The Shock of the New:

Restoration and Early Eighteenth-Century Literature

In this course we will read a selection of exciting and significant works of Restoration and early eighteenth-century literature and explore how they contribute to the creation of new literary forms and to the emergence of modern notions of personal identity.

Some of these developments are well known. For example, this is the period that has long been thought to have seen the invention of a form of prose fiction known as the novel. It certainly is a period of tremendous experimentation in "formal realism" and narrative technique. Other developments have been rediscovered over the last decade or so. For example, this is the first period in which women writers in English begin to produce a "literature of their own"—a development connected in part with the introduction of female actors on the stage. Thus after 1660 English literature is "novel" in a double sense: on the one hand, new notions of the individual are elaborated by the literature of the day; on the other, members of subaltern groups start to exercise—and create—new forms of literary expression. And the period is of contemporary interest in other ways as well. It is a period of sexual experimentation and exploration (at least in literature) unparalleled before the 1960s. And the rise of print capitalism and of modern science both inspired new forms of fiction and "plain style" prose and a series of hilarious satires on the new learning. Finally, we also see geographical modernity reflected in the literary response to colonialism.

Rather than approach the period by way of a chronological survey, I have grouped the material we will be reading under four headings—anti-heroes and anti-epics; libertinage; the new woman; and satire and the new science. In each case we will sample both venerable classics and upstart contenders to the canon, and we will examine the common questions and devices that structure a textual field. One writer in particular—Aphra Behn—will be singled out for attention across three of our four units.

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Office: Hagey Hall 257, X2416
Office hours: 2:30-3:30 Tuesday and Thursday, or by appointment

Required Texts:
Aphra Behn, Oroonoko, The Rover, and Other Works (Penguin)
Katherine M. Rogers and William McCarthy, eds., The Meridian
Anthology of Early Women Writers (Meridian)
Daniel Defoe, A Journal of the Plague Year (Oxford)
Gamini Salgado, ed., Three Restoration Comedies (Penguin)
Paddy Lyons and Fidelis Morgan, eds., Female Playwrights of
the Restoration (Everyman)
Thomas Shadwell, The Virtuoso (U. of Nebraska)
Paul Salzman, ed., An Anthology of Seventeenth-Century
Fiction (Oxford)
Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels (Oxford)
Kinko's Course Reader

Recommended Texts:
Donald Greene, The Age of Exuberance: Backgrounds to
Eighteenth-Century English Literature (McGraw-Hill)
Roy Porter, English Society in the Eighteenth Century,
revised ed. (Penguin)
Joseph Gibaldi and Walter S. Achtert, MLA Handbook for
Writers of Research Papers, 3rd ed. (MLA)

Assignments: Attendance and active participation in class (10%);
class presentation or mid-term (your choice = 20%); 7-page paper
(30%); and a final exam (40%).

For those that choose to write it, the mid-term will be held
November 3. The paper is due in class on December 1. Papers
must be typed and double-spaced; if using a word-processor, laser
print and do not use right justification. A page is 250 words.
Papers must follow the format for citation and quotation laid out
in the MLA Handbook. Papers late without prior permission may be
penalized. Uncompleted assignments will be graded F-.

NOTE: Please keep a photocopy of any paper you submit, and never
hand a paper in by sliding it under (or sticking it to) my office
door.
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SYLLABUS

September 13 & 15: Introduction: New Forms, Novel Identities:
Dryden, "Mac Flecknoe" (N=Norton Anthology)

I. Satire and the New Science

September 20: Science and the Style of Politics:
Sprat, History of the Royal Society (excerpt in K=Kinko's Packet)
Butler, Hudibras, from Part 1, Canto 1 (K)

September 20 cont. & 22: Gender and Experimental Authority:
Cavendish, The Blazing World (in Salzman)

September 27 & 29; October 4: Against Nature:
Shadwell, The Virtuoso
Swift, Gulliver's Travels (Part 3)

II. Libertinage

October 6: The Future of Illusion:
Rochester, selected poems (K)
Behn, "The Golden Age" (in Rogers & McCarthy);
"The Disappointment," "To the Fair Clarinda," "On Desire" (in Todd); and selected poems (K)

October 11 & 13: The Constraints of Desire:
Wyckerley, The Country Wife (in Salgado)

October 13 cont. & 18: Sexual Modernism:
Etherege, The Man of Mode (in Salgado)

October 20 & 25: Women Who Rove with the Wolves:
Behn, The Rover (in Todd)
III. The New Woman and Her Detractors

October 25 cont. & 27: Seventeenth-Century "Material Girls":
Behn, The Feigned Courtesans (in Lyons & Morgan)

November 1 & 3: Liberating Women:
Behn, "An Epistle to the Reader, Prefixed to The
Dutch Lover" (in Rogers and McCarthy);
"Epilogue to Sir Patient Fancy" (in Todd);
and "The Unfortunate Happy Lady" (in Salzman)
Astell, A Serious Proposal to the Ladies
(selections in Rogers & McCarthy)
Manley, "The Wife's Resentment" (in Rogers and
McCarthy)

November 8 & 10: Problems of Publicity
Finch, "The Introduction," "Ardelia's Answer to
Ephelia," "The Spleen," "A Nocturnal Reverie"
(in Rogers & McCarthy)
Centlivre, The Basset Table (in Lyons & Morgan)

November 15: Backlash:
Swift, selected poems (K)
Pope, "Of the Characters of Women" (N)

IV. Anti-Hero and Anti-Epic:

November 17: Noble, African, and Anti-Christian:
Behn, Oroonoko (in Todd)

November 22 & 24: Narrative Accounts:
Defoe, A Journal of the Plague Year

November 29; December 1: Satire and Anti-Humanism:
Swift, Gulliver's Travels (Part 4)

NOTE: As should be clear from the syllabus, this is not a
course for the faint of heart—at least not when it comes to a
love of reading. Do not take this course if a heavy reading load
is inconvenient or un congenial. English courses have high
reading demands in general, and Restoration and eighteenth-
century literature is a particularly extensive field. While some
of the survey courses offered in the English Department cover a
period of forty or fifty years of British literature over two
terms, English 410A and 410B cover one hundred and forty years.
Unfortunately, it is not in my power to change this fact. If the
challenge of this course is not for you, by all means consider
taking another one.