

**COURTAULD INSTITUTE OF ART  
(University of London)**

**BA History of Art**

**SECTION ONE: General Information**

**Title of Course:**           **Graphic Satire in Eighteenth-Century Britain**

**Course Tutor(s):**       **Dr Kate Grandjouan**

**Period Section:**       **Early Modern**

**Course Code:** [to be entered by Student & Academic Services]

**Type of Course:**       **BA3 Special Option**

**Level:**                   **6 (Honours)**

**Course Description:** This course investigates one hundred years of graphic satire -- a vigorous, reactive and humorous art form that flourished in London during the eighteenth century. 'Graphic satire' describes an image that could be designed by an artist but was sold by a publisher and which circulated as an urban commodity. As this type of visual culture provided vehicles for morality and for political commentary, graphic satires were exploited by governments and employed as propaganda. By the late eighteenth century, a graphic satire usually meant a caricature, i.e. a comic image that traded in crass stereotypes of class, ethnicity and gender. Graphic satires could be complex, malicious, instructive and entertaining. The vogue for this type of politically and socially informed imagery was peculiar to Britain and the result of this activity is a vast and heterogenous corpus of visual material.

This course will trace the pictorial history of the eighteenth-century graphic satire. It will link satire's visual subjects to contemporary discourses about the state of the British nation and to its status as a commercial, imperial and military power as well as to broader patterns of artistic production and consumption, such as the development of a lively public sphere where a free press, mass media and vibrant public spaces for the arts were producing significant transformations in the ways in which culture was being used and understood. 'British' satirical imagery frequently sprouted from cosmopolitan roots and foreigners were often at the forefront of satirical production. This is why alongside major artists like William Hogarth, Thomas Rowlandson and James Gillray, we shall be paying close attention to the many foreign artists, dealers and designers whose names are less familiar today. The artistic legacies for this type of art are enormous and with comprehensive collections of graphic satire within easy reach of the Courtauld, participants will have plenty of opportunities for studying them at first hand. Visits will include a trip to the Reform Club, where eighteenth-century caricatures are still displayed on the walls, and to the 'British Cartoon Archive' at the University of Kent, to think about the sorts of continuities that can be established between the earlier forms and functions of graphic satire as it developed in England and the operation of the satirical image in Britain today.