

EN2E4-30 Eighteenth-Century Literature

24/25

Department

English and Comparative Literary Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 2

Module leader

Stacey McDowell

Credit value

30

Module duration

21 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

N/A

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

This module aims to give a broad introduction to the literature and culture of eighteenth-century Britain. It moves through an eventful and often turbulent period in history, from the “Glorious” Revolution of 1688 to the American and French Revolutions towards the end of the eighteenth century. This was a time of financial revolution which saw unprecedented growth (and some spectacular crashes) in the British economy, of commercial expansion (including the rapid growth of the book trade and of the number of readers), of continual warfare for European and colonial power, and of global exploration, including new British “discoveries” in the Pacific and in the African interior. It was also the period that witnessed the creation and development of the modern form of the novel, the flowering of uniquely brilliant and biting literary satire, and the invention of the practice and literature of the perennially iconic English landscape garden. Students will read a roughly equal selection of plays, novels, diaries, poems, and letters organised into themes that

capture aspects of eighteenth-century life: drama the rise of the novel, satire, and finally space and landscape.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

SYLLABUS

Term One

Week 1: Introduction

SATIRE

Week 2: Gay, *The Beggar's Opera*

Week 3: Pope, "The Rape of the Lock" and "Epistle to a Lady"; Swift, "The Lady's Dressing Room"; Montagu, "The Reasons that Induced Dr. S— to write a Poem called the Lady's Dressing Room"

Week 4: Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* and *A Modest Proposal*

Week 5: Visual satire: Hogarth, *A Harlot's Progress* and *Four Times of the Day* (plus article on Hogarth's Progress)

Week 6: Reading Week

THE RISE OF THE NOVEL

Week 7: Richardson, *Pamela*

Week 8: Cleland, *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*

Week 9: Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, Vol 1-4

Week 10: Inchbald, *A Simple Story*

Term 2

SPACE AND LANDSCAPE

Week 2: Centlivre, *Bold Stroke for a Wife*; Addison and Steele, selections from *The Spectator*

Week 3: Thomson, *The Seasons* ("Spring"); Duck, *The Thresher's Labour*; Collier, *The Woman's Labour*

Week 4: Johnson, *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*

Week 5: Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"; Goldsmith, "The Deserted Village"; Crabbe, "The Village"

Week 6: Reading Week

OBJECTS AND MATERIALS

Week 7: *Adventures of a Robinson Crusoe*; Dixon, "From a Gilt Paper to Cloe" (will hand out in class); *Adventures of a Silk Petticoat* and *Adventures of a Black Coat*.

Week 8: *Lowlife*, or, *One Half of the World Knows Not How the Other Half Lives*

Week 9: Thomas Turner diary extracts

Week 10: Austen, *Emma*

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a broad knowledge of key writers of eighteenth century British literature, and write and talk in a well informed way about generic developments (e.g. The rise of the novel),

literary cross-fertilisations (e.g. classical influences) and cultural modes of expression (e.g. sensibility) inherent in many of the key texts

- Work individually and as a member of a small group to generate collaborative understandings of texts. Use a wide range of secondary, reference and electronic resources to further individual research. Develop and apply cumulative knowledge in order to make meaningful connections between themes and texts
- Demonstrate the ability to analyse and critically examine a broad spectrum of texts. Demonstrate the ability to apply general information (about generic developments, historical background etc) in ways which meaningfully illuminate literary reading. Demonstrate time management and organisational skills (essential for coping with longer fiction).
- Display an advanced understanding of eighteenth-century literature – its characteristic modes of writing and representation. Link the knowledge gained about this literature to knowledge of earlier and later periods gained in previously taken modules. Display a capacity to make evaluative critical judgements about unfamiliar literature which are also historically and critically informed.

Indicative reading list

1. Illustrative Bibliography

General Historical Background

John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (1997)

Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (1992)

H. T. Dickinson, *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain* (2002)

Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-83* (1989) [key historical background]

James Sambrook, *The Eighteenth Century: The Intellectual and Cultural Context* (Longman Literature in English series, 1993)

Satire

Frederic V. Bogel, *The Difference Satire Makes: Rhetoric and Reading from Jonson to Byron* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000).

Laura Brown, "Reading Race and Gender: Jonathan Swift," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 23.4 (1990), 425-443.

Ashley Marshall, "Contemporary Views on Satire, 1658-1770," in Marshall, *The Practice of Satire* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013).

Dustin Griffin, *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1994).

Mark Hallett, "Re-Reading A Harlot's Progress," in Hallett, *The Spectacle of Difference: Graphic Satire in the Age of Hogarth* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999).

Felicity Nussbaum, *The Brink of All We Hate: English Satires on Women 1660-1750* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1984).

Michael Seidel, "Crisis Rhetoric and Satiric Power," *New Literary History* 20.1 (1988), 165-86.

The Novel

Peter Garside and Karen O'Brien, *The Oxford History of the Novel in English, Vol. 2: English and British Fiction, 1750-1820* (2015)

Brean Hammond and Shaun Regan, *Making the Novel: Fiction and Society in Britain, 1660-1789* (2006)

J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels: The Cultural Context of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (1990)

Cheryl Nixon, *Novel Definitions: An Anthology of Commentary on the Novel, 1688-1815* (2009)

Leah Orr, *Novel Ventures: Fiction and Print Culture in England, 1690-1730* (2017)

Nick Seager, *The Rise of the Novel: A Reader's Guide to Essential Criticism* (2012)

Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Novel Beginnings: Experiments in Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (2006)

Charlotte Sussman, *Eighteenth-Century Literature, 1660-1789* (2011) -- A REALLY GOOD INTRODUCTION

Helen Thompson, *Fictional Matter: Empiricism, Corpuscles, and the Novel* (2016)

Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987)

Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (Berkeley, 1967) William Warner, *Licensing Entertainment: The Rise of Novel Reading in Britain: 1684-1750* (University of California Press, 1998)

Kathleen Lubey, *Excitable Imaginations: Eroticism and Reading in Britain, 1660-1760* (Bucknell 2012)

Deidre Lynch, *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning* (University of Chicago Press, 1998)

Thomas Keymer and Peter Sabor, *Pamela in the Marketplace: Literary Controversy and Print Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 2005)

Tom Keymer, *Sterne, the Moderns, and the Novel* (Oxford, 2002)

Sandra McPherson, *Harm's Way: Tragic responsibility and the Novel Form* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).

