Eighteenth-Century Fiction

SYLLABUS

January 8 & 10: Introduction: Romance, Realism, and the “Rise” of the Novel

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

January 15, 17 & 22: Eliza Haywood, *Love in Excess*

January 24, 29 & 31 and February 5: Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders*

II. Modes of Inscription: Representation and Social Status

February 7 & 12: Samuel Richardson, *Pamela*

February 14: Midterm

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IV. Realism and Romance Revisited: The Gothic

March 11, 13 & 18: Ann Radcliffe, *A Sicilian Romance*

March 20 & 25: Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*

March 27: no class

April 1: Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (cont.)

April 3: Conclusion and Review
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" (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 of modern literary consciousness as well as the historical and technical roots of the modern novel.

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Logistics:

Office: Hagey Hall 257, ext. 32416
Office hours: 4:00-5:00 pm Tuesday, or by appointment

Required Texts:
- Eliza Haywood, *Love in Excess*, 2nd ed. (Broadview)

*Note:* These novels are all long works which in many cases have no chapter or other internal divisions; you **must have** the required class editions for class participation assignments, since you need to be able to follow page references to the works; moreover, make sure that you get the exact editions listed above, as pagination varies between most editions (even from the same publisher). Furthermore, for term papers, students are **required** to refer to the page numbers in the class editions.

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 must 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 14. The paper MUST be handed in to the instructor at the start of class on March 20. Due to my administrative and research responsibilities 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 20th class, in the absence of a serious personal medical reason, will be graded 0. Papers must be typed, double-spaced, and fastened with a staple (DO NOT use plastic report folders or other fasteners or covers); please also 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. Uncompleted assignments will be graded 0.

Finally, students are expected to follow at all times both university and departmental 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.
Sample Presentation Topics

The presentation is a 15-minute (maximum) talk on an approved topic that is relevant to the development of eighteenth-century fiction ("approved" means okayed by me at least two weeks in advance of your presentation date). At the time of your presentation, please submit a one-page point-form outline of the main sections of your report with the date and the names and student numbers of the presenters at the top. Presentations will be given by up to 10 groups of two students. In most cases I will have important suggestions for both resource material and logistical support; in any case, do consult with me before beginning your research. Students are encouraged to propose their own topic for approval. The assignment is worth 20% of your total grade, and you must sign up on the sheet I will circulate in class for either this assignment or for the midterm essay.

(auto)biography
sentimentalism
scandalous narratives
oriental tales
travel narratives
rogue biographies
literacy
heroic romance
prostitution
servants
religion
marriage
letter-writing
encyclopedias
exploration narratives
the picaresque
amatory fiction
secret histories
the mock heroic
scientific discourse
the middling ranks
sexual ideologies

professional writers
women writers
conduct literature
Grub street
the Gothic
newspapers
the book trade
free indirect discourse
chronotrope
censorship
monarchy
the domestic sphere
individualism
women’s education