

English 212 – London in 18th-Century Literature  
Fall Semester, 2003  
TuTh 1:30-2:45pm  
Lewis Environmental Center 102

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Office hours: Tu, 3-5pm; W, 10am-12noon;  
and by appt.

### **London in Eighteenth-Century Literature**

“Sir,” said Samuel Johnson to James Boswell in 1777, “when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford.” By the eighteenth century, London was by far the largest city in Great Britain and was, indeed, larger than any other city in all of Europe. Unique among European cities as the center both of the nation’s government and of its trade, London was also the center of the nation’s literary, cultural, and fashionable life. By turns wondered at and reviled, London was, for the British, a place of infinite variety and possibility, but also a place of temptation, danger, and loneliness. This course examines depictions of and reflections on London life in representative works of poetry, drama, fiction, and nonfiction prose during the “long” eighteenth century (from roughly 1660 through 1800). By examining eighteenth-century London from a number of different vantages, students will gain insight into London’s unique identity as a modern metropolis, as well as perspective on issues and ideas that continue to inform the way we think about cities.

This class has three principal objectives:

- The course will help students gain facility in the careful reading and thoughtful interpretation of texts, which are foundational skills not only for literary study, but for most other fields of inquiry in the humanities.
- While the course is thematically centered on treatments of London, the texts we will read offer a good sampling of representative works in the most important eighteenth-century forms, thus providing students (particularly current or prospective English majors) with a solid introduction to this period of English literary and cultural history.
- Our work with contemporary sources (particularly with materials in the Special Collections department of Oberlin’s library), as well as with selected secondary readings, will offer students an introduction to historicist approaches to literary study.

**Required Texts** (available at the Oberlin College Bookstore)  
William Wycherley, *The Country Wife* (University of Nebraska)  
Daniel Defoe, *A Journal of the Plague Year* (Oxford)  
John Cleland, *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (Oxford)  
William Hogarth, *Engravings* (Dover)  
James Boswell, *London Journal, 1762-63* (Yale)  
Frances Burney, *Evelina* (Oxford)

Other readings are posted on Blackboard

## COURSE POLICIES

**Please Note:** It is Oberlin College's policy to make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. If you have a documented disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible. You will also need to contact Jane Boomer, Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities, as her office coordinates all arrangements with instructors. Instructors are not obliged to provide accommodations to students whose need for accommodations has not been documented with Ms. Boomer's office.

### Written Work

The major written assignments for the class are two short papers (the first five pages, the second seven pages). The first paper will be due on Tuesday, September 23, as noted on the schedule below. **The second paper will be due Wednesday, December 17 at 2pm** (the time the Registrar's Office has scheduled for the final exam). **No extensions will be granted for the final paper.**

- Written work should be double-spaced, in standard fonts, and with reasonable margins.
- I am happy to accept papers printed out double-sided.
- Written work will be collected in class the day it is due.
- Any requests for extensions must be made at least 48 hours in advance of the due date.
- Late papers, if no extension has been arranged, will be received for reduced credit (lowered one full letter grade, e.g. from B to C).
- I will not accept papers that are more than two weeks late, except upon special arrangement in view of extraordinary circumstances (e.g. serious illness, death in the family).

### Presentations

In addition to the two papers, students will work in groups during the second half of the semester to prepare thirty-minute formal presentations on a theme related to a day's reading. Each group will do research in Special Collections to find material not on the syllabus that can help to supplement our understanding of a key cultural context for the text under discussion. Additionally, each group should use modern bibliographies (e.g. the MLA International Bibliography, Historical Abstracts, etc.) to locate a few secondary sources that discuss the topic. Your presentation is, in effect, a collectively written fifteen-page paper (n.b., it generally takes two minutes to read a double-spaced page of text at a pace that an audience can follow). Each group will submit a write-up of its research to me the day it presents to the class.

### Additional Assignments

Over the course of the semester, I may make additional brief assignments to promote the smooth running of class discussions.

### Attendance and Participation

In a seminar-style class, the "form" of the discussion—the give-and-take of ideas—is at least as important as the "content" of that discussion (the ideas given and taken). Your active participation in the conversation is a constitutive part of this class. It is essential that you read the texts carefully and come to class prepared to talk with your classmates about them.

It's impossible to participate in a discussion at which you are not present. More than two absences will begin to erode the participation portion of your grade. If you miss six classes, you will **forfeit** consideration of participation in your final grade. I don't distinguish between "excused" and "unexcused" absences—if you aren't in class, you aren't in class. However, if you're faced with extraordinary

circumstances (e.g. serious illness, a death in the family, religious observance, etc.), please come talk to me so we can figure out accommodations.

**Grading**

Your final grade for the course will be *no lower than* the grade arrived at using this formula:

Paper 1:	20%
Presentation:	25%
Paper 2:	25%
Course Participation:	30%

In calculating grades, I use the “quality point” scale published in the College’s 2003-04 catalogue (i.e. A+ = 4.33; A = 4.0; A- = 3.67; B+ = 3.33; B = 3.0; B- = 2.67; C+ = 2.33; C = 2.0; C- = 1.67). In some cases, an assignment may receive a “slashed” grade, which will be interpreted as falling midway between the two grades on the quality point scale (e.g. “B-/B” would equal 2.835). In the event that a paper earns a grade below C-, I will continue Oberlin’s quality point scale downward (i.e. D+ = 1.33; D = 1.0; D- = 0.67; F = 0). Final grades of lower than C- will, of course, be recorded as “No Entry.”