John Richetti, ed. *Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth-Novel* (Cambridge, 1996)

Space and Landscape

John Barrell, "An Unerring Gaze: the prospect of society in the poetry of James Thomson and John Dyer," in Barrell, *English Literature in History, 1730-80: An Equal, Wide Survey* (London: Hutchinson, 1983).

Rachel Crawford, "English Georgic and British Nationhood," *ELH* 65 (1998), 123–58.

Bridget Keegan, "Georgic Transformations and Stephen Duck's *The Thresher's Labour*," *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 41.3 (2001), 545-62.

Tim Fulford, *Landscape, Liberty and Authority: Poetry, Criticism and Politics from Thomson to Wordsworth* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), esp. chapters 1-3. Suvir Kaul, "Thomas Gray, *Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard*," in Christine Gerrard (ed.), *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006).

Anthony Pollock, "Neutering Addison and Steele: Aesthetic Failure and the Spectatorial Public Sphere," *ELH* 74.3 (2007), 707-34.

Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973).

Material Culture

Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J.H.Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: the Commercialization of eighteenth-century England* (Europa, 1982)

Lynn Festa, "Person, Animal, Thing: The 1796 Dog Tax and the Right to Superfluous Things"

Eighteenth-Century Life 33.2, Spring 2009

Tita Chico, *Designing Women: The Dressing Room in Eighteenth-Century English Literature and Culture* (2005) Jonathan Lamb, *The Things Things Say* (Chicago, Chicago UP)

Julie Park, *The Self and It: Novel Objects in Eighteenth-Century England* (Stanford, 2009)

Paula Byrne, *The Real Jane Austen: a Life in Small Things* (Harper Collins, 2012)

Mark Blackwell, Ed. *The Secret Life of Things: Animals and Objects in Eighteenth-Century Fictions of Circulation* (Bucknell, 2006)

Chloe Whigston Smith, *Women, Work, and Clothes in the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge, 2013)

Tim Morton, *Radical Food: The Culture and Politics of Eating and Drinking, 1790-1820* (Routledge, 2000)

Subject specific skills

- Discuss debates current to the area of eighteenth-century literary studies
- Demonstrate a coherent and detailed knowledge of key writers of eighteenth-century British literature
- Demonstrate conceptual understanding by describing and commenting, in a well informed way, on generic developments (e.g. The rise of the novel), literary cross-fertilisations (e.g. classical influences) and cultural modes of expression (e.g. sensibility) inherent in many of the key texts.

Transferable skills

- Work individually and as a member of a small group to generate collaborative understandings of texts informed by recent scholarship
- Use a wide range of secondary, reference and electronic resources to further individual research.
- Develop and apply cumulative knowledge in order to make meaningful connections between themes and texts.
- Demonstrate the ability to analyse and critically examine a broad spectrum of primary and secondary texts.
- Demonstrate the ability to apply complex information (about generic developments, historical background etc) in ways which meaningfully illuminate literary reading.
- Demonstrate time management and organisational skills (essential for coping with longer fiction).
- Display a systematic understanding of eighteenth-century literature – its characteristic modes of writing and representation.
- Link the knowledge gained about this literature to knowledge of earlier and later periods gained in previously taken modules.
- Display a capacity to make evaluative critical judgements about unfamiliar literature which are also historically and critically informed.
- Describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship, in the discipline

Study

Study time

| Type | Required |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| Seminars | 19 sessions of 1 hour 30 minutes (9%) |
| Private study | 271 hours 30 minutes (90%) |
| Total | 300 hours |

Private study description

Reading & research.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

Assessment group A1

| | Weighting | Study time | Eligible for self-certification |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|---------------------------------|
| Essay 1 3000-word essay | 50% | | No |
| Essay 2 3000-word essay | 50% | | Yes (extension) |

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback; individual meetings

Availability

Courses

This module is Core optional for:

- Year 2 of UENA-Q300 Undergraduate English Literature
- Year 2 of UENA-QP36 Undergraduate English Literature and Creative Writing
- Year 2 of UCXA-QQ39 Undergraduate English and Classical Civilisation
- Year 2 of UENA-VQ32 Undergraduate English and History

This module is Optional for:

- Year 2 of UENA-Q300 Undergraduate English Literature
- Year 2 of UENA-QP36 Undergraduate English Literature and Creative Writing
- Year 2 of UENA-VQ32 Undergraduate English and History
- Year 2 of UENA-VQ34 Undergraduate English and History (with a term in Venice)
- Year 2 of UTHA-QW34 Undergraduate English and Theatre Studies
- Year 2 of UFIA-QW25 Undergraduate Film and Literature
- Year 2 of UPHA-VQ52 Undergraduate Philosophy, Literature and Classics

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 2 of UCXA-QQ37 Undergraduate Classics and English

This module is Option list C for:

- Year 2 of UCXA-QQ37 Undergraduate Classics and English

This module is Option list D for:

- Year 2 of UPHA-VQ72 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature