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ENGLISH 606: BOOKS, MANUSCRIPTS, LIBRARIES: EXPERIENCING THE 18TH-CENTURY NOVEL

Course Description:

This course will chart the success of a radical experiment in literature: the creation of the novel in eighteenth-century Britain. We will be able to experience this eighteenth-century experiment by conducting an experiment of our own: **the course will be held in the Rare Books Room of the Boston Public Library and will result in a public rare books exhibition on Daniel Defoe.** We will work with original novels from the eighteenth century, placing the rise of the novel in its “cheap print” and “hand press” contexts. Although we all know what a novel is, we will try to erase that familiarity and imagine a time when the novel was “novel.” What are the rules of the novel, how were they invented, and who invented them? What is the material shape of the novel—what did early novels look like? What is the content of the novel, how does it connect author and reader, and how does it invent ideas such as “individualism” and “realism”? What are the economics of the novel; how was it printed and circulated and how did it become popular?

To answer these questions, we will explore two basic plots—the domestic romance and the picaresque-adventure—that are developed in the eighteenth century. We will also examine the novel’s sub-genres, including the Gothic (“haunted castle”), the sentimental (“crying men”), and political (“utopian”) tales. Our readings will be book-ended by the works of Aphra Behn and Jane Austen. At the heart of the course will be a lengthy novel; we will read excerpts from an abridged version of *Clarissa* (the longest novel in the English language) and *Tom Jones*, which we will use to re-create the eighteenth-century reading experience. We will connect our novels to the adventure- and scandal-filled episodes depicted in William Hogarth’s engravings.

To understand why the rise of the novel occurred in the eighteenth century, we will also investigate the century’s social history and visual art. Taking advantage of our Boston Public Library location, we will stress “book history” approaches to the novel in addition to current critical understandings of our course texts. This course will examine the book as an artifact, exploring its manuscript, print, and digital forms. By literally getting our hands dirty by working with old, new, hyper, and rare texts, we will be able to ask how historical changes in the book’s form connect to the invention of new literary forms, such as the novel. For example, what happened when printing press technology made books inexpensive and readily available to a buying public? How do institutions such as libraries and bookstores create a reading public? How do changes in buying and reading lead to changes in literary form—again, helping to invent the novel? To allow us to experience these questions, the class will spend much of its time working at the Boston Public Library, in addition to exploring on-line resources. We will practice archival research and think deeply about the rare books and manuscripts the Boston

Course Schedule:

Unit I: Daniel Defoe, Cheap Print, and Sources of the Novel

Week 1: Mon, Jan 23

Meet in Wheatley, Room 47, 2:00

Introduction to Course
Experiencing Hogarth
Experiencing Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*

Week 2: Mon, Jan 30

Meet in Wheatley, Room 47, 2:00

Locate and read: Aphra Behn, *The Fair Jilt*: download from ECCO

- Start at: Behn, *All the histories and novels written by the late ingenious Mrs. Behn* (4th edition, 1700)—find and print out the “Catalogue of Books Printed for Mr. R. Wellington,” front matter, p. 1-2.
- Then, go to: *All the histories and novels written by the late ingenious Mrs. Behn* (6th edition, 1718)—find and print out “Books Printed by M. Wellington,” back matter p. 481-484.
- Print out and Read: *The Fair Jilt* in this 1718 edition.

Locate and read: Eliza Haywood, *The City Jilt; Or, the Alderman turn'd Beau* (2nd edition, 1726): download from ECCO
(if you want to see an evil woman, glance at Haywood's *The City Widow*)

Locate and skim-read: select one text that is listed on one of the “**Catalogue of Books**”—**trace a book** that would have been available at the same book stall that sold *The Fair Jilt*.

Read: Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*: Chpt 2: The reading public and the rise of the Novel: on wiki-page: <http://engl606-nixon.wikispaces.umb.edu/>

Complete: Research/Reading Log #1: See assignment packet

1. Comment on your reading experience: what is unexpected or strange about reading an 18th text?
2. Comment on locating a text listed in the one of the “Catalogue of Books Printed...”: what types of books is the 18th-century reader interested in?

Week 3: Mon, Feb 6

Meet at BPL, at assigned time

Getting Settled into the BPL:

- Group A: Come at 1:00-2:45
- Group B: Come at 2:45-4:30

Examine: www.bpl.org

Go to: Rare Books and Manuscripts (“Research and Specialized Services” tab)

Go to: Collections, read description for “Trent Defoe Collection”

Read: Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders*; read as much of first ½ as possible.

