

English 314-01: Atlantic Transactions
Fall Semester, 2003
MWF, 3:30 – 4:20pm
King 235

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Tu, 3-5pm; Wed. 10am-12noon; and by
appointment
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Atlantic Transactions: Literature and Property in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World

In his *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1765-69), the English jurist Sir William Blackstone wrote: “There is nothing which so generally strikes the imagination and engages the affections of mankind, as the right of property; or that sole and despotic dominion which one man claims and exercises over the external things of the world, in total exclusion of the right of any other individual in the universe.” This course explores the deep fascination with “the right of property” in literary, political, and economic writings of the eighteenth-century British Atlantic world—those countries and regions on both sides of the Atlantic that were tied together by a complex system of British trade (primarily Great Britain, West Africa, the Caribbean, and North America). In addition to considering the ways eighteenth-century authors wrote about “the external things of the world,” we will also see how deeply ideas of property and ownership are implicated in notions of personal and national liberty in an age that witnessed both an American war for independence and a massive traffic in African slaves.

This course is intended as an advanced thematic study of eighteenth-century British, American, and Anglo-African/African-American literature and thought. We will read literary texts alongside works of political theory, journalism, and propaganda in an effort to trace ideas about property across a broad swath of eighteenth-century culture. At the same time, our discussions should serve to interrogate both the generic boundaries that have been used to separate literature from other kinds of writing and the disciplinary boundaries that have separated literary studies from, for example, history, political science, or economics.

Required Texts:

- John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (Cambridge)
- Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (Penguin)
- Susanna Centlivre, *A Bold Stroke for a Wife* (Broadview)
- John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, *Cato's Letters* 2 vols. (Liberty Fund)
- John Dickinson and Richard Henry Lee, *Empire and Nation: Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania and Letters from the Federal Farmer* (Liberty Fund)
- Charles Brockden Brown, *Edgar Huntly* (Penguin)
- Quobna Ottobah Cugoana, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery and Other Writings* (Penguin)
- Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings* (Penguin)

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.

Assignments

The major written assignments for the class are one short paper (five-pages, double-spaced) and one longer paper (ten-pages, double-spaced). The first paper will be due on Monday, September 22, as noted on the schedule below. The final paper will be due Friday, December 12, the last day of class.

In addition, over the course of the semester, each student will post one additional five-page paper to the discussion forum on Blackboard. In this essay, you will present and support your view on some aspect of the day's reading. Because the class may not have completed the text under discussion on the day you present, your presentation may have to be rather more speculative and suggestive than your other papers. This paper is meant primarily to provide the class with a point of departure for discussion.

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

Written Work

- I am happy to accept papers printed out double-sided.
- Written work will be collected at the beginning of class the day it is due.
- Any requests for extensions must be made at least 48 hours in advance.
- 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).

Attendance and Participation

In a seminar-style class, the "form" of the discussion—the give-and-take of ideas—is 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:	20%
Paper 2:	30%
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	W	9/3	Introductions
	F	9/5	John Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> , ch. 1-5 Thomas Hobbes, from <i>Leviathan</i>
Week 2	M	9/8	John Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> , ch. 6-14
	W	9/10	John Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> , ch. 15-end Secondary reading to be announced
	F	9/12	Daniel Defoe, <i>Robinson Crusoe</i> , pp. 1-56
Week 3	M	9/15	Daniel Defoe, <i>Robinson Crusoe</i> , p. 57 (“The JOURNAL”) – p. 122 (“But now I come to a new scene of my life.”)
	TU	9/16	ADD/DROP DEADLINE FOR FULL SEMESTER COURSES
	W	9/17	Daniel Defoe, <i>Robinson Crusoe</i> , p. 122 (“It happen’d one day about noon ...”) – p. 219 (“... from among the <i>Moors</i> of <i>Sallee</i> ”)
	F	9/19	Daniel Defoe, <i>Robinson Crusoe</i> , p. 219 (“In this vessel ...”) – p. 241 Kenneth Morgan, from <i>Slavery, Atlantic Trade and the British Economy, 1660-1800</i>

