

Carleton University
Fall 2017
Department of English

ENGL 5402F: Studies in Eighteenth-Century Literature
Topic: Transatlantic Fictions

Tuesday, 8:35 a.m. – 11:25 a.m.
Location: 1816 Dunton Tower

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PLEASE NOTE: The course evaluation in this description is subject to change depending on class enrollment. The final and official course outline will be posted on CULearn by September 5.

DESCRIPTION:

For English readers during the first three-quarters of the eighteenth-century, the United States of America was no such thing, but one of several exotic colonies of a burgeoning British Empire. For the last quarter, it was an upstart, independent country. The British public, most of whom never left England, learned about America through books and periodicals, many of which were written by people who likewise never crossed the Atlantic. Nevertheless, the range and diversity of texts that dealt with the American colonies is surprisingly wide. Some, such as Defoe's *Colonel Jack* and Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*, advocate for political action in England. *The Female American*, Edward Kimber's *Life and Adventures of Mr. Anderson*, and Charlotte Lennox's *Euphemia* consider relations between the English and Native Americans. Susanna Rowson's *Charlotte Temple* and Samuel Jackson Pratt's *Emma Corbett* transplant the English novel of sensibility onto American soil, and, in the Revolutionary Decade, Robert Bage and George Walker use America in their respective satirical novels to heap scorn on their respective political enemies in England.

This course will focus on British literature that is set in both England and America and will consider historical matters of slavery, indigenous peoples, emigration, piracy, shipwrecks, kidnapping, indentured servitude, and revolution. We will examine the ways that writers portray a realistic, if often politically biased, America, as opposed to a purely instrumental representation that has little-to-nothing to do with America and everything to do with contemporary England. Insofar as the eighteenth-century novel formed a crucial aspect of the project to establish the hegemony of the emergent middling classes, we will consider how transatlantic fictions worked to promote this aim through condemnation of a decadent aristocracy and the triumph of virtuous upward mobility. We will also examine specific ways that these texts conformed to readers' demands that their reading matter not only interest and entertain them but also instruct them in improving ways.

Required texts:

Bage, Robert. *Hermesprong* (Broadview)
Defoe, Daniel. *Colonel Jack* (Broadview)
Equiano, Olaudah. *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (Broadview)
Kimber, Edward. *The History of the Life and Adventures of Mr. Anderson* (Broadview)
Lennox, Charlotte. *Euphemia* (Broadview)
Pratt, Samuel Jackson. *Emma Corbett* (Broadview)
Rowson, Susanna. *Charlotte Temple* (Oxford)
Walker, George. *The Vagabond* (Broadview)
Winkfield, Unca Eliza. *The Female American* (Broadview)

These texts will be available at Octopus Books, 116 Third Avenue. The Broadview editions will be shrink-wrapped in sets of four and offered at a discounted price.

Grade distribution (tentative and subject to adjustment):

Presentation on a short critical or historical text (20 minutes)	20%
Lesson on a predetermined topic relevant to the reading material (10 minutes)	10%
Roundtable discussion #1	5%
Roundtable discussion #2	5%
Written work (choice of nine two-page insight reports or a formal essay of 18-20 pages)	45%
Attendance and participation	15%