

Carleton University
Fall 2016
Department of English

ENGL 4401A: Studies in Eighteenth-Century Literature
Prerequisite: fourth-year standing in Honours English

Topic: Being Human in Eighteenth-Century Literature and Culture

Thursdays, 8:35am-11:25am
Location: *Please confirm location on Carleton Central*

Instructor: Professor Julie Murray
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10am-12pm

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:

Two short seminar presentations (10 min each) – 30 %

Research Essay Proposal and Annotated Bibliography (due November 10, 2016) – 15%

Research Essay (due December 8, 2016) – 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.

Two Short Seminar Presentations (30%)

You will choose TWO weeks in which you will write and present your response. One of your two responses must be based on a primary text, and the other can be based on EITHER one of the critical articles OR some aspect of the historical context of the primary text in question. 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. **NOTE: You will submit your written presentation (3 double-spaced pages maximum) at the end of the class in which you present. Your first presentation must be completed by October 20, 2016. You can sign up for presentations in the first week of the course by emailing me your preferences for your two 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. Your discussion should make some effort to situate the primary text in the context of some aspect of the historical context: ie, Equiano’s *Interesting Narrative* in the context of slavery, or *Frankenstein* in the context of early-19thC science, or *Adventures of a Banknote* in the context of 18th-C concepts of money.

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: November 10, 2016

You are to write a 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 cover. In addition to your proposal, you will include an annotated bibliography of 5-6 secondary sources (critical articles, book chapters, etc). Each entry (approx. 250 words each) should clearly summarize the argument of the article or chapter and suggest how it might be useful for you in thinking about your own argument.

Research Essay (40%)

Due: December 8, 2016

Length: 10-12 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 **three 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, 12 point font, Times New Roman
- *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 Wednesday - the night before our Thursday 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.

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.
- This is a small seminar, which means that active, ongoing participation in discussion is crucial. In a small classroom, laptops can sometimes pose a distraction. I will permit the use of laptops for notetaking, but if I feel that they are taking away from the ability to have a more robust discussion, I may ask you to take notes with pen and paper only, unless of course you have special permission to use a laptop.

Plagiarism

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;

- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course. For more information please go to: <http://www2.carleton.ca/studentaffairs/academic-integrity>

Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: 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. For more details see the Student Guide

<http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/academic/students/>

Religious obligation: 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. For more details see the Student Guide above.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your ***Letter of Accommodation*** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). **Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.** After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website (www.carleton.ca/pmc) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*).

Other Services at Carleton:

Student Academic and Career Development Services (SACDS): SACDS includes departments such as the Academic Advising Centre, Careers Services, Co-operative Education, and the Centre for Student Academic Support. For more information on the services offered by these departments, please visit <http://carleton.ca/sacds/>.

Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): CSAS 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 the Centre on the 4th floor of the MacOdrum Library, or visit online at <http://carleton.ca/csas/>.

Schedule

- September 8** Introduction to course; review syllabus
- September 15** **Making and Unmaking the Human**
Primary: Behn, *Oroonoko* (Ares)
Secondary: Mallipeddi, “Spectacle, Spectatorship, and Sympathy in Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko*” (Ares)
Secondary: “Interrogating *Oroonoko*: Torture in a New World and a New Fiction of Power” (Ares)
- September 22** **Humans and Other Animals**
Primary: Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels* Books One and Two
Secondary: Spratt: “Gulliver’s Economized Body: Colonial Projects and the *Lusus Naturae* in the Travels”
- September 29** **Primary:** *Gulliver’s Travels* Books Three and Four
Secondary: Kelly, “Gulliver as Pet and Pet Keeper: Talking Animals in Book 4” (Ares)
- October 6** **Outbreak!**
Primary: Defoe, *A Journal of the Plague Year*
Secondary: Nixon, “Keep Bleeding: Hemorrhagic Sores, Trade, and the Necessity of Leaky Boundaries in Defoe’s *Journal*” (Ares)
Secondary: Gilman, “The Subject of the Plague” (Ares)
- October 13** **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)
- October 20** **Human Families are Scary**
Primary: Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*
Secondary: Frank, “Horace Walpole’s Family Romances” (Ares)
- October 24-28** **Fall Reading Break – no class**
- November 3** **The Crying Game**
Primary: Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling*
Secondary: Harkin, “Mackenzie’s *Man of Feeling*: Embalming Sensibility” (Ares)

November 10

Money Talks

Primary: Bridges, *The Adventures of a Banknote*

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

Research Essay Proposal and Annotated Bibliography Due

November 17

Talking Books

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

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

November 24

Skin Deep

Primary: Anon, *The Woman of Colour*

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

December 1

Monsters, Inc.

Primary: Shelley, *Frankenstein*

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

December 8

Primary: *Frankenstein*

Secondary: McLane, “Literate Species: Populations, ‘Humanities’ and *Frankenstein*” (Ares)

Research Essay due