

English 330
English Literature, 1640-1789
Spring 2007
T - Th, 11:00-12:20
Hoover 202

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Renaissance, Revolution, Romanticism: British Literature, 1640-1789

Compared to some courses, the period covered in this course is not a long one: just under 150 years. Yet the period is a fascinating one because it leads directly to our own civilization (or the one just ending)--from the Renaissance to the "modern world." The later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have been called many things: the Age of Reason, the Enlightenment, the "Age of Exuberance" (by my late great former teacher Donald Greene), and, perhaps most aptly of all, the Age of Revolution.

Our period literally began with one revolution (the English Puritan Revolution) and ended with another (the French Revolution). But the period was revolutionary in every way imaginable:

1. Politically--during this age of Locke, Rousseau, and the American founding fathers--the Divine Right of Kings gave way to the radical idea (so obvious, at least in hindsight, to Americans!) of the "social compact."
2. Socially, the middle class (i.e. most of *us*) came into being as an active social force--giving rise, with their new mobility, to reform movements such as temperance and the abolition of slavery.
3. Economically, an agrarian society gave way to unprecedented urbanization and to the rise of capitalism, with all its new opportunities and dangers.
4. Educationally, opportunity both expanded and changed--giving rise to a "reading public" that for the first time included people of all classes, *and women as well as men*.
5. Religiously, the relative unity and stability of the middle ages continued to fragment, giving rise first to a period of unprecedented religious conflict--then to a relatively secular society, in which "the pursuit of happiness" came to mean what most of *us* mean by the phrase: not the search for ultimate reality (God), but *personal* happiness on *this* earth, in our lifetimes.
6. Philosophically, the emphasis on *authority* that had been the hallmark of learning over more than a millennium gave way to a new *empiricism*--a new and urgent interest in discovering the foundations of knowledge itself, not so much in "reason" as in "experience."
7. And *in literature*--under the stress of these revolutionary changes--writers used classical forms (like epic, ode, epistle, and satire) to express revolutionary new subjects and ideas. Women gained an unprecedented power as both readers and writers (a power not to be matched until the twentieth century). And the age gave rise, as well, to whole new genres--most

importantly the newspaper, the magazine, the traveler's tale, and the *novel* (the name of which means, simply, *new!*).

In order to trace these revolutionary changes, we will begin with a look at the tremendous political crisis of the English Civil War (1642-1649) and the intellectual and spiritual crises it both reflected and produced. We will read writers such as John Bunyan and Margaret Fell Fox, as they try to recover ground for religious certainty by privileging the private experience of the Spirit; others like Milton, Locke, Hobbes, and Sprat, as they attempt to find empirical grounds for religious, political, and scientific knowledge--as well as a position from which they can attain personal fulfillment and happiness. We will end this portion of the course with the work of poet-dramatist-satirist-critic John Dryden (1631-1700), who poignantly embodies both the old and the new, and whose career reflects the upheaval and intellectual uncertainty of the time.

Next we will move on to the early- to mid- eighteenth century--where we will encounter an unprecedented range of female voices, while tracing the rise of two new (and at first related) forms: journalism and the novel. We will see how in this brand new fictional form Daniel Defoe represented the new, empirical strain, while Henry Fielding represented the traditional "reasonable" one; and how writers like Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift--meditating on issues debated by thinkers of the time--gave vibrant new life to traditional forms like the epic, the satire, and moral epistle.

During the final weeks of the course, we will move on to explore yet more new social and literary currents--in the middle-class lyrics of "sensibility," in the new aesthetic category of the "sublime," in the traditional but now pessimistic moral philosophy of Samuel Johnson, and finally in the radical visions of William Blake.

William Blake, of course, is equally famous as a poet and as an artist--an anomaly that points up a final important feature of the period. Poets, artists, and critics of the eighteenth century were deeply read in the philosophy of their own day; they were also fascinated by the ever-modern Roman poet-critic Horace (65-8 B.C.E.). They wrote "Horatian epistles," adopted his idea of poetic decorum, and above all pondered his famous statement: *ut pictura poesis* ["like painting is poetry"]--which to them suggested that poetry and painting are "sister arts," the one essential to the illumination of the other. Thus the literature course will also be set in a visual context--first through an evening showing of the film *Restoration*; later through a field trip to the Huntington Library--home of a world-famous collection of English eighteenth-century art, and host to a glorious temporary exhibition of the great painter of late eighteenth-century romanticism, John Constable.

Required Texts:

Daniel Defoe. *A Journal of the Plague Year*, ed. Paula R. Backscheider. New York: Norton, 1722; 1992.

Defoe. *Moll Flanders*. New York: Penguin, 1722; 1984.

Robert Demaria Jr., ed. *British Literature, 1640-1789: An Anthology*, Second Edition. London: Blackwell, 2002.

Henry Fielding. *Joseph Andrews*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1742; 1984.

Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*. New York: Signet, 1726; 1983.

John Harold Wilson, ed. *Six Restoration Plays*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959.

In addition you will be required to read a notebook of hand-outs and additional readings (*RRR*).

Required Work:

(1) Prompt and regular attendance at all class sessions, including the film on February 25 and the field trip on Friday, April 20. (Make arrangements now!) Roll will be taken, and final grades dropped one step--e.g. from a B to a C--for each absence after the first two. (Thus six absences will be regarded as grounds for failure of the course.)

(2) Reading assignments to be completed *before* the dates for which they are assigned (i.e. in time for class discussion). If you must miss a class, you should get class notes from another student and include them in your notebook with proper acknowledgment. Missing a class is no reason not to be fully aware of what went on that day--including possible changes in the schedule.

(3) A midterm exam.

(4) Four analysis and response papers (3-4 pages each)--growing out of your engagement with texts in each section of the course--and two short reviews (about 2 pages each) of the film and Huntington field trip.

(5) A comprehensive final exam.

Note: Late work will be accepted, but will be marked down one half grade for each school day (not class day) after the due date. Under extraordinary circumstances, I will consider an extension without penalty-- provided that I am consulted in advance and that the circumstances seem serious enough to warrant such an extension.

Grading Factors:

(1) Attendance, preparation and discussion	10
(2) Midterm	15
(3) Papers (10% each) and Reviews (5% each)	50
(4) Final exam	<u>25</u>
	100%

Note: All work must be turned in, and be of a passing quality (even if it is turned in so late as to have fallen--theoretically--to an F), in order to result in a passing grade in the course.

Grading Options:

1. A - F
2. Credit/No Credit (non-majors only)

Manuscript Style:

Papers are to be typed double-space in a 12-point font (this syllabus is typed in 12-point Times), and printed on a laser-quality printer. They should be handed in on separate sheets of 8 1/2 X 11 bond paper, stapled in the upper left-hand corner. Margins should be one inch; paragraphs are to be indented five spaces. Spaces should not be skipped between paragraphs. Any notes or bibliography you may want to use must follow the *MLA Handbook*, copies of which are available in both the library and the bookstore.

Always keep hard-copies of all your work. Documents can get lost--both from my desk and from your disk. Should this occur, I will expect you to be able to produce a copy *immediately*; otherwise, I will be forced to count the paper as late beginning with the original due date. (See above for general policy on late papers.)

Note: Electronically submitted work will not be accepted. It is your responsibility to leave enough time to submit a clean hard copy for evaluation.

Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism occurs whenever the true author of a piece of prose, of an idea, or of a line of thought is not the person who claims to be the author. Plagiarism can occur in varying degrees, and will be penalized--in this class as in all others at the College--in proportion to its severity. Papers in which plagiarism is clear will receive an F, and student's name will be turned in to the Dean of Students. A repeated act of plagiarism will result in an automatic F in the entire course, in addition to any action taken by the Office of Student Life (which can include suspension from the College). A number of such serious sanctions have been imposed in recent years.

A particularly common and egregious form of plagiarism is the down-loading of materials from papers posted by others on various web sites. Please be aware that faculty have the tools to identify any work unfairly borrowed from the web--as well as other sources.

If you are in doubt about the need for documentation of borrowed material, please feel free to consult me or any other professor on campus. Also be sure that you have mastered the material in the 2005-2007 College Catalog, 29-34. Ignorance of this material will not be regarded as an excuse.

ADA Policy:

If you have any disabling condition that may require some special arrangements in order to meet course requirements, please begin by contacting the Office of Disability in CAS (extension

4825). I will be happy to provide any accommodations regarded by the Director as appropriate, but am not in a position to offer such accommodations independently. Short of actual accommodations, however, please feel welcome to talk with me about anything I can do to help you succeed in the course.

The Final Exam:

The final examination will be given only at the published time (Thursday, May 17, 10:30 to 12:30), so plan your departure for the summer accordingly. Plane tickets purchased by students not consulting the schedule (or not informing their families of the schedule) will not be accepted as an excuse for missing (or rescheduling) the exam. If you should find yourself scheduled for three final exams on a single day, you are (as the *Catalog* notes) entitled to request an adjustment from your professors.

