

## COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

<b>Academic School / Department:</b>	Liberal Arts
<b>Programme:</b>	N/A
<b>FHEQ Level:</b>	4
<b>Course Title:</b>	British Comedy
<b>Course Code:</b>	THR 4215
<b>Course Leader:</b>	Canan Salih
<b>Student Engagement Hours:</b>	120 (standard 3- credit BA course)
Lectures:	25
Seminar / Tutorials:	10
Field Trips:	10
Independent / Guided Learning:	75
<b>Semester:</b>	Summer
<b>Credits:</b>	12 UK CATS credits 6 ECTS credits 3 US credits

### **Course Description:**

This course will introduce students to the components and unique traits of British Comedy. From theatre and musicals to TV, Film and Stand-Up, students will explore how British Comedy has developed over the centuries and decades to reflect the ever-shifting landscape of British society. In particular, this course will examine how Class plays a significant role in the distinctions and dynamics that define British comedy. The course will explore the elements of satire, absurdity, wit and self-deprecation, in line with the consistent puns, innuendos and intellectual jokes that are at the heart of British humour.

### **Prerequisites:**

### **Aims and Objectives:**

The aim of this course is to introduce students to the journey of British Comedy and Humour, within political and entertainment contexts. The course will begin with considering the historical development of this genre, starting with 16<sup>th</sup> century theatres of William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson and William Congreve, the English witticism of 19<sup>th</sup> century Oscar Wilde and Bernard Shaw, and the contribution of music halls and seaside resorts, including Punch and Judy shows. The role of twentieth century films and television on the development of comedy is discussed, showing, for example, how situation comedy

programmes in television have developed to reflect class distinctions and regional aspects of comedy and humour in British society. There will be an exploration of the relationship between modern notions of protest and satire, in particular scrutinizing the role of British satire and postmodern irony ('post-ironic') as tools for political resistance and activism.

### **Programme Outcomes:**

This is a standalone course and has been mapped to the BA Performance and Theatre Arts programme.

4A(i), 4B(i), 4C(i), 4D(i)

A detailed list of the programme outcomes are found in the Programme Specification.

This is located at the archive maintained by the Registry and found at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

### **Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, successful students should be able to:

- Gain an understanding of British society with particular focus on class diversity and how comedy reflects and impacts on these cultural aspects
- Learn about the historical development of British comedy through its various mediums, including, but not limited to, the stage and television
- Understand the various characteristics of British comedy that differentiates it from other cultural forms of comedy
- Understand the different components of humour, from puns, innuendos, repartees and intellectual jokes to slapstick comedy.

### **Indicative Content:**

- Shakespeare and Johnson
- Congreve
- Shaw and Wilde
- Music Hall Theatre
- Punch and Judy
- Stand-Up Comedy acts
- TV Sitcoms – Hancock's Half Hour, Only fools and horses, etc.
- Little BRITAIN, Vicar of Dibley, etc
- Film - Carry On films
- Notting Hill, Love Actually, Full Monty

**Assessment:**

This course conforms to the Richmond University Special Assessment Norms for Theatre approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/policies/>

**Teaching Methodology:**

The classes will be predominantly seminar based with some field trips to see live stand-up and theatre shows and (if possible) films. The classes will involve presentations, screenings, and some guest acts (stand-up comedians and actors).

**Indicative Text(s):**

Alexander, Richard. "BRITISH COMEDY AND HUMOUR: SOCIAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND." *AAA: Arbeiten Aus Anglistik Und Amerikanistik*, vol. 9, no. 1, 1984, pp. 63–83. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/43023313](http://www.jstor.org/stable/43023313).

See syllabus for complete reading list

**Change Log for this CSD:**

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or AB)	Change Actioned by Registry Services