ENGLISH 410A

SATIRE AND SENSE:
THE RESTORATION & EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Course Syllabus

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Mainly, I want you to enjoy reading and/or rereading the great classic satires of the Restoration, an age much like our recent past in temperament and outlook. In addition we will view some of the finest comedy since Shakespeare and lyric poetry, including works by women outside the traditional canon.

You should also take from this course a better understanding of the central problems of the age which we face today in renewed disguises: the relationship between faith (religion) and knowledge (science), the nature, balance and proper exercise of power (politics), public morality (artistic freedom vs censorship), and the place of women in society and literature (feminism).

You will get a feel for the exciting political, economic and cultural events and trends of an age that includes the restoration of English monarchy, the institution of constitutional monarchy by peaceful revolution, the union of England and Scotland, the Great Fire and Plague of London, the founding of the Royal Society, and such giants as the Sun King, the Duke of Marlborough, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Sir Peter Lely, Godfrey Kneller, Grinling Gibbons, Sir Christopher Wren, John Vanbrugh, Henry Purcell, Georg Friedrich Handel, John Dryden, Jonathan Swift, and Alexander Pope.

Samuel Delany opened a famous essay: "As opposed to style, there is no such thing as content." We will look at dying, rising and renewing of literary forms and how they affect the message of the writers: the eclipse of the lyric, epic, and high tragedy, the rise of the mock epic, the comedy of manners and the tragicomedy, and the honing of satire into a deadly instrument.

The course traditionally excludes John Milton, John Bunyan and other writers who reached the peak of their achievements during the Restoration but had their gaze fixed on an earlier age and other problems. You will find them in English 350.
THE TEXTS

To achieve our aims and objectives, I have chosen the following texts:

Aphra Behn,
   The Rover (Lincoln: Nebraska, 1967).
Robert N. Gosselink, comp.
   A Restoration Miscellany (Kinko's, 1995).
Robert A. Greenberg and William B. Piper, eds.,
Donald Greene,
John Harold Wilson, ed.

THE READINGS

Read all the assigned words before we take them up in class. You cannot hope to benefit fully from the lectures (which, unlike book reviews, assume a reading of the book) or discussions unless you have the expected listening and participating readiness. Naturally, I will not take up each work read, but if you have questions concerning those, feel free to ask them in class or come see me privately.

As you read, take notes, make marginalia, ask yourself questions, answer them as you read on; don't just sit there running your eyes across the page; get actively involved with the reading experience. "Escape" reading or reading strictly for pleasure is great fun, but we don't learn as much as when we pay more active attention. Use study notes or questions when available. When you finish a work or a section, sum up. Write a brief response; critique; ask questions about elements that puzzled you. Keep a reading journal. Bring it to class and draw on it. READ ALL POETRY ALoud! preferably TO someone else.

Think about what you have read and be prepared at any time to comment usefully or to ask perceptive questions (or both) about your reading. Have opinions; express them; defend them with citation and interpretation from the works, your critical reading, and your experience of life.
Read all introductions to all books, authors, works.

By Read
September
21 Katherine Philips, Lucy Hutchinson, Edmund Waller, Sir John Suckling, Richard Lovelace, Andrew Marvell,
14 John Wilmot, the Earl of Rochester
26 Elizabeth Countess of Rochester*, Anne Wharton*, Ephelia*, Aphra Behn
28 George Etheredge, The Man of Mode
October
3 William Wycherley, The Country Wife (don't read it; see it)
5 Aphra Behn, The Rover
10 Thomas Otway, Venice Preserv'd*
12-7 Anne Killigrew*, John Dryden
19 William Congreve, The Way of the World
24 George Farquhar, The Beaux' Stratagem
26 MIDTERM EXAM
31 Mary Astell*, Sarah Frye Field Egerton*
November
2 Matthew Prior, Daniel Defoe
7-14 Alexander Pope
16 Anne Finch*, Mary Wortley Montagu*
21 Jonathan Swift, A Tale of a Tub IX, Bickerstaff Papers, selected poetry
23-30 Gulliver's Travels, Letters to Pope
December
5 A Modest Proposal
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

I. Time

This course has a heavy reading load, always has, always will. The 410A/B courses cover 140 years of intense writing activity, including the first modern literature, the first major influx of women writers, and the beginning of the novel. Other full year courses cover as few as 32 years. Is that fair? No! Have I, after 29 years of trying, been able to change it? No! Do I shed copious tears every time I think of those unfortunate authors fallen by the wayside to accommodate changes in the canon (e.g. Butler, Vanbrugh, Philips [John & Ambrose], Addison & Steele, Mandeville, Shaftesbury, Pomfret)? Yes!

