This course looks at two pivotal writers at a watershed moment in British literary history, 1650-1700: John Dryden, and Aphra Behn. Through the works of these wonderful literary artists, we will consider five key themes: the crisis of civil war and questions of monarchy and rule; the Catholic-Protestant divisions of Britain with their ideological, cultural, and ethnic implications; the new empirical science against the backdrop of world exploration and colonization; the emergence of mercantile capitalism; and changing conceptions of sexuality and gender, particularly as women took up literary expression. We will examine poetry, drama, and prose in the context of a rich and waning baroque sensibility that was giving way to a more ‘modern’ world.


**WORK:** Midterm (25%); Take-Home Final (25%); In-Class Essays (25%); Presented Scene & Essay (25%)

---

**WK 1 (3/31): ‘Early Modern’: Looking Forward, Looking Back; Royalist & Puritan; Gender & Heroism**

**T:** Introduction: Books; the Course; 17th-Century Britain—Civil War, Restoration, & a transforming World


**Th:** Baroque Poetry: Behn, “Love Armed” (*Oroonoko, the Rover, &c.*, p.329; also read intro. 1-22); Dryden, *All for Love* (Act I)

**Terms:** Periods of Eng.Literature—Commonwealth P., Restoration, Augustan Age, lyric, baroque (Abrams)

---

**WK 2 (4/7): Dryden—Classical & Mythic Patterns, Gendered Spheres, & the Personal as Tragedy**

**T:** *All for Love* (Acts I-II)

**Th:** *All for Love* (Acts II-III)

**Terms:** Neoclassical Period, tragedy, blank verse, poetic diction, masque

---

**WK 3 (4/14): Dryden & Behn—Classical & Mythic Patterns, Gendered Spheres, & the Personal Voice**

**T:** Dryden, *All for Love* (Acts III-V)

**Th:** Dryden, *All for Love* (Acts IV-V); Behn, “Paraphrase on Ovid” (Canvas)

**Terms:** three unities, heroic drama, character, plot, soliloquy, verse epistle

---

**WK 4 (4/21): Behn—Classical & Mythic Patterns, Gendered Spheres, the Personal & the Satirical**

**T:** Behn, “Paraphrase on Ovid” (BBoard); Dryden, “Macflecknoe” (*Selected Poems*, 99-105)

**Th:** Dryden, “Macflecknoe” (142-47); Aphra Behn, “To My Lady Morland…&c.” (Canvas)

**Terms:** heroic couplet, apostrophe, allusion, figurative language, rhetorical figures, rhetorical question, satire
WK 5 (4/28): The Satirical Sensibility—John Dryden & Aphra Behn

T:  <***MIDTERM EXAM***>

Th:  Aphra Behn, “The Disappointment,” “To the Fair Clarinda,” (Oroonoko &c., 223, 262)

Terms: burlesque wit, burlesque, conceit, mock epic/epic, epic simile, pastoral, irony

WK 6 (5/5): Heroism, Love, & Gender in Satire and Comic Drama

T:  Aphra Behn, The Rover (Acts I-II)

Th:  Behn, The Rover (Acts II-IV)

Terms: comedy, tragicomedy, prose, meter, stock characters, stock situations, wit—repartee, intrigue comedy

WK 7 (5/12): Comparing & Contrasting Comic & Satiric Sensibilities—Behn & Dryden

T:  Behn, The Rover (Acts III-V)

Th:  Behn, The Rover (Act V); Dryden, Marriage-à-la-Mode (Act I-II)

Terms: comedy of manners, tragicomedy, stock characters, stock situations, wit—repartee

WK 8 (5/19): Comparing & Contrasting Comic & Satiric Sensibilities—Behn & Dryden

T:  Dryden, Marriage-à-la-Mode (Acts II-IV)

Th:  Dryden, Marriage-à-la-Mode (Act IV-V)

Terms: pastoral, prose, meter, stock characters, stock situations, wit—repartee, tragicomedy, heroic drama

WK 9 (5/26): Gender, Spirituality, & Idealized Realms of Art & Nature

T:  John Dryden, “To…Anne Killigrew” & “Song for St. Cecilia’s Day” (Selected Poems, 214-19, 292-94)

Th:  Aphra Behn, Oroonoko (Oroonoko &c., 75-103)

Terms: ode, irony, paradox, figurative language, platonic love, pastoral; prose, narrative, novel

WK 10 (6/2): Fictional & Non-fictional Prose—Narratives & Analysis & the Private Vantage

T:  Aphra Behn, Oroonoko (Oroonoko &c., 75-141)

Th:  John Dryden, “Preface” to Fables Ancient & Modern (Selected Poems, 398-420) ***Final Essay Due***

Terms: point of view, plot, suspense; criticism, essay