

Veranstalter:	PD Dr. Jens Elze
Modul:	Early Modern City Comedy (ENG-6, ENG-6a, ENG-12, AA7, AA10, LAA9, LAA12, AA-MA01, AA-MA02, AA-MA04, BAC1, BAC2, BAC4, IAA21, IAA23, IAA24, IAA25)
Art der Veranstaltung:	Seminar II
Veranstaltungsnummer:	53-548
Zeit:	2st. Mi 12–14
Raum:	Ü35 – 01016
Beginn:	05.04.2023

Course description:

City Comedy has been one of the most successful genres on the Elizabethan and Jacobean stages. It was perhaps the first literary form in which citizens of a city were seeing their daily lives and institutions performed on the stages of the theatre. While these representations were comedic and, thus, upheld the traditional division in which everyday lower-class life could only be represented in comedic rather than in tragic form, many of these plays nonetheless evinced a respectful treatment of the institutions and people of the city that may be considered radical for the development of modern realist literature. In this class, we will read a whole range of city comedies by Thomas Dekker, Thomas Middleton, Ben Jonson and others to work out the highly discrepant modes in which they approached and represented early modern city life. We will talk about the contexts of the early modern London theatre and the important political institutions of the city without which these plays cannot be understood. We will also look at these plays through the lens of theories of comedy and study important theatrical and dramatic precursors of the form, from Athenian and Roman Comedy. Gender will be an important focal point in our discussions, because of the centrality of women in the early modern city and in these plays and because anxieties and optimism about the city were often articulated along imaginaries of gender and images of femininity. We will analyze how early modern plays offered by no means a monolithic image of London, but sketched very different ideological and formal responses to a multitudinous, commercial, and constantly transforming city and negotiated different versions of early modern citizenship.

Reading:

Thomas Dekker, *The Shoemaker's Holiday*

Ben Jonson, *Everyman in His Humour*

Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton, *The Roaring Girl*

All three texts are collected in the affordable collection *The Roaring and Other City Comedies* published by Oxford University Press. I highly recommend obtaining that edition. More texts will be announced in our first session.

Course requirements: Regular and active participation in the seminar (no more than two missed classes), excellent knowledge of the texts assigned, oral presentation or preparation of discussion questions, term paper.

Sprechstunden im Semester:	s. Sprechstundenliste
Sprechstunden in der vorlesungsfreien Zeit:	s. Sprechstundenliste