The Schedule (subject to change as necessary):

I. The Age of Revolution (1640-1660): Backgrounds to the Restoration and Eighteenth Century.

February

8 Introduction to the course, to the period, and to a recurring theme: The Pursuit [and redefinition] of Happiness--or "the Choice of Life." Vanity Texts (*RRR*, 5-10).

13 Britain in Crisis: The English Civil War and the Execution of Charles I. Read "The World is Turned Upside Down," Demaria, 1-4; Documents on the death of the king, 4-5; selection from Hobbes's *Leviathan*, 6-8; Margaret Fell Fox, 131-33; and John Bunyan, 163-65. Also see (and carefully study) *RRR*, 11-19.

15 Poets of the mid-seventeenth century. Read Robert Herrick, Demaria, 11-15; John Milton, 40-41; Richard Crashaw (hand-out); Richard Lovelace, 134-35; Andrew Marvell, 145-50; and Henry Vaughan, 151-53. For Crashaw see *RRR*, 21-22. Before coming to class: Take some notes on the biography of each poet, and make sure you can identify his position in the theological and political battles of the time. To what extent does each poet's position inform his work? Conversely, to what extent do you see the poems as embodying "universal" concerns?

20 Grounds for Consensus: Ideas and Attitudes, 1660-1688 and beyond. John Locke, 214-18; Thomas Sprat (hand-out); David Hume, 740-42; and Samuel Pepys, 219-24. Before coming to class: Take some notes summarizing the issue taken up in each writer's work (in the case of Pepys, a historical event we will see dramatized later both in the film *Restoration* and in Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Year*).

II. Restoration Literature (1660-1688): Poetry, Satire, Drama.

22 John Dryden (1631-1700): (1) Lyric and Satiric. Read Introduction, Demaria, 173; "To the Memory of Mr. Oldham," 204; "A Song for St. Cecilia's Day," 209-11; "MacFlecknoe," 175-80. Also see *RRR*, 24-28 (Dryden), and 36-38 (epic). Before coming to class: Take some notes on each work, taking into account the genre to which it belongs. How does that genre contribute to meaning in each poem? How do classical and biblical allusions in each poem both complicate the work and add to its meaning? (Students who have had either Greek and Roman Literature or Literature of the Bible may have some advantage here.)

27 Dryden (2): Dramatic--Restoration Tragedy. Read *All for Love; or, The World Well Lost* (1678), Wilson, 169-243. Before coming to class: Write a brief summary of the action in each act of the play, and identify the values that are at odds in each. Which values "win" at the end of each act; at the end of the play? How--and to what extent? What do you think Dryden is attempting to express through his interpretation of this ancient, true story? Is his tragedy entirely "tragic"? (If you've read Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, you might reflect upon what is different in Dryden's re-presentation of the characters and the narrative.)

27 7:15 p.m. Film: *Restoration*. Media Center 202. Attendance required.

March

1 Restoration Comedy: William Congreve's *Way of the World* (1700), Wilson, 319-89. Before coming to class: Make a list of the characters with enough identification that you can keep them straight in class discussion. Be sure you can identify who is "paired" with whom and what the nature of each pairing is. What is each character's guiding motive? Then try your hand at a definition of the terms "comic" and "satiric." To what extent is this comedy "comic," and what extent is it satiric? What serious criticisms of society does Congreve seem to be making?

6 Restoration Women of Letters: Read Katherine Philips, Demaria 166-72; and Aphra Behn, (Intro.), 225; 236-43. For Philips also see *RRR*, 29-34. Before coming to class: Jot down a few notes on what each poem is about. Are there any clear signs that these (admittedly very different) poems were written by women? Film response due.

III. Writers of the Earlier Eighteenth Century (1688-1745): Journal, Novel, Poetry, Satire, Epistle.

8 The Rise of Journalism and the Novel as "True History": Daniel Defoe (1660-1731). Read Demaria, 303-308 and 329-34. Then read *A Journal of the Plague Year*: Backscheider's Preface and pp. 1-23 (graves and carts); mid-53-55; 66-73 (sorrows and outrages of daily life); last paragraph of 140 through 143 (reactions to trauma); second paragraph of 178 through 179; 190-193 (end: the lifting of the plague). Before coming to class: Consider the *narrator* in this factual and carefully researched account of the great plague of 1665. How does he represent himself?

Who is he? What seems to guide his choice of vignettes? What motivates him to remain in London throughout the plague? What aspects of his interpretation of the catastrophe seem "modern," "scientific," empirical? Which seem less so? How do you account for this seeming disjunction? Can you think of any examples of similar attitudes toward recent catastrophic events? What about the "projector" in "An Academy for Women" and the reporter of Mrs. Bargrave's odd experience? What sort of character does each of these narrators construct himself as having? To what extent does each speak for Defoe himself? How can you tell--or can you? First analysis and response paper due.

