ENGLISH 4108
SATIRE AND SENSE:
THE RESTORATION & EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Course Syllabus

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

I want you to enjoy reading and/or rereading the great poets of the age whose major works have influenced the way we think and feel to this day. You should also see how television drama, the musical, the novel, and our taste for primitive culture began. You should also take from this course a better understanding of the history of political events, thought, culture, art, music, and science of the first modern century.

The course excludes William Blake, who falls within our period, whom I traded to Helen Ellis for Jane Austen a quarter century ago.

THE TEXTS

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


Ricardo Quintana, *Eighteenth Century Plays*.


Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*.

Jane Austen, *Persuasion*.

Donald Greene, *The Age of Exuberance*.
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 in class every work we 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. 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.

Reading Schedule:

All introductions to all books, authors, works, as they arise.
17 Feb (at the latest; as long before that as possible)

The Age of Exuberance
6 Jan  Pope: Windsor Forest, Eloisa to Abelard
11 Jan  Pope: Couplet on Newton, Essay on Man
18 Jan  Pope: Of the Characters of Women, Of the Use of Riches
20 Jan  Pope: Epistle to Arbuthnot, [To Augustus], Epigram, Universal Prayer
25 Jan  Pope: The Dunciad (both versions)
27 Jan  Steele: The Conscious Lover
  Lillo: The London Merchant
1 Feb  Gay: The Beggar's Opera
8 Feb  Fielding: Joseph Andrews
15 Feb  Johnson: Vanity of Human Wishes (Rasselas)
17 Feb  Johnson: Preface to Shakespeare, Life of Pope
1 Mar  Thomson: Winter
  Young: Conjectures on Original Composition
8 Mar  Collins: Odes to Fear, Poetical Character, 1746, Evening
  Goldsmith: The Deserted Village
10 Mar  Sterne: Tristram Shandy
17 Mar  Sheridan: The School for Scandal
22 Mar  Goldsmith: An Essay on the Theatre, She Stoops to Conquer
24 Mar  Burns: The Holy Fair, The Cotter's Saturday Night, To a Mouse
  To a Mountain Daisy, To a Louse, Tam o' Shanter,
  Holy Willie's Prayer, Songs
29 Mar  Austen: Persuasion
OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Written Work:

Essay – 40% You may write a research essay of no more than 2500 words on a subject mutually agreeable to you, the writer, and me, the reader. I may suggest topics as we go along; you should be actively considering possible topics as you read and discuss the works. You will submit a proposal (in duplicate) 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 (3 March). I will return one copy within a week with comments and approval (if the proposal seems reasonable and includes enough detail).

In considering your topic for approval, I will use the following criteria:
1. Will researching or analyzing it teach you something new? Or will it overlap my lecture or class discussion?
2. Is it worth doing? Is it large enough, or small enough, for the time and space allotted? Is it significant, meaningful, useful? Will it adequately repay your effort?
3. Is it fresh and interesting? Have I already approved nine other essays on the same topic? Can I bear reading yet another essay on that topic? When I read your essay, will the topic itself suggest intentional or accidental plagiarism?

Submit your essay in duplicate. I will mark one copy and return it to you; the other will be available in HH 232 to your classmates as an additional study resource (23 March –30 April). To assist them in finding the information they want and you in checking your essay for focus, include with your essay a 50-100 word abstract stating your conclusions.

Your essay is due 22 March. I will not accept late essays (except for documented medical emergencies). You will suffer no penalty for submitting your essay early.

Begin your essay research no later than study week. Because I believe that the point of all education is learning, I will do everything I can to help you make your research and writing a learning experience. Please consult with me freely with interesting ideas, difficult problems, writing strategies, etc., before turning in the essay. I will not accept work which does not exhibit standards of sophistication and correctness appropriate to upperclass English students.

Final Exam – 60% An three hour in class exam containing some short answer and some essay questions will be available sometime during April.
Time:

By remaining in this course, you agree to commit 130 hours of your time to this course by 5 April; you may spend as little time as you wish after that, except for the three hour final exam. That's an average of 10 hours per week for the next 13 weeks, or 2.5 hours outside of class for each class hour, a universal North American standard for a century. If you have difficulty agreeing to that sort of commitment, please see me after class or in my office this week.

Class Format and Participation:

Often 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, addition, 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 untired faith. You don't really know how brilliant or untenable your interpretation is unless you let others break it or break themselves upon it.

Therefore, we will have as much class discussion as the amount of material to be covered, the class size, and the keenness of your interest will 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 are 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. We develop new meanings and readings for old texts all the time. The new ideas most often occur to those coming to the work fresh. Unfortunately, those who have encountered the text many times (like I have) "know" what it means already and have less access to fresh insights. Help me out here.