenary**  
Students will be asked to deliver a short presentation in this session which will form part of their overall assessment for the course. (Details to be provided in Session 1). The course will conclude with a summary and discussion about current developments and events in the city related to the module content.

9. **Learning outcomes**

On completion of this module, students will be able to:

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<tr>
<th>Learning outcome</th>
<th>Assessment component which assesses this learning outcome</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop confidence in understanding and communicating complex ideas in written and spoken language</td>
<td>Written essay/reflection Group presentation</td>
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<td>Research a topic and work collaboratively to produce a written essay/reflection and a group presentation</td>
<td>Written essay/reflection Group presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrate a basic awareness of the skills and knowledge required to plan, deliver and reflect on the contribution of art and culture to the regeneration of a city</td>
<td>Written essay/reflection Group presentation</td>
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10. Skills

Key skills that will be developed:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>How this skill is developed</th>
<th>Mode of assessment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Group discussions, activities and tasks in class</td>
<td>Group presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Orally in group discussions, activities and tasks in class, in writing by production of assessed assignment</td>
<td>Written essay/reflection</td>
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<td>Classroom Management</td>
<td>Practice and micro-teaching within the sessions</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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11. Books, ebooks and websites:

The University Website at [www.liv.ac.uk/library](http://www.liv.ac.uk/library) provides access to many relevant books and electronic books, as well as academic journals and databases.

**Recommended Pre-Course Reading**


Henri, Adrian; McGough, Roger; Patten, Brian, *The Penguin Modern Poets: Mersey Sound*, 1968


All three of these books are excellent introductions to 60s Culture and Liverpool, but it is not necessary or required to read all of them. We would recommend choosing and reading one, or at least dipping into the chapters of particular interest to you.

We may also assign readings from these books as preparatory work during the course.

If you are not familiar with the English grammatical system, it would be advisable to also buy or borrow a good grammar reference book and/or a learner's dictionary.

Examples include:


Core Texts


Henri, Adrian; McGough, Roger; Patten, Brian, *The Penguin Modern Poets: Mersey Sound*, 1968


Useful Websites

http://www.liverpoolvision.co.uk/marketing-liverpool/

http://www.tate.org.uk