ENG 342U (online) Spring 2020 | Eighteenth Century British Lit

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Welcome

I'm so glad you're here! I prefer to be addressed as Dr. Schneider and as she/her. Email is the best way to contact me (use my @pdx.edu address). You can expect a reply within 24 hours, but if I haven't replied within 48 hours feel free to send a follow-up email. Do let me know if you use a name besides the one provided to me in the course roster.

Look for an optional "introduce yourself" discussion in the announcements section of the course d2L. There will also be a FAQ section where I will post answers to your emailed questions that I think might have wider relevance to other people in the class. I will keep the identity of the person who asked the question anonymous, but I do want to give everyone the same access to information and instructions.

If you have questions about administrative policies, registration, or other deadlines, please contact the English Department at eng@pdx.edu.

Instructor bio

I completed my MA in Literature and Culture at Oregon State in 2013 and my PhD in English at University of Colorado Boulder in 2019. I work on 18th-century and Romantic era (1780s-1830s) texts and topics. My ongoing book project recovers archival materials from Jamaica, England, and the U.S. that record instances of enslaved people asserting personhood and freedom throughout the colonial Caribbean. I aim to establish a precedent for reading archival fragments as narratives within established literary traditions, such as reading runaway ads in the mode of the Romantic fragment poem or place names in the mode of the epitaph. My broader scholarly goal is to mitigate the neglect of Black and Indigenous colonial experiences within literary studies. I am excited to bring my expertise to this class, but I am equally looking forward to learning from the conversations we'll have together.

Topic overview

This section of English 342U routes some of the period's most central concerns through Caribbean plots and places. British commerce, governance, defense, and nationalistic identity formed apace with the expansion of British plantation economies. Even authors who never personally set foot on "West Indian" soil imagined the sugar islands as contexts for their writing. In this infamous age of revolution, popular revolts against tyranny coalesced into newly freed states, while enslaved Africans daily asserted their own right to be free.

Given our Caribbean focus this term, most of the course texts explore *unfreedom* and *resilience* through the lives and experiences of African diasporic people in the British Caribbean. But, given the pervasive colonial opposition to literacy among enslaved populations, most of the course texts present Africans' perspectives as they were imagined by white authors. This conundrum will allow us to query how literary representations of Africans (and especially violence by and against racialized bodies) throughout the century informed political action, and vice versa. The reading list includes prose, natural history writing, confession and captivity narratives, eclogues, epistolary fiction, pantomime and melodrama, and abolitionist poetry.

Learning objectives

Students who actively participate in the work of the course, and who read carefully and closely, will have the ability to do the following by the end of the term:

- Comprehend basics like what actions are happening to whom or what in course texts
  - Assessed via 10 open book reading quizzes (multiple choice, T/F, and short essay)
- Intuit or deduce the possible implications of the events in course texts
  - Assessed via 2 close reading and discussion prompts written by you, 20 responses to your peers' discussion prompts, and the literary analysis essay
- Synthesize personal experience and knowledge of the world with ideas in course texts
  - Assessed via the literary history project and literary analysis essay
- Analyze a text's implications to identify the stakes of the narrative
  - Assessed via 2 close reading and discussion prompts, 20 responses, and the essay
- Identify/evaluate gaps in existing knowledge about topics introduced in course texts
  - Assessed via the literary history project and literary analysis essay

Required texts

Behn, Aphra, *Oroonoko* – I recommend the Penguin edition
Earle, William, *Obi; or, The History of Three-Fingered Jack* – I recommend the Broadview edition
Equiano, Olaudah, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* – any edition
Price, Richard and Sally, eds. *Stedman's Surinam: Life in an Eighteenth-Century Slave Society*
Prince, Mary, *The History of Mary Prince* – any edition
Plus various PDFs and links made available on the course d2l page

Grading

Open book reading quizzes and discussion make up 50% of the course grade. Discussion prompts and replies will be awarded completion points if you meet the minimum requirements listed in the instructions. A public-facing literary history project makes up 30% of your grade and will be awarded completion points if/when the minimum requirements have been met. A claim-driven literary analysis essay supported by secondary sources makes up the remaining 20%. It also will be awarded completion points if/when the minimum requirements have been met. Detailed instructions are posted on d2l.

Workload

Budget time each week to watch lectures, complete quizzes, join in asynchronous discussion, and read approximately 75-100 pages. You will lead discussion twice (exact dates assigned in week 1) by posting an original close reading response accompanied by a thesis statement and a set of open-ended questions. I encourage you to begin the literary history project and essay at least 1-2 weeks before they are due. All d2l homework should be posted by 11:59 pm Pacific Time on the day it is due.

