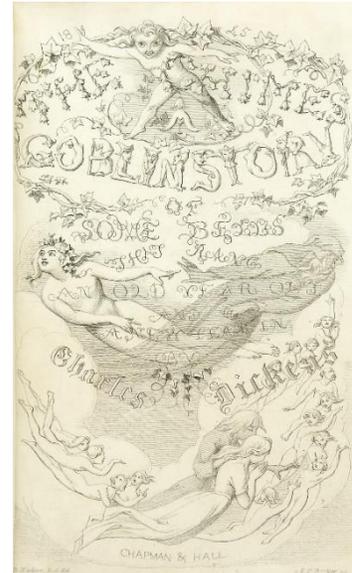


Dickens' Christmas Books: *A Christmas Carol* and *The Chimes*

2 weekly sessions plus 1 related program: November 29 and December 6 | 6:00–7:45 p.m.
Drinking with Dickens Bibliococktails featuring a Dickensian reading of “The Goblins Who Stole a Sexton”, Friday December 14 | 6:00–8:00 p.m.
Led by Edward G. Pettit, Sunstein Manager of Public Programs at the Rosenbach

A Christmas Carol has become the most enduring of all Charles Dickens' works, enormously popular from its first publication in 1843. So successful was it that Dickens continued to publish new works for the Christmas season for the next several years. Although *A Christmas Carol* is the one we all still know and love, the other Christmas books were also very popular in Dickens' own lifetime.

In this short course, we will examine the *Carol* in all its glory. Why was it so popular (and why still so popular)? Why did Dickens write the story? And did it really change the way we celebrate Christmas? Then we'll look at the second book especially written for the Christmas season, *The Chimes: A Goblin Story of Some Bells that Rang an Old Year Out and a New Year In* (1844). While not explicitly about the holiday of Christmas, it is set during the turn of the new year and like all his Christmas books, Dickens infuses it with his “Carol philosophy.” *The Chimes* is also Dickens' most political Christmas book. Dickens sees literature as an art form that can help transform society for the better, so all of his works have some didactic element to them. And if Dickens can improve the lives of his readers, while also telling an entertaining story, so much the better. We'll examine both *Carol* and *Chimes* in their Victorian context and also ponder if their messages are still relevant today.



Students of this course are also welcome to attend the December Bibliococktails: Drinking with Dickens, in which we will have punch made from Dickens' own recipe and then listen to a performance of the first *Christmas Carol* prototype tale, “The Story of the Goblins Who Stole a Sexton,” a tale told within the novel, *The Pickwick Papers*. Bibliococktails is for ages 21 and up only.

Our reading schedule:

Thursday, November 29: *A Christmas Carol*

Thursday, December 6: *The Chimes*

Friday, December 14: Bibliococktails Drinking with Dickens

About the instructor

Edward G. Pettit is the Sunstein Manager of Public Programs at the Rosenbach. In 2012, Pettit served as the Charles Dickens Ambassador for the Free Library of Philadelphia's yearlong Bicentenary celebration of the author's birth and wrote the Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion's 2013 mystery play, *Twisted*, in which he played Dickens. He has lectured widely on Dickens and given public readings of Dickens' Christmas stories. For the Rosenbach, Pettit has taught many courses, including Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, and *Bleak House*.