

Department of English
Winter 2015
English 4401: Studies in Eighteenth-Century Literature

Topic: Being Human in Eighteenth-Century Literature and Culture
Monday, 11:35am-2:25pm
Location: see Carleton Central

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Office Hours: Mondays 10-11am; or by appointment

Does literature “make us human”? Since the eighteenth century, such a sentiment has grounded justifications of literature’s exceptional status, and its distinction from other kinds of writing. In this course we will explore how eighteenth century readers and writers understood their relationship to books and to reading, and how the act of reading a book made readers *feel* something, or made them “feel human.” We will also consider how eighteenth century writers explored the question of the “human” or “humanity” precisely by paying close attention to the non-human: to animals and inanimate objects. From gothic fiction, to the harrowing spectacle of London after the Great Plague of 1665, to “it-narratives” in which bank notes figure as central characters in a society transformed by commercial modernity, to horses that speak, to dogs that narrate their heroic adventures, to “monsters” that learn to read, we will examine the fluid boundaries between literary animals, literary humans, and eighteenth-century readers. We will also consider the cultures of feeling and affect, sentiment and sympathy, by and through which they are formed and unformed.

Required Texts: (tentative and subject to change)

Aphra Behn. *Oroonoko* (Ares)
Jonathan Swift. *Gulliver’s Travels*
Daniel Defoe. *Journal of the Plague Year* (Penguin)
Francis Coventry. *The History of Pompey the Little*
Horace Walpole. *The Castle of Otranto*
Henry Mackenzie. *The Man of Feeling*
Thomas Bridges. *The Adventures of a Banknote* (Ares)
Olaudah Equiano. *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*
Anon. *The Woman of Colour*
Mary Shelley. *Frankenstein*

All of the editions are from Broadview Press, except where noted. Books are available for purchase at Octopus Books, which is located at 116 Third Ave (in the Glebe). Ph: 613-233-2589.

Website: www.octopusbooks.ca

Course Requirements:

Three short seminar presentations (5-10 min each) – 30 %

Research Essay Proposal and Annotated Bibliography (due March 9, 2015) – 15%

Research Essay (due April 6, 2015) – 40%

Attendance and Class Participation (including weekly email responses) – 15%

NOTE: The course assignments are mandatory. You must complete all of them in order to receive a grade in the course.

Three Short Seminar Presentations (30%)

You will choose three weeks in which you will write and present your response. One of your three responses must be based on a primary text, one must be based on an explication of some aspect of the historical context related to the readings for the week (I will provide some topics and suggestions each week), and one must be based on one of the critical articles. I am flexible about the mode of presentation – you can either read it or present it more informally, but your response should be no longer than 3 pages, double-spaced. Either way, your presentation should take no more than 10 minutes. You will submit your written presentation (3 double-spaced pages maximum) at the end of the class in which you present. **Note: Your first presentation must be completed by February 2; your second by March 2, and your final presentation by March 30, 2015. You can sign up for presentations in the first week of the course by emailing me your three presentation dates.**

Things to keep in mind when writing your response:

Responses on a primary text: Introduce us to the text: what kind of text is it, what context does it come out of? What does the text do? How does it do it? What perspective does it bring to our set of concerns in the course? One way to approach this assignment is to focus our attention on one or two key passages from the text and perform a “close reading.”

Responses on historical context: Do some research about your historically-oriented topic and explore the background, and/or relevant cultural or social or political contexts that pertain to your topic. You can consult secondary sources from the course bibliography, and are always welcome to consult with me about locating sources.

Responses on a critical article/secondary source: What is the argument of the article? What are the main ideas that the author is trying to convey? How would you describe the argument – is it based on historical evidence? The elucidation of a theoretical concept? Are you able to recognize the conceptual or methodological stakes of the article and if so what are they?

Research Essay Proposal and Annotated Bibliography (15%)

Due: March 9, 2015

You are to write a 1-2 page (double-spaced) proposal for your research essay which establishes the topic of your paper, sketches out the argument or thesis you will pursue, and generally lays out the parameters of what you will discuss. In addition to your proposal you will include an annotated bibliography of 3-6 secondary sources (critical articles, book chapters, etc).

Research Essay (40%)

Due: April 6, 2015

Length: 9-10 pages

Your essay must deal with one or two text(s) from the reading list, and develop the critical and theoretical frameworks we used in class. Because this is a research essay, you must use and cite at least **two secondary sources** (these can be either course readings or chosen from the course bibliography).

Essay format: Your essay should conform to the MLA style, as laid out in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. The *MLA Handbook* (in various editions) is available in the reference section and in the stacks of the library. Or check out the website at www.mla.org.

Among the key MLA essay guidelines are the following:

- *typed, double spaced, 11 or 12 point font

- *one inch margins on all sides

- *number your pages (excluding page one) with a header that includes your last name (e.g., Murray 3).

- *on the first page include in the top left corner: your name, the course number, my name, and the date. Centred just below the identifying information, include a thoughtful title for your essay that relates to your specific thesis.

- *document your sources according to the *MLA* style, which employs a Works Cited, as opposed to footnotes or endnotes.

Note: Remember to keep a copy of your assignment when you submit any piece of work.