In a discussion-based course like this one, engaged participation is essential to the successful learning outcomes of all members of our intellectual community. Your own knowledge, experiences, interests, and history will give you unique insights into course texts and – when shared – will help advance your peers' understanding as we create a community of both curious and sophisticated intellectual inquiry.

Major assignments: literary history project and literary analysis essay

The public-facing literary history project expands the Caribbean focus of the course to include lit in English by or about Black, Indigenous, and/or people of color (BIPOC) from any other place in the British-influenced world during any portion of the "long eighteenth century" (roughly 1660-1830). Public-facing means presented with a non-specialist audience in mind. In a roughly 300-word proposal, pitch your initial ideas regarding the region, authors, texts, and communicative platform you are considering. Take time to do some preliminary research and be thoughtful, well organized, and polished in your proposal.

To earn full completion points, your finished literary history must include at least 3 authors, brief biographical notes (with source citations!), short excerpts from the author's writings, short explanations or contextualization of the excerpts, and observations in your own words regarding possible through lines connecting your authors. You may use any format, including social media, a website, video, etc. Or, you may submit your literary history in the form of a word processing document with cues as to how you would intend for it to appear in "public." A reasonable target range is 1,000-2,000 words.

To earn full completion points on your literary analysis essay, produce 5-8 pages (in 12 pt Times New Roman font) of claim-driven analysis based on your original engagement with an assigned course text and three or more secondary sources. You may use any of the secondary sources assigned in the course but do include at least one secondary source you found on your own. (I'm happy to advise if needed!) To earn full completion points, your essay must have an identifiable claim, three or more secondary sources clearly and correctly cited, and a connection to a specific real-world context, past or present.

The literary analysis essay is intentionally open-ended to allow you to connect your existing interests and expertise to course content. I recommend building your literary analysis around one of the close reading discussion prompts or replies you will write this term. But if this degree of freedom is anxiety-inducing, I'm more than happy to intervene to help you choose a topic. Just reach out for assistance.

The essay should follow MLA style formatting including 1" margins on all sides, double spacing throughout except for long quotes in block formatting, a four-part header at the top left of the first page, a centered title, page numbers preceded by your last name in the top right margin, and a separate works cited page not counting toward page count. Consult the sample essay posted in d2l.

Feedback on in-progress assignments

When asking for my feedback on in-progress coursework, tell me what specific area(s) you'd like me to target (i.e. MLA style, thesis statement, organization) and your requested turn-around time. I typically will not provide general feedback on an entire draft. I will always let you know if I can meet your time frame, depending on my schedule and the type and amount of feedback you've requested.

Late work

Contact me in advance, if possible, if you have issues completing coursework on time. Late work submitted with no explanation will not be graded. Late work that you discuss with me may receive a points deduction rather than a 0. Points deductions will never be more than 50%. I do not require doctors' notes or in-depth explanations, but I will require that you and I collaborate to create a plan for catching up. Students who are caregivers for family members or who are experiencing mental health issues are particularly encouraged to seek flexible deadlines. I have a no-questions-asked policy for claimed mental health days.

Plagiarism

Any written work deemed to be plagiarized will result in a failing score on the assignment and potential failure of the course overall. Plagiarism is defined here as failing to adequately cite ideas and knowledge that is not your own. In academic writing, direct quotes and paraphrased source content should always be cited in-text; most summarized content should also be cited. When in doubt, ask me! Self-plagiarism also applies, which is defined as resubmitting work that you've already received credit for. Suspected plagiarism will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Netiquette

Be aware that your online behavior in the course impacts other people.

1. Please think twice before you hit submit. Your tone and intention can be misinterpreted without nonverbals with your message.
2. Keep it relevant. Do not stray from the discussion in the assigned questions.
3. Avoid using all caps. This is the equivalent of yelling online. It is not fun to read.
4. Make sure that you are using appropriate grammar. For example, there are people in the class that may not understand texting or chat abbreviations.
5. Emoticons are fine if they are appropriate. A smile 😊 is welcome, but anything explicit or offensive is not.
6. Remember there is a person behind the name on your screen. It can be easy to hide behind the computer. In some cases, it empowers people to treat others in ways they would not in person.
7. Treat all with dignity and respect and you can expect that in return.

Source: these suggestions were adapted from a list by Melissa Landin, Dept. of Communication, Inver Hills Community College http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html