Read: Nixon, *Novel Definitions*: Introduction: on wiki-page!

Examine, locate, and print out: Daniel Defoe in ECCO—look at the extreme number of works that come up from a simply author search; spend time skimming through the list and locate **one title of interest** to you. Print out the title page.

Locate and skim-read:

- Defoe, *Conjugal Lewdness or Matrimonial Whoredom* (1727); Download first 250 pages from ECCO. Skim text and read Chapter VII (p. 181-212) and glance at Chapter IX (p. 229-234).

- Defoe, *A History of the Lives and Exploits of the Most Remarkable Pirates, Highwaymen, Murderers, Street-robbers, &c.* (1742: Birmingham). Make sure to find this exact edition. Download first 250 pages from ECCO. Look at the hand-drawn images in the front matter and the markings on the table of contents. Look at the engravings in the text. Read “The Life of Moll Cutpurse” (p. 192-195), “The Life of Mary Read” (p. 195-197). “The Life of Anne Bonny” (p. 197-199); Read “The Life of Colonel Jack” (p. 20- 32).

Complete: Research/Reading Log #2: See assignment packet

1. Comment on 18th century authorship as represented by Defoe. What types of writing is hack writer engaged in?
2. Comment on using a database to connect lesser-known, non-fiction works to a well-known piece of fiction. How does this sort of primary source research “work”? What about this work excites/frustrates you?

Week 4: Mon, Feb 13

Meet in Wheatley, Room 47, 2:00

Read: Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders*; concentrate on second ½, when Moll is a criminal

Examine: **Old Bailey Sessions Papers**: <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/>

Perform Advanced Searches (using the search page)

Search: Offenses that match Moll’s (drop-down box)

Search: Date of *Moll Flanders*

Search: Moll’s name

Note down and print out best searches

Complete: Research/Reading Log #3: See assignment packet

1. Comment on the experience of starting rare books research. Explain your first impressions of the rare books reading room; what about this research space and process seems interesting, exciting, intimidating, confusing, strange?
2. Comment on the experience of seeing the original rare book edition of a text that you have studied on-line.

Mon, Feb 20: President's Day Holiday

No class

Work on: *Moll Flanders* paper.

Read: Class-selected Long Novel for next unit.

Make appointment: Meet at BPL for small group work this week or next week.

Complete: Research/Reading Log #4: See assignment packet

1. Comment on the experience of starting to work in the Rare Books room. What are you learning about how the Rare Books room is organized? What are you learning about the skills and processes needed in order to perform Rare Books research? Comment on the experience of selecting, calling up, and receiving a rare book.
2. Comment on the physical aspects of rare books research. What does your rare book look like? What does it feel like? Note all physical aspects—the binding, paper, type, ink, layout, condition, marginalia, etc. How is working with a real book different from reading a modern edition, a copy, or on-line scan?

Week 5: Feb 27

Meet at Harvard

Due: *Moll Flanders* paper

**“Field Trip”: Harvard’s Houghton Library Rare Books Exhibition Room:
“Cabinets of Curiosity and Rooms of Wonder”**

Read: Long novel unit: *Tom Jones*; Class-selected *Clarissa Excerpts*.

Unit 2: The Novel Arrives!: The Novel Finds its Lengthy Form

Week 6: Mon, March 5

Meet at BPL, Rare Books

Read: *Tom Jones*; Class-Selected *Clarissa Excerpts* and criticism reading assignments
TBA

Due: Short Essay #1

Mon, March 12: Spring Break

Read: *Tom Jones*; Class-selected *Clarissa Excerpts* and criticism reading assignments
TBA

Week 7: Mon, Mar 19

Meet at BPL, Rare Books

Read: *Tom Jones*; Class-selected *Clarissa Excerpts* and criticism reading assignments
TBA

Due: Short Essay #2

Unit 3: The Novel Explodes!: Novelist Sub-Genres

Week 8: Mon, Mar 26

Meet at BPL, Rare Books

Read: Sarah Scott, *Millenium Hall* (1762); criticism TBA

Read: Daniel Defoe, *Augusta Triumphans: Or the Way to Make London the Most Flourishing City in the Universe* (1728) 62 pages: Download from ECCO

Due: Digital Scavenger Hunt #1

Week 9: Mon, April 2

Meet at BPL, Rare Books

Read: Horace Walpole, *Castle of Otranto* (1764); criticism TBA

Read: Daniel Defoe, *A True Relation of the Apparition of One Mrs. Veal* (1706) 11 pages: Download from ECCO.