Week 4	M	9/22	Meeting with Ed Vermue, Oberlin College Library Preservation Librarian Meet in Mudd 443 ASSIGNMENT DUE: PAPER 1
	W	9/24	Joseph Addison and Sir Richard Steele, <i>The Spectator</i> , nos. 1, 2, 69, 174, 232, and 428 Henry St. John, [later Lord Viscount Bolingbroke], from <i>Letters of Henry St. John to the Earl of Orrery, 1709-1711</i> J. G. A. Pocock, "The mobility of property and the rise of eighteenth-century sociology" Lawrence Klein, "Property and politeness in the early eighteenth-century Whig moralists: the case of the <i>Spectator</i> "
	F	9/26	Susannah Centlivre, <i>A Bold Stroke for a Wife</i>
Week 5	M	9/29	Susannah Centlivre, <i>A Bold Stroke for a Wife</i> Daniel Defoe, <i>The Villainy of Stock-Jobbers Detected</i>
	TU	9/30	CREDIT/NO ENTRY DEADLINE FOR FULL SEMESTER COURSES
	W	10/1	Alexander Pope, <i>The Rape of the Lock</i>
	F	10/3	Alexander Pope, <i>The Rape of the Lock</i> Sidney Mintz, from <i>Sweetness and Power</i> , pp. 35-46, 108-20 John E. Wills, Jr., "European consumption and Asian production in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries"
Week 6	M	10/6	NO CLASS (YOM KIPPUR)
	W	10/8	Daniel Defoe, from the <i>Review</i> Daniel Defoe, <i>An Essay on the South-Sea Trade</i> Colin Palmer, "The Development of the British Slave Trade to Spanish America"
	F	10/10	Daniel Defoe, <i>The Anatomy of Exchange Alley</i>
Week 7	M	10/13	Alexander Pope, <i>Epistle to Bathurst</i> Jonathan Swift, "Upon the South Sea Project" Catherine Ingrassia, "The Pleasure of Business and the Business of Pleasure"
	W	10/15	John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, <i>Cato's Letters</i> , nos. 2-6, 9-10, 17-18, 35, 40, 89, 107 (Volume I, pp. 40-59, 68-86, 123-32, 250-54, 278-82; Volume II, pp. 638-42, 753-61)
	F	10/17	John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, <i>Cato's Letters</i> , nos. 24-26, 33, 38, 59-60, 63, 68, 84, 106 (Volume I, pp. 174-94, 234-40, 266-72, 405-20, 435-42, 483-93; Volume II, pp. 607-13, 747-53)

Week 8	FALL BREAK		
Week 9	M	10/27	Dickinson, <i>Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania</i>
	W	10/29	Samuel Johnson, "Taxation No Tyranny" P. J. Marshall, "Parliament and property rights in the late eighteenth-century British Empire"
	F	10/31	United States' <i>Declaration of Independence</i> Bernard Bailyn, "The Logic of Rebellion"
Week 10	M	11/3	<i>Constitution of the United States</i> James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay, from <i>The Federalist Papers</i> , nos. 1, 10, 35, 36, 51, 54, 60, and 85
	W	11/5	James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay, from <i>The Federalist Papers</i> , nos. 1, 10, 35, 36, 51, 54, 60, and 85
	F	11/7	Richard Henry Lee, <i>Letters from the Federal Farmer</i>
Week 11	M	11/10	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Edgar Huntly</i> , pp. 3-68 (chapters 1-7)
	W	11/12	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Edgar Huntly</i> , pp. 69-142 (chapters 8-14)
	F	11/14	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Edgar Huntly</i> , pp. 143-213 (chapters 15-21) Cornplanter, "Listen to me, Fathers of the thirteen Fires" Red Jacket, "Brother, the Great Spirit has made us all" Little Turtle, "Brothers, these People never told us they wished to purchase our Lands from us"
Week 12	M	11/17	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Edgar Huntly</i> , pp. 214-285 (chapter 22-end) Jared Gardner, "Alien Nation: Edgar Huntly's Savage Awakening"
	W	11/19	Robert Ferguson, "The Limits of Enlightenment"
	F	11/21	David Brion Davis, "Antislavery and the Conflict of Laws"

Week 13	M	11/24	Quobna Ottobah Cuguano, <i>Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species</i> , pp. 9-60 (“and to swallow them up in the sea of destruction and oblivion”)
	W	11/26	Quobna Ottobah Cuguano, <i>Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species</i> , p. 60 (“History affords us many examples of severe retaliations”) – p. 111
	F	11/28	NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING)
Week 14	M	12/1	Olaudah Equiano, <i>The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavas Vassa, The African</i> , pp. 5-130 (chapters 1-6)
	W	12/3	Olaudah Equiano, <i>The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavas Vassa, The African</i> , pp. 131-236 (chapters 7-12)
	F	12/5	English abolitionists (Specific readings to be announced)
Week 15	M	12/8	Richard Cumberland, <i>The West Indian</i>
	W	12/10	Richard Cumberland, <i>The West Indian</i>
	F	12/12	Conclusions ASSIGNMENT DUE: PAPER 2