**18th-Century British Novel**

**The rise of the individual. The construction of British identity**

(ENGL 4372. CRN: 28140)

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[](http://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwj_5NCDpbjRAhWDxYMKHbaoByEQjRwIBw&url=http://bibliophilescorner.blogspot.com/2011/07/novel-reader-by-van-gogh.html&bvm=bv.143423383,d.amc&psig=AFQjCNHWVwlyKh6gzUQTVYzpsvaSuCjIfw&ust=1484162105407349)

**Course Description:** This course traces and explores the rise and cultural work of the novel in 18th-century Britain. That moment is particularly important because it marks the development and flowering of the Enlightenment-driven systems that would come to define what we consider modernity: individualism, social mobility, democracy, capitalism, etc. And the novel plays an outsized role in both the development and social enculturation of those systems. That is, the novel imagines and normalizes radical social, economic, and political changes in Britain. In essence, this class argues that the emerging genre of the novel provided a cultural space from which the emerging middle class could write, read, and imagine itself into existence.

We will read novels from Daniel Defoe through Jane Austen as well as secondary critical approaches to the genre in order to trace the ways that the novel constructs, tests, and rehearses notions of British identity. Because the 18th century is a truly amazing time in Britain—at its dawn, neither Britain nor a cohesive cultural concept of a human as an individual even existed, but by the end of the century, both of these things were not only cultural assumptions but also governing facts of everyday life. This course argues and tests the hypothesis that the novel played a seminal role in that construction of modern British identity. As such, we will be engaging with the argument that literature is not merely a cultural product but also a cultural driver. That is, obviously we create literature—but in this class, we’ll engage with the possibility that literature also creates us.

**Learning Outcome:** Literacy. Which I define as a comprehensive understanding of texts, contexts, and implications of a literary period/genre. In this case, the 18th-century British novel. To achieve this outcome of literacy, we will practice critical reading in order to make **associations** and **connections**. In short, we will carefully process varied and complex material to consider & rehearse the specific ways in which that material connects to, comments on, questions, drives, and reflects issues and situations outside the text. We will systematically engage with written texts to explore the ways that literature functions simultaneously as a window and a mirror. To do this effectively, we will develop a critical toolbox that will allow you to strengthen your ability to analyze works, both primary and secondary, and organize and express those analyses in verbal and written form. We will read texts, form ideas, observations, and arguments about them, and deliver those ideas, observations, and arguments in clear, concise, and effective essays. In the end, this learning outcome of literacy goes beyond “local” knowledge of the 18th-century British novel—it extends to a more “global” understanding of the ways that cultural production can work to both reflect and affect society.

**My Policies.**

**Participation**: It comprises 15% of your final grade. That means that I expect everybody to participate in our discussions. Seriously, you do *not* want to listen to 50 straight minutes of my talking head every MWF. That said, we will explore a wide range of texts and topics in class; not only would it be impossible for all of you to agree on everything, it would be boring. I highly encourage you to disagree with one another, and I highly encourage you to disagree with me. All I ask (actually, I don’t ask, I demand) is that you disagree with one another (and me) in a **constructive** manner that fosters conversation rather than shuts it down. Show respect for one another’s views, opinions and ideas.

In keeping with the idea that this is a safe space to share and test out ideas, I encourage you all to speak to one another in our discussions. That is, not all comments have to go through me at the front of the room. Let ideas bounce around the room—address one another directly. This will be best accomplished if you learn each other’s names. If done properly, we can all join together in an 18th-century novel brother- and sisterhood. We will now join hands and sing Kumbaya.

Small but not insignificant point: In order to truly participate productively in class, you need to have done the assigned readings. If it becomes obvious that you haven’t been doing the readings—and it’s not that difficult to tell—I’ll be forced to administer annoying quizzes at the beginning of each class. Don’t make me administer annoying quizzes. Do the readings.

**Attendance:** If you intend to make a premium grade (A or B), you should attend class as frequently as possible, preferably every class day. Your final grade for this course will drop two points for every absence after three, except in rare situations. Infrequent absences caused by illness or accident, family death, official university functions, or inclement weather are acceptable, but you need to bring documentation of the reason to receive this consideration. If you should miss 6 or more classes, I will strongly recommend that you drop the class.

**Late arrivals/Early departures:** Avoid these at all costs; if it’s unavoidable, be as considerate as possible to your classmates.

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*!!!!!!Cell Phones!!!!!!\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

 

Hear this now: Cell phone interruptions drive me nuts—seriously, they give me facial tics. So please turn off and stow all cell phones before class. Seriously, I don’t even want to see your cell phone. Really. Prove to yourself that you’re not addicted to the little monster: spend our 50 minutes out of its presence (#giveyourthumbsarest).

**Late Work:** I do not accept late work. All assignments are due on the day indicated on the syllabus, at the start of class. Period.

**Assignments and Grade value:**

\*Essay 1 (3/3) 25% Short Projects (2/15 & 3/30) 15% \*Final Essay (5/3) 35% SWAs (11 short writing assignments) 10% Participation/Crit. Presentation 15%

\*You cannot pass the class without completing **both** essays.

# Grades: Ahh, grading! Here’s the rub. One of the major sticking points between teacher and student comes down to a potential disparity in goals. My goal is that you develop as a thinker, reader and writer. Often (I didn’t say always, so don’t be offended!), your goal is to obtain a grade that will make you happy. See the potential conflict? Honestly, if I thought that handing out A’s were the best way to improve your thinking/reading/writing, I’d do it. Unfortunately, everything about your academic training to this point has worked in an opposite direction. In our system, I tie a carrot (grade) to a stick and dangle it in front of you as you pull the millstone. Sorry. I didn’t invent the system, but it’s where we work. On the bright side, in my experience, it’s relatively rare for the grade not to reflect the effort of the student.

