

Advanced English: Class, Humour & Eccentricity - British Society and Popular Culture

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Academic year 2026-2027 - **Language Department** - Fall semester.

This course is meant for students of the advanced C1 level. Theme-based language classes aim at developing written and oral skills through the study of a specific topic.

Course Objectives

This is a 12-week course exploring British society and popular culture, intended to improve student understanding and use of English.

The course has two main objectives:

- Discussing crucial social, political & historical issues in Britain
- Facilitating the critical analysis of selected works in various media (cinema, TV, music).

Course Description

Britain has a distinct culture shaped by both tradition and modernity. That culture has been represented in various popular media: music, cinema and more recently television series. This class will cover a number of issues running through British society since the middle of the 20th century: key historical eras (the Thatcher years, the Troubles in Northern Ireland), but also the political system, social issues, humour and – perhaps most importantly – class differences.

Together we will study how these issues are reflected in the British cultural output. We will discuss films like *Billy Elliot* by Stephen Daldry and *Gosford Park* by Robert Altman; television series such as *Peaky Blinders* and *Derry Girls*; and songs by **the Beatles, David Bowie, Kate Bush & Arctic Monkeys**.

Classes will be devoted to student-led discussions of the material and the issues discussed. We will also have weekly student presentations, quizzes on British culture and writing exercises in class.

Organization

Activities will cover the four language skills:

- Speaking
- Writing

- Listening
- Reading.

In-class discussion of course content will emphasise **speaking** (including student presentations), but also **reading** (articles, interviews, poems), **writing** (both critical and creative) and **listening** (including songs and extracts from series & films).