

# A Networked and Theatrical World: The Culture of Spectacle in 18<sup>th</sup> Century England

Working Course Proposal  
Upper-level Undergraduate (with an Option on Graduate) Seminar

Any gathering of lexias, whether assembled by the original author of the verbal text or by someone gathering together texts created by multiple authors, also takes the form of a network; thus document sets, whose shifting borders make them, in some senses the hypertextual equivalent of a work, are called, in some present systems, a web. (42)

*Hypertext 2.0*, George Landow

## Course Description

This course is intended as an introduction to the chaotic and multifarious world of popular culture and spectacle in eighteenth-century Britain. Because the subject matter can be perceived as diffuse, our larger goal is student-centered theorization and synthesis of the materials presented. Methodologically, we will approach this vast body of material from below, with occasional aid from eighteenth-century critical texts and contemporary theoretical interventions. I hope to design this course in part as a pedagogical experiment, encouraging the students to select the texts and contexts constituting our course. What happens when we teach popular materials in a populist manner? Is the material conducive to such an approach? What might our success—or our failure—teach us about eighteenth-century popular culture? A semester-long, collaborative web assignment will draw on contemporary network culture as a window to both our methodology and our material. In addition to this collaborative web project, course requirements will include rotating oral discussion-oriented presentations, an online response journal, and one formal essay of 10-12 pages.

## Grade Breakdown (to be finalized by class)

Attendance & Participation	10%
Discussion Presentations*	30%
Response Journal	20%
Formal Essay	20%
Collaborative Web	20%

\*rotating presentations; ideally, each student will present three times.

## Schedule (subject to change and alteration by class)

### Week 1: Network Culture/Cultural Studies

Terranova, Tiziana. "Introduction." *Network Culture: Politics for the Information Age*. Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2004.

Turner, Graeme. "Introduction." *British Cultural Studies: An Introduction*. Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990.

Storey, John. "Cultural Studies: an Introduction." *What Is Cultural Studies? A Reader*. Ed. by John Storey. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996.  
Ladow, George. "Introduction." *Hypertext 2.0*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1997.

## **Week 2: A Fair-Going and Theatrical People**

Hauden, Brad, Maribeth Sitkowski, and Sarah Skow. "[The Eighteenth Century Fair Experience.](http://www.umich.edu/~ece/student_projects/fairs/index.html)" *Eighteenth-Century England*. 2002. University of Michigan. 14 Sept. 2003. <[http://www.umich.edu/~ece/student\\_projects/fairs/index.html](http://www.umich.edu/~ece/student_projects/fairs/index.html)>  
Owen, William. *Owen's Book of Fairs*. London. Printed for W. Owen and R Goadby. 1769. (excerpts)  
Charke, Charlotte. *A Narrative of the Life of Charlotte Charke*. London: Printed for W. Reeve, 1759. (excerpts)  
Morley, Henry. *Memoirs of Bartholomew Fair*. London: Chapman and Hall, 1859. (excerpts) [HTC, TS 932.3F]  
Rosenfeld, Sybil Marion. *The Theatre of the London Fairs in the 18th Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1960. (excerpts)

## **Week 3: Rope Dancers, Puppet Shows, and Posture Masters**

*Remarkable Characters; A Collection of Portraits of Celebrated Criminals, Dwarfs, Giants, Monstrosities, Eccentric Characters, Highwaymen, Pirates, Centenarians, etc.* (excerpts) [HTC, TS 992.19 ]  
Morley, Henry. *Memoirs of Bartholomew Fair*. London: Chapman and Hall, 1859. (excerpts) [HTC, TS 932.3F]  
Caulfield, James. *Portraits, Memoirs and Characters of Remarkable Persons*. (excerpts)  
Altick, Richard. *The Shows of London*. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1978.

## **Week 4: Curiosity, Wonder, and Spectacle**

Wiles, R. M. "Crowd-Pleasing Spectacles in Eighteenth-Century England." *Journal of Popular Culture*. 1 (1967): 90-105.  
Thomas, Keith. *Religion and the Decline of Magic*. (excerpts)  
Theories of Enthusiasm and Imagination  
Curiosity Cabinets and Antiquaries

## **Week 5: "Prodigious Monsters"**

Addison, Joseph. *Spectator* No. 28, Nos. 173ff.; *Tatler* No. 108  
Steele, Sir Richard. *Spectator* No. 334  
Ralph, James. *The Touchstone* (1728) and *A Taste of the Town, a Guide to all Pub-lick Diversions Answered* (1730) (excerpts)  
Payne, Harry C. "Elite versus Popular Mentality in the Eighteenth Century." *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 8 (1979): 3-32.  
Excerpts from *The Spectator*, *The Tatler*, and *The Female Spectator* on theatricality and spectacle  
Hill, Aaron. *See and Seem Blind: or, A Critical Dissertation on the Publick Diversions*

## **Week 6: Music in the Streets**

Dugaw, Dianne. "The Popular Marketing of 'Old Ballads': The Ballad Revival and

Eighteenth-Century Antiquarianism Reconsidered." *Eighteenth-Century Studies*.  
21:1 (1987 Fall) 71-90.

A selection of popular ballads

Laroon, Marcellus. *The Criers and Hawkers of London*.

### **Week 7: A Fairgoing and Theatrical People**

Collier, *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the Stage* (?)

Gay, *The Beggar's Opera*

### **Week 8: Pantomime and Harlequinade**

*The Necromancer; or, Harlequin Executed*

Weaver, John.

Taylor, Nancy. "John Weaver and the Origins of English Pantomime: A Neoclassical Theory and Practice for Uniting Dance and Theatre." *Theatre Survey* (2001), 42:191-214.

