

ENGLISH 477
RESTORATION AND 18TH-CENTURY
BRITISH LITERATURE
FALL 2007
(THREE SEMESTER CREDIT HOURS)

DR. PAUL W. CHILD

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CLASS DAYS AND TIMES: MWF 10:00 A.M. TO 10:50 A.M.

LOCATION: EVANS 417

OFFICE HOURS: MWF 11:00 A.M. TO 12:00 A.M., AND BY APPOINTMENT

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

English 477, Restoration and Eighteenth-Century British Literature, surveys the literature of Great Britain from 1660, the year in which the English restored the monarchy after the Interregnum, to 1798, the year in which Wordsworth and Coleridge ushered in “Romanticism” with the publication of their *Lyrical Ballads*. The familiar and not-so-familiar authors that we read include Pepys, Sprat, Locke, Rochester, Butler, Behn, Wycherley, Dryden, Addison and Steele, Swift, Gray, Johnson, Chatterton, Wollstonecraft, and Blake. In reading their works, we test some of the popular myths about the so-called “long eighteenth century”: Was this, in fact, an “age of reason”? an age of “enlightenment”? a “neoclassical” age? an age of “sensibility”?

Grounding the writers and their works in their cultural and historical contexts, the course seeks above all to dispel the myth that the eighteenth century was an age of stiff brocades, unswerving gentlemanly and gentlewomanly decorum, and stuffy dinner conversations over port wine. It was, instead, a time of brawling, bustling, busyboding, sometimes meditative but often reckless, boisterous, inquisitive and acquisitive, often daring and sometimes smug, grave and querulous, gossipy, blushing and bawdy, blustering, earthy, exuberant, and embattled men and women who saw the birth of the information age and a consumer economy, the fluidization of class lines, and the groundswell of the *-isms* that we call “modern”: secularism, skepticism, and empiricism. Standing thus at the edge of our own world, the writers of the day acknowledged and ignored, recorded, and wrestled with these developments, encouraged them, resisted them, and debated them. Their responses are the stuff of our course.

Requirements include a reading response journal, midterm and final examinations, and active and steady participation.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of one sophomore English class or equivalent.

Course value: Three semester credit hours.

2. COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course aims primarily to

- give you a broader understanding and appreciation of literature from Restoration and 18th-century Britain
- develop your skills in expressing yourself in writing
- encourage you to analyze and critically evaluate arguments and points of view

3. POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

A. REQUIRED TEXTS:

The Longman Anthology of British Literature Volume 1C: The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century (2nd ed.). ISBN: 0-321-10668-7 (paper)

Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (ed. Fox). ISBN: 0-312-06665-1 (paper)

Course Supplement (provided for you)

You must purchase or otherwise procure the texts for this course and bring the appropriate book(s) to class every day.

B. COURSE REQUIREMENTS (WITH APPROXIMATE RELATIVE VALUES):*

Reading Response Journal (35%)

Comprehensive Midterm Essay Examination (25%)

Comprehensive Final Essay Examination (30%)

Participation (10%): To do well with this grade, *engage* the class: Show that you care about the materials and the assignments. Come to class; come to class on time; come to class having read the assigned readings and eager to discuss them. Avoid complacency. Try to break the habit of automatically answering, "I don't know" when your professor directs a question toward you. You probably *do* know, if you give the question a couple of moments' thought. Show me also that you are taking careful class notes.

C. ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Since you have decided to take this class at this time, I presume that you *want* to be here. Accordingly, I expect that you attend class *every* day. Life being what it is, however, you are allowed *five* absences before your final grade begins dropping incrementally. After those five, an *A* becomes a *B*, a *B* becomes a *C*, and so forth. The clock begins ticking as soon as your name appears on my roster.

Except in the case of a university-excused absence (for which I should receive formal documentation), I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. Please—no doctor's notes, hospital vouchers, death certificates, court summons, or long tales of woe!

An extended illness does not excuse you from this policy; my rationale is that if you are too ill to attend all classes, you should withdraw from your courses and try them again when you can attend without distraction or dis-ease.

If you have a demanding job, an unreasonable pet, "personal problems," or other extracurricular distractions that will prevent your attending class regularly and submitting all assignments on time, please take another class and try this one again in a later term.

D. LATE ARRIVAL, EARLY DEPARTURE:

* To receive credit for this course, you must submit/complete all of the major components listed here.

Arriving late is both disruptive and impractical. So for the protection of your fellow students (and myself), we abide by the Stacey Smith Clause (named affectionately after a student who very disruptively used to arrive five minutes late to every class and begin packing up her belongings to leave ten minutes early): Every two instances of tardiness count as one absence. You are tardy if you arrive after I begin making announcements or lecturing.

Do not leave class early unless you provide me with a formal note *before class begins* explaining the reason for leaving. If you stay less than half the class, of course, you are absent for the day.

E. MAKE UP POLICY:

An absence does not excuse you from taking an examination or from submitting a written assignment on time.

