

**ANG 1021 Contemporary British and Irish Culture**  
**Wednesdays, 08:30 11:30 (180 minutes)**

**Instructor:** Chris Dilworth  
E-mail: christopher.dilworth@umontreal.ca (Allow 24hrs for a response.)  
Office hours: (To be determined.)  
Phone: (Given out in class.)

**Location:** Z-245 Pavilion Claire-McNicoll, 2900, boul. Édouard-Montpetit

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**Description:**        **'REPRESENTATIONS OF THE WORKING CLASS 1950-2010'**

"This course aims to raise awareness, through various media, of some aspects of contemporary British civilization : geography, industry, family and social life, politics, art, film and recreation."

We shall examine representations of the British and Irish working class through plays, books, and film. The working class forms the majority of the British population and is often the subject of and the main consumer of popular culture.

This course takes a trajectory through working class culture of the 1950s into the present-day culture of the 2010s. We will begin with *Fish Tank* (2010), and then work through the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, back to the 2010s.

Award-winning plays, books, and films have been selected to make working-class culture as accessible as possible. Many of the books are available in translation and film adaptations are available with French dubbing or subtitles.

**Book:** KIRK, John. *The British Working Class in the Twentieth Century: Film, Literature, and Television*. Cardiff: University of Wales, 2009. This book has been ordered and will be available at the University bookstore.

**StudiUM:** Support materials are available only through the course's *StudiUM* site which is a work in progress; it may change until the course begins, after which you will be notified of any further changes. If you find any errors on this StudiUM course site, please contact me directly by e-mail with the details.

**Structure:** The class will be divided into groups. Most classes will begin with the presentation of a group report (see below), followed by a lively question period. Each group member will be responsible for one aspect of the report. All group members must be present to deliver their section of the report to the class.

The others in the class are responsible for reading the material listed on the course's StudiUM site for that week and for preparing questions for the group members. All class members are responsible for reading the assigned pages from the course text and participating in the discussion of that material.

We shall also watch three films in class—*Fish Tank* on Wk 1/Jan 11, *This is England* on Wk 7/Feb 22, and *Brassed Off!* on Wk 11/Mar 28. Following each film I will report on and lead a discussion of the themes addressed. These films may be used in exam questions and can be the subjects of final papers.

**Grading:** 10% Attendance/participation

30% Students will work in groups to compile a report on the racial, sexual, economic, political, and regional themes that inform the week's topic. Each group will present their report to the class, with each group member

presenting one of the themes. All group members receive the same grade.

Each report must be e-mailed to me 24 hours before we meet for distribution to the class. Groups choose their subject in the second class. All members of each group will be expected to have read/watched their play/book/film and be able to answer detailed questions on it in class.

30% Mid-term exam. Open-book, in-class essay questions on the first half of the course text (up to page 102) as it applies to the plays/books/films we have studied in the first half of the course. Students *cannot* write on the same play/book/film covered in their report.

30% Final paper. 1750-2000 words, due two weeks after the last class (April 25). For your subject you can choose only from the plays/books/films that you did *not* report on. Your topic must be approved by April 11 at the latest.

**Plagiarism** Plagiarism will not be tolerated. A definition of plagiarism can be found at <http://www.fas.umontreal.ca/etudes/plagiat/> : "as part of your work, use 'quotes' and quote your sources; Adhere strictly to the instructions on the use of materials during the exams. Plagiarism can result in an 'F' or 'failure', and even go as far as suspension or expulsion from the University."

**Courtesy:** Texting and unauthorized surfing will not be tolerated in class (but I might ask someone to do some on-line fact-checking). Students found paying undue attention to their electronic devices in class will lose participation points.