**SCHEDULE**

Week 1	Tu 9/2	Introductions  Daniel Defoe, Letter 5 of <i>A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain</i>
	Th 9/4	
Week 2	Tu 9/9	John Brewer, from <i>The Pleasures of the Imagination</i>
	Th 9/11	John Dryden, from <i>Annus Mirabilis</i> Samuel Pepys, from the <i>Diary</i> , September 2-10, 1666
Week 3	Tu 9/16	William Wycherley, <i>The Country Wife</i> <i>ADD/DROP DEADLINE FOR FULL SEMESTER COURSES</i>
	Th 9/18	William Wycherley, <i>The Country Wife</i>
Week 4	Tu 9/23	Introduction to Special Collections with Ed Vermue, Oberlin College Library Preservation Librarian Research methods seminar Meet in Mudd 443 <b>PAPER 1 DUE</b>
	Th 9/25	Daniel Defoe, <i>A Journal of the Plague Year</i> , pp. 23-103 (“... and then they could no more bury in form, rich or poor.”)

Week 5	Tu 9/30	Daniel Defoe, <i>A Journal of the Plague Year</i> , pp. 103 (“I have mentioned above that notwithstanding ...”) - 177 (“... when they found they could not get leave to go out of their doors”) <i>CREDIT/NO ENTRY DEADLINE FOR FULL SEMESTER COURSES</i>
	Th 10/2	Daniel Defoe, <i>A Journal of the Plague Year</i> , p. 177 (“It was for want of people conversing with one another ...”) - end
Week 6	Tu 10/7	Joseph Addison and Sir Richard Steele, <i>The Spectator</i> , nos. 1, 403, and 454 Jonathan Swift, “A Description of a City Shower” William Hogarth, <i>The Enraged Musician</i> and <i>The Four Times of Day</i>
	Th 10/9	Joseph Addison and Sir Richard Steele, <i>The Spectator</i> , nos. 28, 69, and 428 William Hogarth, <i>Industry and Idleness</i> <b>Group Presentation: Commerce and Trade</b>
Week 7	Tu 10/14	Alexander Pope, <i>The Rape of the Lock</i> Joseph Addison and Sir Richard Steele, <i>The Spectator</i> , nos. 275, 281, and 323
	Th 10/16	Alexander Pope, <i>The Rape of the Lock</i> <b>Group Presentation: Exotic Consumption</b>
Week 8		FALL BREAK
Week 9	Tu 10/28	John Cleland, <i>Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure</i> , Volume I William Hogarth, <i>A Harlot’s Progress</i> , <i>The Rake’s Progress</i>
	Th 10/30	John Cleland, <i>Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure</i> , Volume II <b>Group Presentation: Prostitution</b>
Week 10	Tu 11/4	William Hogarth, <i>Beer Street and Gin Lane</i> Henry Fielding, from <i>An Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers</i> Charles Woodward, “The Midnight Ramble” Anonymous, “Strip Me Naked, or Royal Gin Forever. A Picture” <b>Group Presentation: Gin</b>
	Th 11/6	James Boswell, <i>London Journal</i> , 1762-63, pp. 39-113
Week 11	Tu 11/11	James Boswell, <i>London Journal</i> , 1762-63, pp. 115-204 (“... a sacred ode by Dr. Brown.”) <b>Group Presentation: Medicine</b>
	Th 11/13	James Boswell, <i>London Journal</i> , 1762-63 pp. 204 (“Sunday 27 February”) – 259 (“I wish I could spend my time always in such company.”)

Week 12	Tu 11/18	James Boswell, <i>London Journal, 1762-63</i> pp. 259 (“Monday, 16 May”) – 333 Samuel Johnson, <i>London</i>
	Th 11/20	Frances Burney, <i>Evelina</i> , pp. 1-84 (Prefatory matter; Volume I, letters i-xx)
Week 13	Tu 11/25	Frances Burney, <i>Evelina</i> , pp. 85-166 (Volume I, letter xxi – Volume II, letter viii) William Woty, “White Conduit House” Anonymous, “A City Eclogue” <b>Group Presentation: Nightlife</b>
	Th 11/27	NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING)
Week 14	Tu 12/2	Frances Burney, <i>Evelina</i> , pp. 166-254 (Volume II, letters ix-xxv)
	Th 12/4	Frances Burney, <i>Evelina</i> , pp. 254-323 (Volume II, letter xxvi – Volume III, letter x)
Week 15	Tu 12/9	Burney, <i>Evelina</i> , pp. 323-406 (Volume III, letters xi-xxiii)
	Th 12/11	William Wordsworth, “Composed upon Westminster Bridge, 3 September 1802” Conclusions