Therefore, plan to commit 144 hours of your time to this course by 5 December, plus whatever time you need to study for the final exam. That's 12 hours per week for the next 12 weeks, or 3 hours outside of class for each class hour.

II. Class Format and Participation

Usually I will lecture, hoping, however, to avoid the stereotyped lecture, in which the notes of the professor become the notes of the student without affecting the mind of either. At almost any time in any lecture, your question, insight or correction is welcome. Occasionally I will want to finish a statement, idea, or demonstration before being interrupted and I will say so. But I will welcome your comment when I finish, so jot down a reminder for when I call for your point. This will not be a lecture course entirely, because you need to learn how to read and interpret more effectively and how to defend your interpretations to your peers. From hearing me lecture, you can learn how I and, occasionally, other scholars interpret the works, and you can pick up cues on critical methodology, but you don't learn to do anything just by watching others; you must try it yourself. You cannot depend on an undefended idea any more than an untried faith. You don't really know how brilliant (or silly) your interpretation is unless you let others break it or break themselves upon it.

Therefore, we will have as much class discussion as your actions (not your professions) allow. This format entails at least two responsibilities for you:

1. Attend class regularly. I don't take attendance, because I assume that if you're not in class you have something more important to do. Conversely, you are responsible for anything you miss, either academic or administrative. However, missing often or without due cause sends a clear signal to your fellow students and to me that you don't believe we can offer you enough insights to compensate you for your time.

2. Demonstrate your careful reading and critical skill by contributing usefully to the literary analysis.

You may wish to make a more formal gift of your talents to the class. You can offer to present a short (15 minute) seminar (from notes or manuscript) to share knowledge and expertise you have (or are willing to obtain) with your classmates. You will choose from the items with an asterisk in the reading list. Reserve early because we will not have time for everyone to present. First come, first served. You may cancel without penalty until eight days before (to allow time to offer the seminar to others).
III. Written Work

To feel confident in your newly acquired knowledge and abilities, you will want to test it in some formal way. I will offer the opportunity to write an essay (which tests how thoroughly and yet efficiently you can demonstrate an hypothesis) and exams (which test how well, under time constraints, you can synthesize what you have learned).

A. Essay

You may write one essay of no more than 2500 words on a subject mutually agreeable to you, the writer, and me, the reader. I will suggest topics as we go along. If you wish to write an essay, you will submit a proposal of no more than 250 words specifying your precise topic, your intended approach, your resource materials, and your expected conclusions, no later than three weeks before the due date (21 November).

Your essay is due 11 December. I will not accept late essays (except for documented medical emergencies). However, I will be happy to receive early essays.

B. Exams

Midterm exam -- based on the material through Farquhar on 24 October.

Final exam -- based on the whole course (but emphasizing the latter half), offered during the final examination period.

4. Marking Scheme

In assigning your mark for the course, I need to know whether you have read the material, thought about the ideas presented, understood the writing techniques involved, and can communicate your ability to exercise your critical skills on the course material. We all have different strengths; I want you to be able to demonstrate your strengths while improving your weaknesses without undue penalty. Therefore, the marking scheme will have flexibility. I will compile your mark of 100% from your performance on the following components:

Written Work
1. Essay 25%
2. Midterm 25%
3. Final Exam 50%

Oral Component
1. Seminar 25%

If you attempt more than 100%, I will discard the lowest 25%.

5. The Professor

I am available outside of class and enjoy talking with students, professionally and socially, so come by. I provide tea and sympathy. You may consult me on general matters of curriculum or career planning, since I have been departmental undergraduate and co-op officer. Feel free to discuss anything that interests or concerns you.

During office hours I guarantee to be there for you. I am often in my office at other times, ready to talk with you, but I also work elsewhere (in the library or at home), so please do not come by expecting to find me outside office hours. That does not mean I am not happy to see you at any mutually convenient hour. Knock on the door, stop after class or call me for an appointment. If I'm not in when you phone, leave a mail message. I will return your call as soon as convenient.

Office HH 255
Phone: 2419

Office Hours:
2:30-4TR & by appointment