

Carleton University

Winter 2017

Department of English

ENGL 5402 : Studies in Eighteenth Century Literature

The Nature and Uses of 18th Century Book Subscription Lists

Class times: Thursdays, 11:30 – 2:30

Location: 1816 DT

Instructor: Dr. J.H.C. Reid

Office Hours: Thursdays, 10:15-11:15

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Course description

This course aims to provide students with the context and nature of subscription lists and give students the opportunity for original research in this field. Initially students will be given a theoretical background to subscription lists and lessons on how the 18th century book trade worked: how was paper made, how was type set, how were books printed and bound, what was the role of bookseller, of publishing congers, etc. The hope is that they will then have an understanding of the trade sufficient to deal with book subscriptions. Then each shall pick a subscription list to work on. This kind of work could not have been done at Carleton in the past because the library's holdings in antiquarian books was inadequate. Now, however, we can access almost all the books published in the 18th century by subscription (some 3,000). Students may choose any list. For example, if they are interested in female poets they might chose Mary Leapor whose work was published posthumously by subscription. In the seminar, they will report on what they have learned and what has evaded them. As each student reports we will discuss how each may progress. There are so many things which we can learn from subscription lists and very little has been done in this field in the past. Some of the topics which may be examined might include the number of female subscribers, the number of people from the mercantile class, the number of members of the aristocracy, or from academia, or the clergy, or other sub groups. How did this subscription list fit into the publishing industry in the eighteenth century?

By the end of the course, the hope is that each student will have done sufficient research (and learned how to do it) to produce a paper worthy of presentation at a conference or as an article in a journal.

Students may also choose to examine the materiality of their chosen book to ascertain how that materiality affects the nature of how a one would read the content of the book. They might consider the following kinds of questions about content and form:

How does the title page present and categorize the book? Is it identified as a novel, or play or poem? If not, how is it described, and why might it be described that way? Does the title page seem to be aimed at a particular audience?

Does the book have a dedication, or a preface, or an introduction? How does this prefatory material frame the book? What might this framing suggest about the author's or the publisher's intentions for the marketing of the book?

Does the book have a table of contents? If so, how is it organized? How are the chapters/sections/acts identified, and why? Does this suggest anything about how authors or booksellers expected readers to read the text and use the book?

Does the book include any advertising information about the titles and/or prices of other books that the publisher sells? If so, what does this suggest about the publisher and their positioning in the market?

What is the size of the book, and how many volumes is it? What does the size of the book suggest about the publisher's costs or about the potential audience?

What kind of paper (if known or can be determined) was used for the book? What size and style of print was used? Do these material details indicate quality, time, and expense? What do they suggest about the publisher's expenses and the intended market for the book?

Are there any illustrations? If so, how many? Where in the book are they placed? Are they signed? What is the purpose or function of the illustrations? What do they suggest about the publisher's expenses and the intended market for the book?

How many editions of the book were there in the eighteenth century? Does it appear to have been popular?

Is this text considered an important one by scholars, particularly with reference to histories of that particular genre? Is there much or little criticism on this text? Does its canonical or non-canonical status appear to correlate with the material form of this particular copy?

Text:

Hugh Reid. *The Nature and Uses of Eighteenth Century Book Subscription Lists*.

Sources:

Janine Barchas's book *Graphic Design, Print Culture, and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* provides a model of ways to integrate material and literary scholarship.

Roger Chartier, *Forms and Meanings: Texts, Performances, and Audiences from Dodec to Computer*.

Carter, John. *ABC for Book Collectors*. 8th ed., revised by Nicolas Barker. New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll, 2004.

Gaskell, Phillip. *A New Introduction to Bibliography*. New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll, 1995.

Pearson, David. *Books as History: The Importance of Books beyond Their Texts*. London; The British Library, New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2008.

Pearson, David. *English Bookbinding Styles 1450-1800*. London: The British Library; New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2005.

—. *Provenance Research in Book History: A Handbook*. London: The British Library; New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 1998

Final Grade

With the exception of participation (including a preliminary presentation of work) in class, the final grade will be composed of an evaluation of each individual student's analysis of a subscription list.

Participation

Since many of the course requirements are initiated, refined, or completed in class, full attendance and participation are expected. Class attendance is mandatory, and attendance will be taken. One unexcused absence may be permitted., but I should be informed beforehand. Participation in class discussions is also a factor in your attendance mark. Excused absences must be medically documented. Absences for work reasons will not be excused. The participation factor in your grade will be one grade point.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism means passing off someone else's words or ideas as your own or submitting the same work in two different academic contexts (self-plagiarism). The consequences of plagiarism are severe and are issued by the Dean and the University Senate. In order to avoid plagiarism, you must correctly attribute the sources of the ideas you pick up from books, the internet, and other people. See the statement on Instructional Offences in the Undergraduate Calendar. In addition I should like to quote a letter from C.S. Lewis to Dr. Alastair Fowler (dated 10 December 1959). Lewis writes: "I only once detected a pupil offering me some one else (Elton) as his own work. I told him I was not a detective nor even a schoolmaster, nor a nurse, and that I absolutely refused to take any precaution against such a puerile trick; that I'd as soon think it my business to see that he washed behind his ears or wiped his bottom...He went down [left the university] of his own accord the next week and I never saw him again. I think you ought to make a general announcement of that sort. You must not waste your time constantly reading me and Dowden and Churton Collins as a sort of police measure. It is bad for them to think this is 'up to you'. Flay them alive if you happen to detect them; but don't let them feel that you are a safeguard against the effects of their own idleness. What staggers me is how any man can prefer the galley-slave labour of transcription to the freeman's work of attempting an essay on his own...."

For Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course are encouraged to contact a coordinator at the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities to complete the necessary *letters of accommodation*. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet and discuss your needs with me at least two weeks prior to the first in-class test or cutv midterm exam. This is necessary in order to ensure sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.

For Religious Observance:

Students requesting academic accommodation on the basis of religious observance should make a formal, written request to their instructors for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student.

Students or instructors who have questions or want to confirm accommodation eligibility of a religious event or practice may refer to the Equity Services website for a list of holy days and Carleton's Academic Accommodation policies, or may contact an Equity Services Advisor in the Equity Services Department for assistance.

For Pregnancy:

Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a *letter of accommodation*. The student must then make an appointment to discuss her needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.