Due: Digital Scavenger Hunt #2

Week 10: Mon, April 11

Meet at BPL, Rare Books

Read: Class-selected *Short Novel*; criticism TBA

Skim Read: Defoe text TBA: Download from ECCO

Due: Digital Scavenger Hunt #3

Unit 4: Daniel Defoe, Cheap Print, and Multiple Editions of the Novel

RARE BOOKS RESEARCH and EXHIBITION PROJECT at the BPL

- Locating Rare Books (casting a wide net to keep ideas open)
- Selecting a Rare Book(s) for further Research and Analysis (narrowing to create a “smart” topic)
- Developing a Rare Books Project (adding critical sources)
- Connecting Literature to Contextual Materials (adding historical/cultural sources)
- Engaging with Technologies of Primary Sources (checking database resources)
- Creating Connections across Individual Rare Books Projects (exhibition planning)
- Locating Visual Materials (exhibition design)
- Placing the “Rise of the Novel” within the History of the Book, the History of Readership, and the History of Authorship

Mon, April 16: Patriot’s Day

No class

Final Rare Book Project: One-on-one meeting at BPL to Design Exhibition on Defoe

Read: Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, first 1/3; criticism TBA

Due: Research/Reading Log #5

Week 11: Mon, April 23

Meet at BPL, Rare Books

Final Rare Book Project: Working Session to Design Exhibition on Defoe

Read: Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, second 1/3; criticism TBA

Due: Research/Reading Log #6

Week 12: Mon, April 30

Meet at BPL, Rare Books

Final Rare Book Project: Work in Progress Show-and-Tell for Exhibition on Defoe

Read: Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, complete; criticism TBA

Due: Research/Reading Log #7

Week 13: Mon, May 7

Meet at BPL, Rare Books

Final Rare Book Project: Work in Progress Show-and-Tell: Exhibition on Defoe

Due: Research/Reading Log #8

Final Project Outcomes/Deadlines to be Defined by Class

Student Conduct:

Students are required to adhere to the University Policy on Academic Standards and Cheating, to the University Statement on Plagiarism and Documentation of Written Work, and to the Code of Student Conduct as delineated in the university catalog. The Code is available online. Also see the English Department's handout on Plagiarism, available in the English Department Office.

Course Accommodations:

Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1960 offers guidelines for curriculum modifications and adaptations for students with documented disabilities. If applicable, students may obtain adaptation recommendations from the Ross Center for Disability Services, M-1-401, (617-287-7430). The student must present these recommendations and discuss them within a reasonable period, preferably by the end of the Drop/Add period.

Specific Course Objectives:

On-site Work at Rare Books Libraries and Archives

- To visit rare books libraries and work with rare books and manuscripts sources
- To create an experiential, hands-on, activity-based classroom
- To expand classroom learning to include primary source literary research
- To experience the intellectual, reading, writing, and research implications of working with rare print, manuscript, and digital sources
- To position the course meetings and assignments as opportunities for practice and reflection on methods of practice
- To create an intellectually challenging classroom, in which all members investigate ideas, take risks, and question the course concepts

Rare Books Literary Scholarship

- To understand basic aspects of the physical form of the book, including size, typography, paper, and binding
- To analyze the conceptual issues raised by physical form, such as authorial intent, reader response, economic issues such as affordability, and production technology
- To understand the difference between manuscript and print objects
- To analyze the historical and theoretical issues raised by the differences between print and manuscript culture
- To consider the artistic possibilities and challenges of the physical form of the book
- To analyze how literary theme and form is heightened by illustrated forms
- To explore the literary agents central to the book: author, reader, editor, publisher
- To explore the social influence of the book, such as literacy and the circulation of ideas
- To explore the historical contexts of the book, such as the invention of the printing press
- To understand and participate in current debates concerning the history of the book

To think deeply about the ways in which literature is integral to cultural change,
including how literature might precipitate or follow from cultural change
To think deeply about how literature is used to address, resolve, or heighten conflicts
within our conception of self and society
To think deeply about what literature is, what it means, and what it does