I Course Description

It is in the eighteenth century, writes Neil Postman, “that we may find ideas that offer a humane direction to the future, ideas that we can carry with confidence and dignity across the bridge to the twenty-first century” (Building a Bridge to the Eighteenth Century, p. 17). The ideas of which Postman speaks are large ones: progress, technology, language, information, children, education, narratives, and democracy.

It is the aim of this course to examine how some major ideas and themes -- concepts of human nature; aspects of liberty; gender politics; and the relationship between social norms and literary forms -- found expression in the poetry and prose of the Restoration and eighteenth century, and to discuss their relationship to our own society and lives in the twenty-first century.

Put another way, the objective of the course is first to learn more about the major writers of the eighteenth century, and then to relate their ideas, themes, and literary craft to our own time, place, and aspirations.

II Resources

Required texts


Swift, Jonathan, Gulliver’s Travels, Penguin Classics

Other resources

A good dictionary, a writing handbook, and a glossary of literary terms are useful tools in English studies. M. H. Abram’s A Glossary of Literary Terms, and The Little, Brown Compact Handbook are recommended by the Department of English.

III Class Schedule

September 13

Introduction & Organization

15

Views of Human Nature

Hobbes, “Natural Condition” (6-8)
Locke, “State of Nature” (215-16)
20  Pope, *Essay on Man*, Bks I & II

22  Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*

27  Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*

29  Gray, *Elegy* (750-53)

4   Blake, *Songs* (911-15)

**October 4**

**Aspects of Liberty**

6   Locke, “Of Slavery” and “Of Property” (216-17)
Defoe, “An Academy for Women” (303-04)

11  Thanksgiving

13  Milton, *Areopagitica* (24)

18  Equiano, *Interesting Narrative . . . of Olaudah Equiano* (871-80)
More, *The Slave Trade* (882-5)

Mandeville, *A Modest Defense of Public Stews* (496-500)

Paine, *The Rights of Man* (848-50)
Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication . . . Man* (923-24)

**November 1**

**Sexual Politics**

27  Defoe, “An Academy for Women” (303-04)

1  Pope, *Rape of the Lock* (532-49)

3   Swift, “The Lady’s Dressing Room” (430)
Montagu, “The Reasons . . . Dressing Room” (596)

8   Haywood, *Love in a Maze* (602-16)
Social Norms & Literary Forms

10  Dryden, *Mac Flecknoe* (175-80)
15  Manley, “Secret Memoirs” (348-58)
17  Trials at the Old Bailey (617-23) and
    Johnson, *The life of . . . Savage* (639-43)
22  Johnson, *Preface to Dictionary* (654-60)
24  Johnson, *Preface to Plays of Shakespeare* (710-16)
29  Boswell, *Life of Johnson* (851-62)

December 1  Burney, *Journals & Letters* (892-901)
6  Review

IV Requirements & Evaluation

**Essay interview**

Essay topics will be chosen in consultation with Dr. Hartling or me. A formal interview will be scheduled for this purpose. Please come to the interview having given some thought to the issues and works that interest you most.

**Essay**

In clear prose, compose a 10 - 12 page paper (2500 - 3000 words) on the topic agreed in the interview. The essay (due November 24) may be a research paper or something less structured. The object is not just to produce an essay for evaluation, but to develop and refine powers of critical analysis and literary expression.

The essay should be formatted according to MLA style conventions, which are outlined in the handbook or available from the MLA style guide. Even if you choose a more creative essay topic, your paper should still formulate an argument and include a critical analysis of the relevant literary works.

**Class participation: required and voluntary**

To ensure the course provides opportunity for the practice of organizational and presentation skills, each student will be expected to participate in a twenty-minute class presentation of a piece of group research. Students will work in teams of two or three to prepare for the class. Each team will meet twice with Dr. Hartling or myself: first, to settle on the approach and the division of responsibility, and, second, the week before the class, to discuss the plan of presentation.
In addition to making the presentation, each team member will be expected to submit a one-page description of the nature and significance of the ideas or issues addressed, plus a bibliography of sources consulted. This one-page report, together with an assessment of the presentation, will be used as the basis for evaluation (to a maximum of 20%) for required participation.

A further maximum of 10% will be allocated for voluntary contributions to class discussion.

**Final Exam**

The final exam will be based upon all of the material studied in the course. It will be in three parts: identify and interpret selected passages; write a brief essay on one of several topics; explain certain critical and historical terms that have been used in the course.

**Evaluation**

Evaluation will be based on class presentation/participation (30); essay (30); and final exam (40).

V. **Policies**

**Plagiarism and cheating**

Cheating, of which plagiarism is a form, will result in automatic failure of the assignment and could lead to other penalties, including failure in the course or consequences even more severe. Plagiarism is the presentation (whether deliberate or not) of another person’s work as your own. This includes obvious cheating, such as copying or downloading parts of or whole published essays, copying another student’s paper, and purchasing or downloading from the Internet an essay that someone else has written. Please refer to University Policy #71 in the calendar (available on-line at http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infoucal/UW/policy_71.html).

**Late essays and missed tests and exams**

Essay due dates should be observed. The exam will be written on the scheduled day. Only for medical or other emergencies will exceptions be made. In such a case, please contact me immediately to make alternative arrangements.