

Preliminary Web Course Description

*Please note: This is a preliminary web course description only. The department reserves the right to change without notice any information in this description. The final, binding course outline will be distributed in the first class of the semester.

School of English and Theatre Studies

Course Code: THST*3650	Course Title: Theatre Historical Studies Seminar: Fairy tales and British Pantomime	Date of Offering: WINTER 2017
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Course Instructor: J. Schacker	Course Format: seminar
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Brief Course Synopsis:

A “canon” of fairy-tales pervades our contemporary popular culture, currently associated most strongly with film, animation, and television, as well as children’s literature. In this course we will explore the important place fairy-tale material has had in *theatre* history — focusing on the British tradition of the Christmas pantomime, from its roots in Italian commedia dell’arte to its present status as the financial backbone of England’s theatrical economy.

We will focus in particular on pantomime of the Victorian period, when many of the modern conventions for the form — cross-dressed roles, slapstick comedy, topical humour, metatheatricality, as well as the dominant use of fairy-tale plots and figures — were codified. Critical readings will survey the very recent work that theatre scholars have produced on pantomime and related forms like marionette theatre, the *ballet d’action*, and commedia dell’arte. Students will have an opportunity to work with a rich archive of Victorian pantomime scripts, photographs, and other ephemera. Research projects in the course will make extensive use of 19th-century newspapers, periodicals, and memoirs, with instruction on how to navigate these useful resources.

Methods of Evaluation and Weight:

[tentative]

weekly position papers: 40%

scrapbook project (collection of period materials focused on a single pantomime production): 30%

essay: 15%

participation: 15%

Texts and/or Resources Required (e.g. Internet access, specific textbook title, lab kit, etc.)

Internet access and access to a printer are essential to this course.

Critical readings by Michael Booth, David Buch, David Mayer, Jim Davis, Leslie Ferris, Monica Flegel, Peter Holland, Kate Newey, Jennifer Schacker, Millie Taylor will be on electronic reserve or through Courselink; pantomime scripts are on microfilm; students will need to make extensive use of U of G's library databases for research.

Other information that you wish share about the course (optional):

As space allows, this seminar course can welcome students with specializations in English; the course can serve as an 18th/19th-century requirement. Please see an English advisor.