You should try always to avoid missing an examination date, of course. In the rare case that you must miss such a day, however, give me substantial notice; I'd rather not hear about your absence after the fact. We will arrange for you to make up the examination before the next class period of attendance.

If you are absent on the day on which a written assignment is due, you must get the material to me in physical form on the due date (except in the most unusual circumstances, I am reluctant to accept materials in electronic form). Give it to me sometime *before* the due date, or send it by way of a trusted friend.

F. OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXTRA CREDIT:

None. There are too many other ways to succeed in this class.

G. GRADING:

This class observes a standard ten-point grading scale:

91-100	A
81-90	B
71-80	C
61-70	D
-60	F

Sometime shortly before the midterm drop date (Wednesday, October 10), I will make up a spread sheet with your averages so that you know where you stand in the class to that point. While I would never encourage anyone to drop the class, except in a case in which excessive absences make your passing impossible, the spread sheet average will help you make a better-informed decision about your possibilities for success in the course.

I will post grades confidentially on line no later than 9:00 a.m. on Monday, December 17, the deadline set by the Office of the Registrar.

H. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

For definitions of academic dishonesty in general, I refer you first to the Sam Houston State University policy statement about such dishonesty in Paragraph 5.3 of the "Code of Student Conduct and Discipline" in the official *Student Guidelines*. Please read through the short description very carefully.

Plagiarism (a word that comes from the Latin term for plundering) is literary theft, the intentional or sometimes merely careless stealing of someone else's words or ideas and the passing them off as one's own without giving due credit to the original author. Plagiarism not only defeats the very purpose of the educational process—to make an independent thinker and writer of you—but also constitutes academic

fraud. Any assignment convicted of plagiarism will fail; in serious and clearly deliberate cases, the student will fail the course and face the appropriate dean for further disciplinary action.

Unintentional plagiarism is plagiarism nonetheless.

There are a number of sources on the Internet that give guidelines about academic honesty; some of them are even *reliable*.

I. NOTE ON NOTES: CLIFF'S NOTES, MONARCH NOTES, SPARKNOTES, AND OTHER SUCH DIGEST GUIDES TO LITERATURE:

Usually such resources provide useful plot and character summaries, cultural backgrounds, and some critical commentary. You may find them helpful for establishing contexts and understanding the texts, which are not always easy. You may, for example, find help in SparkNotes, available on line. The Twayne volumes in the library (something akin to Cliff's Notes for scholars) provide more sophisticated analyses. I find them helpful in preparing lectures, and you may wish to use them for help with your reading.

Do not, however, read such digest guides as *substitutes* for the primary works themselves; a work of literature is not a paraphrase or summary. In order to write any essay or pass any examination, you will have to read the original works.

Of course, to avoid plagiarism, you should never draw language or ideas from these guides in writing assignments. (I own copies of many of these and can almost always spot plagiarism.)

And please—as a matter of respect to your professor, your fellow students, and the venerable Behn, Dryden, Swift, Pope, et alia—do not ever bring such a guide into the classroom. Agreed?

J. CLASSROOM COMPORIMENT:

Please observe the customary classroom courtesies. I will merely paraphrase the University's policy statement here: Students will avoid any classroom conduct that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and thus impedes the missions of the University. Please turn off or mute your cellular phone before class begins. Do not use/check a text-messaging device. You may not open a lap-top computer in class. Remove iPod "buds" and other such ornaments. You should not eat in class; use tobacco products; make derogatory remarks about fellow students or the class (your professor has a remarkably good sense for hearing whispers); read newspapers or do work for other classes; sleep (ouch); talk with fellow students (or to yourself!) at inappropriate times; wear inappropriate clothing; or engage in any other form of distraction.

The class begins at 10:00 a.m. and ends at 10:50 a.m. Please do not begin to pack up belongings—very distracting to professor and fellow students—until you are dismissed at 10:50. (Thank you.)

If you engage in disruptive or otherwise inappropriate behavior in the classroom, I will ask that you leave the room. Continued behavior of this sort will result in dismissal from the class and referral to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action.

K. ADDENDA:

Students with Disabilities: Sam Houston State University responsibly observes the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you have a disability that may adversely affect your work in this class, please register with the SHSU Counseling Center and talk with your professor about how he can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. No accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center, however. Contact the Chair of the Committee for Continuing Assistance for Disabled Students and Director of the Counseling Center, Lee Drain Annex, by calling (936) 294-1720.

Observance of Religious Holy Days: Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself or herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s) early in the term.

Visitors in the Classroom: I always welcome visitors in the class-room—a chance for *you* to show off. But the visitor must not disrupt the classroom with his or her attendance.

Instructor Evaluation: The University asks that you complete a course/ instructor evaluation form toward the end of the term. So if you bide your time patiently, you will have the opportunity to turn the tables on your professor by evaluating *him*.

E-Mail Policy: I am always happy to answer questions or address concerns by e-mail (eng_pwc@shsu.edu). But in e-mailing, please address me (“Dear Professor Child”), and identify yourself clearly. (Thank you.)

And Finally: I reserve the right to make minor changes in the syllabus.