#### Course Schedule:

- Week 01**  
**Jan 11** **Film screening: *FISH TANK* (2010s)**  
This film is available, on reserve for this course at the library.
- Film screening: *Fish Tank* (2009, 123m). Andrea Arnold (Dir.)
  - Instructor's report on *Fish Tank*.
  - Question period. (Read material on StudiUM)
- Week 02**  
**JAN 18** **Report from group ONE (1950s)**
- Group ONE will present their report on *Nothing To Lose* (1946) by R.J. Minney / *Time, Gentlemen, Please* (1952, 79m), Lewis Gilbert (Dir.).
  - Question period. (Read material on StudiUM)
  - Discussion of Kirk.
- Week 03**  
**Jan 25** **Report from group TWO (1960s)**
- Group TWO will present their report on *A Taste of Honey* (1959) by Shelagh Delaney / *A Taste of Honey* (1961, 100m), T. Richardson (Dir.).
  - Question period. (Read material on StudiUM)
  - Discussion of Kirk.
- Week 04**  
**Feb 1** **Report from group THREE (1960s)**
- Group THREE will present their report on *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958) by Alan Sillitoe / *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960, 79m), Karel Reisz (Dir.)
  - Question period. (Read material on StudiUM)
  - Discussion of Kirk.
- Week 05**  
**Feb 8** **Report from group FOUR (1970s)**
- Group FOUR will present their report on *Made in Dagenham* (2009,

113m), Nigel Cole (Dir.) / *Commentary* with Director Nigel Cole / *The Making of Made in Dagenham*

- Question period.
- Discussion of Kirk.

**Week 06 Report from group FIVE (1970s)**

Feb 15

- Group FIVE will present their report on *Breakfast on Pluto* (1998) by Patrick McCabe / *Breakfast on Pluto* (2005, 128m), Neil Jordan (Dir.)
- Question period. (Read material on StudiUM)
- Discussion of Kirk.

**Week 07 Film screening: THIS IS ENGLAND (1980s)**

Feb 22

This film is available, on reserve for this course at the library.

- Film screening: *This is England* (2006, 101m). Shane Meadows (Dir.).
- Instructor's report on *This is England*
- Question period. (Read material on StudiUM)

**Feb 29 MID-TERM EXAM**

Mid-term exam (30%): Open-book, in-class essay questions on the first half of the course text (up to page 102) as it applies to the plays/books/films we have studied in the first half of the course. Students *must not* write on the same play/book/film covered in their report.

**Mar 7 READING WEEK**

(No class.)

**Week 08 Report from group SIX (1980s)**

Mar 14

- Group SIX will present their report on *Trainspotting* (1993, novel) by Irvine Welsh / *Trainspotting* (1993, play adapted by Harry Gibson, included in *4Play*) / *Trainspotting* Definitive Edition (2003, 94m), Danny Boyle (Dir.) / *Feature Commentary* / *Interviews* and *The Making Of* (Disk 2).
- Question period. (Read material on StudiUM)
- Discussion of Kirk.

**Week 09 Report from group SEVEN (1990s)**

Mar 21

- Group SEVEN will present their report on *The Commitments* (1987) by Roddy Doyle / *The Commitments* Two-Disc Collector's Edition (2004, 118m), Alan Parker (Dir.) / *Director's Commentary* / *Dublin Soul*: the working class and changing face of Dublin / *The Making of The Commitments*
- Question period. (Read material on StudiUM)
- Discussion of Kirk.

**Week 10 Film screening: BRASSED OFF! (1990s)**

Mar 28

- Film screening of *Brassed Off!* (1996, 107m), Mark Herman (Dir.)
- Instructor's report on *Brassed Off!*
- Question period. (Read material on StudiUM)

**Week 11 Report from group EIGHT (alternative 1990s)**

Apr 4

- Group EIGHT will present their report on *Never Let Me Go* (2005) by Kazuo Ishiguro / *Never Let Me Go* (2010, 103m), Mark Romanek (Dir.)
- Question period.

- Discussion of Kirk.

**Week 12 Report from group NINE (2000s)**

**Apr 11**

- Group NINE will present their report on *Closer* (1997) by Patrick Marber / *Closer* (2004, 104m), Mike Nichols (Dir.).
- Question period. (Read material on StudiUM)
- Review of Kirk.

**Week 13 CLASS OUTING**

**Apr 18**

Depending on the availability of the film in theatres, we may go to see the biopic of Margaret Thatcher *The Iron Lady* (2011) to round out the course, and discuss it afterward at a place of your choosing.