O'Brien, John. "Harlequin Britain: Eighteenth-Century Pantomime and the Cultural Location of Entertainment(s)." *Theatre Journal* 50.4 (1998) 489-510.

### **Week 9: Popular Reading (potentially two weeks)**

Altick, Richard. "The English Common Reader: From Caxton to the Eighteenth Century." *The Book History Reader*. Ed. by David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery. London: Routledge, 2002.

Rogers, *Grub Street: Studies in a Subculture* (introduction)

Thomas D'Urfey, *Wit and Mirth: or, Pills to Purge Melancholy* (excerpts)

Tom Brown, *Letters from the Dead to the Living* (excerpts)

Dickie, "[Hilarity and Pitelessness in the Mid-Eighteenth Century: English Jestbook Humor.](#)"

[Joe Miller's Jests](#), 1739 (online, ECCO)

*The Grub Street Journal* (excerpts)

[Early Eighteenth Century Newspaper Reports: A Sourcebook Compiled by Rictor Norton](#)

### **Week 10: Drinking and Gambling**

Hippisley, John. *The Drunken Man*.

*The Female Spectator* on gambling; *Tatler* and *Spectator* excerpts

Evans, James. "'A Sceane of Uttmost Vanity': The Spectacle of Gambling in Late Stuart Culture." *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 31 (2002): 1-20.

Hogarth, "Gin Lane" and "Beer Street"

Warner, Jessica and Frank Ivis. "Gin and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century London." *Eighteenth-Century Life*. 24:2 (2000 Spring): 85-100.

Burford, E.J. *Wits, Wenchers, and Wantons: London's Low Life : Covent Garden in the Eighteenth Century*. London: R. Hale, 1986. (excerpts)

### **Week 11: Criminal Fascinations**

Criminal Biography

[The Proceedings of the Old Bailey, 1674-1834](#) (excerpts)

Excerpts, Alexander Smith's *A Complete History of the Highwaymen*

Mary Blandy, Jack Shepard, Mary Carleton, Catherine Hayes, et al. (to be selected)  
Engravings/prints relating to the foregoing  
Henry Fielding, "The Female Husband"

### **Week 12: Mercantile Scenes**

Allen, Rick. *The Moving Pageant: A Literary Sourcebook on London Street-life, 1700-1914*. New York: Routledge, 1998. (excerpts)  
The Spectacle of the Street: Hogarth  
Excerpts from *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*  
Mandeville, *Fable of the Bees* (excerpts)

### **Week 13: Looking Forward: Pleasure Gardens and the Development of the Circus**

Marlebone; Vauxhall; Astley's; Sadler's Wells

### **Week 14: Hypertext, Re-revisited; Conclusions**

#### **Required Texts:**

- Mullan, John and Christopher Reid, eds. *Eighteenth-century Popular Culture: A Selection*. New York: Oxford UP, 2000.
- Porter, Roy. *English Society in the 18th Century*. New York: Penguin, 1990.

#### **Online Resources:**

- [Hillman's Hyperlinked and Searchable Book of Days](#)  
Chambers, Robert. *The Book of Days; A Miscellany of Popular Antiquities in Connection with the Calendar, Including Anecdote, Biography, and History, Curiosities of Literature and Oddities of Human Life and Character* (1864)
- Highfill, Philip, ed. *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers, and Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660–1800*. [online, NetLibrary]
- [Caulfield, James. Portraits, Memoirs, and Characters of Remarkable Persons](#) (1794-95). [online, ECCO]

#### **Coursepack:**

- Allen, Rick. *The Moving Pageant: A Literary Sourcebook on London Street-life, 1700-1914*. New York: Routledge, 1998. (excerpts)
- Altick, Richard. "The English Common Reader: From Caxton to the Eighteenth Century." *The Book History Reader*. Ed. by David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Burford, E.J. *Wits, Wenchers, and Wantons: London's Low Life : Covent Garden in the Eighteenth Century*. London: R. Hale, 1986. (excerpts)
- Dickie, Simon. "Hilarity and Pitilessness in the Mid-Eighteenth Century: English Jestbook Humor." *Eighteenth-Century Studies*. 37:1 (2003): 1-22.
- Dugaw, Dianne. "The Popular Marketing of 'Old Ballads': The Ballad Revival and Eighteenth-Century Antiquarianism Reconsidered." *Eighteenth-Century Studies*. 21:1 (1987 Fall) 71-90.
- O'Brien, John. "Harlequin Britain: Eighteenth-Century Pantomime and the Cultural Location of Entertainment(s)." *Theatre Journal* 50.4 (1998) 489-510.

- Paulson, Ronald. *Hogarth*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991. (excerpts)
- Payne, Harry C. "Elite versus Popular Mentality in the Eighteenth Century." *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 8 (1979): 3-32.
- Picard, Liza. *Dr. Johnson's London: Coffee-houses and Climbing Boys, Medicine, Toothpaste and Gin, Poverty and Press-gangs, Freakshows and Female Education*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001. (excerpts)
- Sorensen, Janet. "Vulgar Tongues: Canting Dictionaries and the Language of the People in Eighteenth-Century Britain." *Eighteenth-Century Studies*. 37:3 (2004): 435-454.
- Rogers, Pat. *Grubstreet: Studies in a Subculture*. London: Methuen (1972)
- . *Literature and popular culture in eighteenth century England*. Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press (1985)
- Rosenfeld, Sybil Marion. *The Theatre of the London Fairs in the 18th Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1960. (excerpts)
- Wiles, R. M. "Crowd-Pleasing Spectacles in Eighteenth-Century England." *Journal of Popular Culture*. 1 (1967): 90-105.