Attendance and Class Participation (including weekly email responses (15%))

Your class participation mark will be assigned at the conclusion of the course, and will be based in part on your preparation for, and willingness to participate in, class discussions. In order to be considered duly prepared for class, you will need to have completed the required reading, have the relevant texts with you in class, and be ready to discuss them. Therefore, if you attend class regularly, come to class having done the assigned reading, and engage in class discussion in a thoughtful and respectful manner, you can reasonably expect to do well in this aspect of the course.

I take attendance very seriously in a course that only meets once a week. If you cannot make it to

class due to illness or something very serious, please let me know in advance if possible. More than two missed classes without a documented reason will cost you your entire participation grade (15%).

Weekly email responses: A one paragraph response is to be sent to me via email by 9pm Sunday - the night before our Monday class each week. A brief but thoughtful response to the readings for the week – either one that raises questions, or draws our attention to a striking passage – will help to jumpstart class discussion. You must still submit a response even if you are absent. Late responses will not be accepted. You do not need to submit a response for a class in which you are giving a presentation.

Note on Plagiarism:

The University defines plagiarism as “using and passing off as one’s own idea or work the ideas or work of others without expressly giving credit to those others.” The most common forms of plagiarism include unacknowledged copying from secondary sources, purchasing papers on-line or from essay services, or having another person write a paper for you. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence with severe penalties, and constitutes an Instructional Offence at Carleton. Please consult the statement on Instructional Offences in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Late Assignments Policy:

The penalty for late assignments will be 2% per day, 10% per week. In the case of illness or some other emergency, medical documentation will be required. If you cannot meet a deadline because of illness, an extension may be granted, but you must discuss the possibility of an extension with me at least 3 days in advance of the deadline. Late essays will be graded without comments.

Email Etiquette:

The most efficient way to contact me is in person. Email communication should be used for brief messages only. I will respond to email messages as promptly as possible, but please anticipate that I may take a couple of days to respond. If you have questions about your work or any other aspect of the course, I encourage you to come and see me in my office.

Classroom Etiquette and Technology:

- I expect you to arrive on time for class, stay until the end, and be focused on discussion throughout the class. Bathroom breaks and other comings-and-goings during class time are strongly discouraged: organize yourself to tend to these needs before or after class.
- Mobile phones must be turned off before class begins, and texting during class is prohibited.
- You are welcome to use laptops, tablets, or comparable electronic devices in my classroom, provided that they are used SOLELY for note-taking. If your technology use proves distracting, whether to yourself, to students seated nearby, or to me, I will ask you to turn off your device and use pen and paper for your note-taking. If the problem persists, I will ask you to leave. You may also lose the privilege of using technology in subsequent classes.

Academic Accommodations:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but are not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations.

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation>.

Other Services at Carleton:

Learning Support Services (LSS): LSS offers students a variety of services, including academic-skills workshops and information sessions, study rooms, a Tutor Referral Service, and Peer Helpers. To learn more, visit LSS on the 4th floor of the MacOdrum Library, or visit online at www.carleton.ca/lss.

Career Development and Co-operative Education (CDCE): CDCE is an on-campus centre for career development, employment preparation, and experiential learning opportunities for Carleton students. The Career and Resource Centre is located at 401 Tory (613-520-6611) and the Co-op and Employer Centre is located at 1400 Carleton Technology and Training Centre (CTTC) (613-520-4331).

Schedule

- January 5** Introduction to course; review syllabus
- January 12** **Making and Unmaking the Human**
Primary: Behn, *Oroonoko* (Ares)
Secondary: Mallipeddi, “Spectacle, Spectatorship, and Sympathy in Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko*” (Ares)
- January 19** **Humans and Other Animals**
Primary: Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels* Books One and Two
Secondary: Ingram, “Introduction” to Broadview edition of *Gulliver’s Travels*
- January 26** **Primary:** *Gulliver’s Travels* Books Three and Four
Secondary: Kelly, “Gulliver as Pet and Pet Keeper: Talking Animals in Book 4” (Ares)
- February 2** **Pandemic!**
Primary: Defoe, *A Journal of the Plague Year*
Secondary: Healy, “Defoe’s *Journal* and the English Plague Writing Tradition” (Ares)
- February 9** **Animals are People too – at least in books**
Primary: Coventry, *History of Pompey the Little*
Secondary: Hudson, “It-Narratives: Fictional Point of View and Constructing the Middle Class” (Ares)
- February 16-20** **Reading Break – no class**
- February 23** **Human Families are Scary**
Primary: Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*
Secondary: Frank, “Horace Walpole’s Family Romances” (Ares)

March 2

The Crying Game

Primary: Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling*

Secondary: Harkin, “Mackenzie’s *Man of Feeling*: Embalming Sensibility” (Ares)

March 9

Money Talks

Primary: Bridges, *The Adventures of a Banknote*

Secondary: Bellamy, “It-Narrators and Circulation: Defining a Subgenre” (Ares)

March 16

Talking Books

Primary: *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*

Secondary: Festa, “Subject and Object in Equiano’s *Life*” (Ares)

March 23

Skin Deep

Primary: Anon, *The Woman of Colour*

Secondary: Ellis, “Suffering Things: Lapdogs, Slaves, and Counter-Sensibility” (Ares)

March 30

Monsters, Inc

Primary: Shelley, *Frankenstein*

Secondary: Bentley, “Family, Humanity, Polity: Theorizing the Basis and Boundaries of Political Community in *Frankenstein*” (Ares)

April 6

Research essay due; wrap up course