13 The Eighteenth-Century Novel (1)--as "true history": Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722)--entire. Before coming to class: Take some notes on the course of Moll's long career and on the manner in which she tells it. What kind of a "person" is Moll; what is her view of her experiences as she reflects upon them? Then think about Defoe's role as "transcriber" of her story. What seems to be his attitude toward his heroine? Are there any points at which you believe he calls her values into question?

15 *Moll Flanders* discussion: on the new capitalist heroine and the nature of her repentance. Also read John Newton's "Amazing Grace, *RRR*, 63. Second analysis and response paper due.

20 Jonathan Swift (1667-1745): (1) Lyric and Satiric. Read Demaria (intro.), 368, poems, 429-37, and "A Modest Proposal," 425-29. Before coming to class: Make notes on the speaker in this "proposal" and his motives. Compare him to the speaker in Defoe's *Essay Upon Projects*. How is this "project" like Defoe's; how is it different?

22 Jonathan Swift (2): Narrative. Read *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), Parts I and IV. Before coming to class: Take some notes on what you believe to be Swift's satiric targets in each of these two "traveler's tales." To what extent do you see Swift agreeing with Defoe about human nature? To what extent do you see him disagreeing? Also, both have undertaken, through a secondary narrator, to tell an ostensibly true story. How is their use of this convention similar? How different?

27 Alexander Pope (1688-1744): (1) Lyric and Satiric. Read "The Rape of the Lock" (1714), Demaria, 530-49. Also see Conclusion to the 1741 *Dunciad*, *RRR*, 39, and the two poems on *RRR*, 40. Before coming to class: Think of this poem both as an epic (c.f. *The Iliad* and/or *Paradise Lost*) and as a "comedy of manners" (c.f. Congreve's *The Way of the World*). How does it combine elements of each? To what extent is this brief epic *comic*, to what extent *satiric*, to what extent *elegiac*? (Students who have taken English 220 should be ready to lead out in a pretty sophisticated way on these questions.)

29 Day for Discussion. Bring any thoughts or questions you'd like to discuss before the break and the midterm.

Spring Break, April 2-8.

April

10 Pope (2): Reflective and Philosophical. Read "An Essay on Man," Epistle I (1733-34), *RRR*, 41-49; and "Universal Prayer," *RRR*, 50-51. Before coming to class: Take some notes on what you believe to be the crux of Pope's argument in this poem. What examples does he give? How persuasive do you find them? Is the basis for his major argument more "rational" or more "empirical"? Choose a passage that you find especially striking or moving. How do you account for its appeal? Is it philosophically satisfying, or is it more a matter of the beauty of the verse? How satisfying, finally, do you find his argument?

12 Eighteenth-Century Women of Letters. Read Anne Finch, Countess of Winchelsea (1661-1720), *Demaria*, 335-47; and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762), 587-98. Also read her letter to the Countess of Mar, London, September 1727, *RRR*, 52. Before coming to class: Take some notes on each poem and letter and see if you can make any generalizations about the values and abiding concerns of each writer. What seems to be the relationship of each to the world of men and the wider society of their time?

17 Midterm exam (comprehensive to date).

19 The Eighteenth-Century Novel (3)--as "Comic Epic": Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* (1742)--entire. Also read Genesis 39 and Luke 10.29-37; and Augustinian Allegory in *Joseph Andrews*, *RRR*, 53. Before coming to class: Not only read the two brief biblical selections (borrowing a Bible if need be), but take notes on how they inform two pivotal events in Fielding's novel. Come prepared to articulate exactly how Fielding has retold the two stories. How are the retellings funny? How are they also, perhaps, serious? What virtues do the three main characters value and perhaps embody? What values seem to motivate other characters? What virtues do they notably lack? How, according to Fielding, is that lack comic? (See, for example, his Preface, as well as Chapter I of Book III.)

20 Friday, 10:45 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.: Field Trip to the Huntington Library and docent tour of the exhibition: *Constable's Great Landscapes*.

24 *Joseph Andrews* discussion. Before coming to class: Compare this novel to *Moll Flanders* and take some notes on how it is similar and different in terms of characterization, method, and purpose. What is similar? What is different? How do you account for its similar and different effects? (Students who have taken English 220 should be able to trace the roots of Fielding's novel in several older literary traditions; all should see some resemblance to Restoration comedy--and in fact Fielding was a playwright before he turned to writing novels.) What is different about Fielding's goals in the novel, and how is this different approach appropriate to those goals? Third analysis and response paper due.