Extra credit opportunities **may** be offered throughout the semester, but they exist in order to enhance your engagement with the college and our material, not to explicitly improve a student’s grade (though, of course, they will improve your grade). What I’m saying here is, don’t ask me to devise extra extra credit opportunities to make up for missed or poor work.

**University Policies.**

**Academic Integrity:** The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university's Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the Student Handbook. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student's acceptance of this university policy.

**The Americans with Disabilities Act:** The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans withDisabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, please contact the UCA Office of Disability Services, 450-3613.

Students should familiarize themselves with all policies included in the Student Handbook, particularly the **Sexual Harassment Policy** and **Academic Policies**. You are responsible for acting in accordance with these university policies. If you have any questions about these policies and how they pertain to you, do not hesitate to ask me for clarification.

**Title IX disclosure**: If a student discloses an act of sexual harassment, discrimination, assault, or other sexual misconduct to a faculty member (as it relates to “student-on-student” or “employee-on-student”), the faculty member cannot maintain complete confidentiality and is required to report the act and may be required to reveal the names of the parties involved.  Any allegations made by a student may or may not trigger an investigation.  Each situation differs and the obligation to conduct an investigation will depend on those specific set of circumstances.  The determination to conduct an investigation will be made by the Title IX Coordinator.  For further information, please visit:  <https://uca.edu/titleix>.  *\*Disclosure of sexual misconduct by a third party who is not a student and/or employee is also required if the misconduct occurs when the third party is a participant in a university-sponsored program, event, or activity.*

**Emergency Procedures:** Emergency Procedures Summary (EPS) for the building in which this class is held will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at <http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/>. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.

**Course Texts:** *The Rise of the Novel*. Ian Watt; *Roxana*. Daniel Defoe; *Jonathan Wild*. Henry Fielding; *Pamela*. Samuel Richardson; *The Castle of Otranto*. Horace Walpole; *Evelina*. Fanny Burney; *Things as They Are, or the Adventures of Caleb Williams*. William Godwin; *Maria, or the Wrongs of Woman*. Mary Wollstonecraft; *Northanger Abbey*. Jane Austen.

**Class Schedule**

**Week 1.**

F 1/13. Introductions.

**Week 2.** **Foundations & Pioneers:** **Theory/Practice of the rise of the novel**

M 1/16. **MLK Day. No class**

W 1/18. The Rise of the Novel

**Due: SWA 1**

F 1/20. **Pioneers:** Capitalism Revealed: Supply & Demand, Credit, and Sexuality *Roxana*, *or The Fortunate Mistress*, Daniel Defoe (1724)

**Week 3. Pioneers:** Capitalism Revealed: Supply & Demand, Credit, and Sexuality

M 1/23. *Roxana*

W 1/25. *Roxana*

**Due: SWA 2**

F 1/27. *Roxana*

**Week 4. Pioneers:** The rise of the individual

M 1/30. *Roxana*

W 2/1. *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, Samuel Richardson (1740)

F 2/3. *Pamela*

**Due: SWA 3**

**Week 5.** **Pioneers:** The rise of the individual

M 2/6. *Pamela*

W 2/8. *Pamela*

**Due: SWA 4**

F 2/10. *Pamela*

**Week 6. Pioneers:** The novel gets Wild

M 2/13. *Pamela*

W 2/15. *The Life of**Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great*, Henry Fielding (1743)

**Due: Short Project 1**

F 2/17. *Jonathan Wild*

**Week 7.** **Pioneers:** The novel gets Wild

M 2/20. *Jonathan Wild*

W 2/22. *Jonathan Wild*

F 2/24. *The Castle of Otranto*, Horace Walpole (1764)

**Due: SWA 5**

**Week 8.** **The Novel Reacts: The Rise of the Gothic**

M 2/27. *The Castle of Otranto*

W 3/1. *The Castle of Otranto*

F 3/3. *The Castle of Otranto*

**\*Due: Essay 1**

**Week 9.** **Post-WW II. America re-calibrates: (Re Re) building a national identity in a fractured and multiple world.**

M 3/6. *Evelina, or A Young Lady’s Entrance into the World*, Frances Burney (1778)

**Due: SWA 6**

W 3/8. *Evelina*

F 3/10. *Evelina*

**Week 10. The Gothic Novel & the Rise of Democracy**

M 3/13. *Evelina*

**Due: SWA 7**

W 3/15. *Evelina*

F 3/17. *Things As They Are, or the Adventures of Caleb Williams*, William Godwin (1794)

Week 11. **Spring Break!!!**

**Have fun! But … you know … safe, responsible fun.**

**Week 12.**

M 3/26. *Caleb Williams*

**Due: SWA 8**

W 3/28. *Caleb Williams*

F 3/30. *Caleb Williams*

\***Due: Short Project 2**

**Week 13. The Gothic Novel & the Birth of Feminism**

M 4/2. *Caleb Williams*

W 4/4. *Maria, or The Wrongs of Woman*, Mary Wollstonecraft (1797)

F 4/6. *Maria*

**Due: SWA 9**

**Week 14. The Gothic Novel & the Birth of Feminism**

M 4/9. *Maria*

W 4/12. *Maria*

**Due: SWA 10**

F 4/14. *Northanger Abbey*, Jane Austen (1803/1818)

**Week 15.** **The Novel re-considered: the self-conscious novelist & the “new” novel**

M 4/17. *Northanger Abbey*

**Due: SWA 11**

W 4/19. *Northanger Abbey*

F 4/21. *Northanger Abbey*

**Week 16. Conclusions**

M 4/24. *Northanger Abbey*

W 4/26. Last day!!!! In which we achieve total enlightenment and attain total clarity. Or not.

**Final Essay Due: Wed. 5/3!!**