ENGLISH 410A: Satire and Sense

The Restoration and Early Eighteenth Century

and

ENGLISH 410: The Augustan Age

(first half)

SYLLABUS for Fall, 1981

A. Rationale

This course provides a study of representative major works and
trends in English literature between 1660 and 1720, the first half of
the long and richly varied period of English literature known as the
Augustan Age. As the calendar description indicates, the topics range
over "the Restoration comedy of manners, heroic and high tragedy,
poetry of the court wits and other amused commentators on society,
and the major writings of Dryden, Swift, Addison, Defoe, and the early
Pope." Pope's later writings are examined in the companion course,
English 410B.

B. Requirements of the Course

All students are required to read all the literary works assigned,
to read all critical works appropriate to their essay topics and to
an understanding of the period in general, to participate in classroom
discussion as appropriate, to submit a mid-term take-home test by Oct.
19, to submit a major essay (of about 4000 words) by Nov. 16, and to
submit a final take-home examination by Dec. 14. The mid-term test
will have the weight of 1 unit, the final examination 2 units, and the
major essay 3 units.

C. Texts

1. Eighteenth-Century English Literature, ed. Tillotson (Harcourt)

2. Six Restoration Plays, ed. Wilson (Riverside B 38) 0-395-05736-3

   Edition) 0-395-05735-5
C. Texts (continued)

(A text prescribed for English 410B, Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Comedy, ed. McMillan, contains valuable information about the Restoration stage.)

D. Order of Topics

1. Reflection of Restoration society (Sept. 16-18)
   - Defoe, A Journal of the Plague Year (selections in Tillotson)
   - Pepys, selections from his Diary (Tillotson, pp. 41-45, 57-61)
   - Halifax, selections from The Lady's New Year's Gift (to be supplied)

2. Comedy (in Six Restoration Plays) (Sept. 21-28)
   - Wycherley, The Country Wife
   - Congreve, The Way of the World
   - Farquhar, The Beaux' Stratagem

3. Dryden's poetry (Sept. 30-Oct. 21)
   - background lecture on the development of the couplet and
     Dryden's early development, with reference to Rochester's
     Satyr Against Mankind
   - MacFlecknoe
   - Absalom and Achitophel and selections from A Discourse Concerning Satire (the latter to be supplied)
   - Religio Laici

4. Tragedy (in Six Restoration Plays) (Oct. 23-30)
   - background lecture
   - Dryden, All for Love
   - Otway, Venice Preserved

5. New Voices (Nov. 2-9) -- see next page
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   - Addison and Steele, The Tatler and The Spectator (in Tillotson)
   - vers de société: Prior, Swift, Gay (the last to be supplied)

6. Swift (Nov. 11-20)
   - Gulliver's Travels (ed. Greenberg)
   - A Modest Proposal (in Tillotson)

7. Pope (Nov. 23-Dec. 8)
   - background lecture on pastoral
   - Winter
   - An Essay on Criticism
   - The Rape of the Lock

E. Essay

For the major essay, which is to run about 4000 words and which is due Nov. 16, select one of the topics listed below. When preparing material for it, combine selections from scholarly commentary with your own thoughtful response to the literary texts. When you have arrived at an appropriate focus for your essay and have completed a preliminary organization for it, consult with your instructor. The finished essay is to present a cogent argument reflecting your command of the material involved and expressed in a manner that is at least clear and to the point and, preferably, gracefully turned as well. For the mechanics of form, follow Correct Form in Essay Writing.

Topics:
1. An analysis of Restoration prose style
2. The relation of Restoration comedy to Restoration society
3. A comparison of Restoration comedy with either Elizabethan or Jacobean comedy
4. Attitudes toward women in Restoration literature
5. A comparison of the mock-heroic as used by Dryden and Pope
6. The problem of character assassination in satire, as illustrated in Dryden's satires
7. The nature and problems of verse essays, as illustrated in Religio Laici and An Essay on Criticism
8. The rationale, nature, and quality of heroic tragedy
9. A comparison of All for Love and Antony and Cleopatra
Essay Topics (continued)

10. A comparison of Venice Preserved with either an Elizabethan or Jacobean tragedy

11. The place of Addison in English literary criticism

12. Methods of social reform in The Spectator

13. The nature, problems, and quality of light verse

14. The use of satiric masks or personae in Gulliver's Travels and A Modest Proposal

15. The norms from which Swift satirizes

16. The reflection of English society in Gulliver's Travels

17. The reflection of Irish society in A Modest Proposal

18. The place of Pope in English literary criticism

19. Methods of social reform in The Rape of the Lock

20. The norms from which Pope satirizes

21. Any topic similar to the above and approved by your instructor