IV. Writers of the Later Eighteenth Century (1745-1789): Poetry, Satire, Criticism, Philosophical Narrative.

26 Lyrics of the Eighteenth Century: Sublimity and *Sensibility*. Read Matthew Prior, Demaria, 359-64; Thomas Gray, 747-57; William Collins, "Ode to Evening," 771-72; Christopher Smart, 785-88; Oliver Goldsmith, 814-24; William Cowper, 825-31; Hannah More, 881-85. Also read Gray's "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College" (*RRR*, 55-57) and Eighteenth-century hymns (*RRR*, 58-63). Before coming to class: Take some notes on each poet and his/her biography. Be sure to note the genres each poet takes on as well as the subjects he or she considers. Compare these poets to earlier poets in the course (and for those who have taken English 220 to yet earlier poets in English). What is new here--both in terms of form and content? What new subjects become fit subjects for poetry? What emotional responses do these poets attempt to evoke in the reader? Can you see any connections between these poets' concerns and Constable's project as a painter?

Museum Response due.

May

1 "Nature" and "The Sublime": Aesthetic Theory and Practice. Read Joshua Reynolds, Demaria, 789-96; and Edmund Burke, 796-top 803. Before coming to class: Take some notes on what each of these two important critics says about art. What is the basic theory of each? Come prepared to discuss the light--if any--these theoretical works shed on the poetry you have been reading. Bring specific examples of images of "nature" (as defined by Reynolds) and "the sublime" (as defined by Burke) in the work of specific poets we have read. How do Constable's landscapes interact with these two theoretical concepts?

3 Samuel Johnson (1709-1784): (1) Lyric and Meditative. Read Demaria (intro.), 638-39; "On the Death of Dr. Robert Levet" (*RRR*, 64); prayers and meditations (*RRR*, 69-72); "The Vanity of Human Wishes," Demaria, 643-51. Before coming to class: Compare "On the Death of Dr. Levet" to Dryden's "On the Death of Mr. Oldham" and Matthew Prior's "Ginny the Just." How are these three occasional poems similar? How are they different? How does Johnson's poem reflect the new values of the later eighteenth century? On the other hand, what is the purpose of the capital letters at the beginning of the common nouns in the poem? Also take some notes on each vignette in "The Vanity of Human Wishes." What does each vignette represent, and how do the vignettes work together to make Johnson's case in the poem? Finally, what light do Johnson's prayers and meditations shed on the two poems? (By the way, Johnson's beloved and much older wife "Tetty" died on March 28, 1752.)

8 Johnson (2): Reflective. Read *Rambler*, Number 2, Demaria, 651-54; Numbers 32 and 128 (*RRR*, 65-68); and *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia* (1759), 660-725. Also read Backgrounds to *Rasselas*, *RRR*, 73-75. (Page numbers based on previous edition of Demaria--sorry.) Before coming to class: Take some notes on each episode in *Rasselas* and consider what the protagonists learn through each. What light does each of Johnson's three *Rambler* essays shed on their more specific, empirical discoveries? Why do Rasselas and Nekaiah have to undertake the choice of life for themselves? Why can't they learn about life from Imlac's "history"? What does this necessity suggest about us as readers--and about the efficacy of narrative in teaching us how to live? In chapter 10, Imlac gives a long disquisition on the craft

of poetry. To what extent does *Rasselas* itself bear out his aesthetic theory? How does that theory relate to the theories of Reynolds and Burke--and to Restoration and eighteenth-century literature in general?

10 From "Neoclassical" to "Romantic": Johnson to William Blake (1757-1827). Read Selections from *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, Demaria, 911-15. Before coming to class: Take notes on each of the poems and try placing them into dialogic pairs--i.e. pairs that somehow "talk to" and correct each other, to create a fuller view of reality. Blake signals a transition to the "Romantic" period--the period of Wordsworth and Coleridge; Keats, Byron, and Shelley. But consider the following question: Is Blake's vision *wholly new*, or can you see some stirrings of this new movement in poetry in some of the other writers we have considered? Take into account Blake's subjects as well as his imagery and implicit values. Which writers, if any, seem to foreshadow his work in some way? How?

15 Last day of class. Review of the course. Come prepared to talk about big movements and common themes--and of course to raise any desired questions. Fourth response paper due.

17 (Thursday) Final Exam, 10:30-12:30. (Papers and finals will be returned to your campus mailbox. If you wish to have them sent to your home, please provide a self-addressed envelope with enough postage to cover their mailing.)