Eighteenth-Century Fiction

In this course we will read a selection of exciting and significant novels from the eighteenth century by such authors as Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, and Austen. In this period the novel as we now know it was invented. All subsequent fictions--Victorian novels by Dickens and Eliot, texts by modernist writers such as Joyce and Woolf, and post-modernist and post-colonial works by Beckett and Rushdie--are indebted in one way or another to the ground-breaking experimentalism and outstanding achievement of eighteenth-century fiction writers.

In this course we will examine the “rise of the novel” (in Ian Watt’s influential phrase) as it occurred in relation to the more ancient genre of romance. This dialectic between romance and novelistic realism, one with implications for forms of discourse, gender, and ideas of reality, reflects both developments and experiments internal to fiction itself as a semi-autonomous art practice and such social trends as the rise of scientific thought, individualism, and bourgeois domesticity.

We are today a predominantly prose-centred culture. Poetry and drama are rarely read outside of university English classes, except by small coteries of readers. Novels, on the other hand, remain best sellers (along with biographies and cookbooks). To understand eighteenth-century fiction, then, is in some measure to understand the roots modern literary consciousness as well as the historical and technical roots of the modern novel.

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Logistics:

Contact Information:
Office: Hagey Hall 257; Phone: 888-4567, ext. 2416
Office hours: 5:30-6:30 Tuesday (in HH 257) and noon-2:00 Wednesday and 2:30-3:30 Thursday (in HH 269), or by appointment

Required Texts:
Eliza Haywood, Love in Excess, 2nd ed. (Broadview)
Daniel Defoe, Moll Flanders, new ed. (Oxford)
Samuel Richardson, Pamela (Penguin)
Henry Fielding, Joseph Andrews, 2nd ed. (Oxford)
Laurence Sterne, Tristram Shandy, new ed. (Oxford)
Ann Radcliffe, A Sicilian Romance, réissue (Oxford)
Jane Austen, Northanger Abbey, new ed. (Oxford)
Note: These novels are all long works which in many cases have no chapter or other internal divisions; it is therefore essential for you to use the required texts if you wish to follow page references to the works in class; make sure that you get the exact editions listed above, as pagination varies widely between most editions (even from the same publisher). For term papers, students are required to refer to the page numbers in the class editions.

Recommended Texts:
- Ros Ballaster, *Seductive Forms* (Clarendon)

Assignments:

Attendance and active preparation for and participation in class discussions and exercises (10%); in-class midterm essay or 15-minute class presentation on a topic related to the development of eighteenth-century fiction (your choice = 20%); 7-page paper (30%); and a final examination (40%).

Students ARE REQUIRED to prepare course readings ahead of the relevant classes. Class presentations, for those who choose to deliver one, will be scheduled for dates starting in the fifth week of classes; a sign-up sheet for topics and dates will be circulated starting in the second week of classes.

For those who choose to write it, the midterm will be held on February 27. The paper MUST be handed in to the instructor at the start of class on March 27. Due to my responsibilities as Undergraduate Officer and other factors such as class sizes, I am not able to mark papers handed in at other times. For this reason, papers handed in before, during, or outside of the March 27th class, in the absence of a serious personal medical reason, will be graded F-. Papers must be typed, double-spaced, and fastened with a staple (DO NOT use plastic report folders or other fasteners or covers); if using a word-processor, laser print your paper and do not use right justification. A page is 250 words. Papers must follow the format for paper presentation, quotations, and references laid out in the *MLA Handbook*, 5th ed. Uncompleted assignments will be graded F-.

Finally, students are expected to follow at all times both university and department regulations on plagiarism (in particular, all work apart from group assignments must be your own, and the words and ideas of others must appear within your work inside quotation marks and with complete references in foot- or end-notes).

NOTE: Please keep a photocopy of any paper you submit, and NEVER hand a paper or any other assignment in by sliding it under (or sticking it to) my office door.
Eighteenth-Century Fiction

SYLLABUS

January 7 & 9: Introduction: Romance, Realism, and the “Rise” of the Novel

I. Gender and Genre: Romance, Realism, and Class Sexualities

January 14 & 16: Eliza Haywood, Love in Excess

January 21, 23, 28, & 30: Daniel Defoe, Moll Flanders

II. Modes of Inscription: Representation and Social Status

February 4 & 6: Samuel Richardson, Pamela


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February 25: Henry Fielding, Joseph Andrews (cont.)

February 27: Midterm

III. Representing Representation: Realism and Experimental Fiction

March 4, 6, 11, 13: Laurence Sterne, Tristram Shandy

IV. Romance and Realism Revisited: The Gothic

March 18 & 20: Ann Radcliffe, A Sicilian Romance

March 25 & 27 and April 1: Jane Austen, Northanger Abbey

April 3: Conclusion and Review