

ENG 399 Special Studies: Eighteenth-Century Things

Instructor: Katy Brundan
Winter 2016: CRN 22195

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Office Hours: Tues 1-3pm, Wed 1-3pm and by appointment.

Class: MWF 11-11.50am, 142 HEDCO Ed. Bldg. Phone: 541 346 0937

Course Overview

This course examines the lively world of things – objects, commodities, necessities, frivolities – in eighteenth-century fiction. Nowadays the subject of Pinterest pages, eighteenth-century objects generated their own curious and popular narratives. We will begin with “it-narratives,” stories told from the point of view of objects themselves, with titles such as “The Adventures of a Lady’s Slippers” or “The History of an Atom.” Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* follows this obsession with objects, and people-treated-as-objects, to cement the hero’s status as a colonial subject. Our reading of objects will be wide-ranging, including Lady Mary Wortley Montagu’s travel narrative, *Turkish Embassy Letters*, Horace Walpole’s gothic novel *The Castle of Otranto*, and Jane Austen’s *Northanger Abbey*. This course will introduce students to concepts of literary theory and history as we explore “thing” theory and the circulation of commodities.

Required Texts (from UO Bookstore)

Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (Oxford UP)
Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (Oxford UP)
Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (Penguin)

* Please try to obtain these editions. Please note that Kindle and other electronic editions typically do not contain explanatory notes and/or translations, meaning that you will miss important details.

Packet containing readings (from Copyshop on 13th Ave)

Course Requirements:

1. Regular and active participation in class discussion, & presentation. 15%
2. Quizzes. 10%
3. Paper one: 3-4 pages. 20%
4. Paper two: 4-page paper. 20%
5. Paper three: 6-page paper. 35%

Policies

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory and you must arrive **promptly**. You may miss two classes without penalty (one week's worth of class meetings); students who are absent more than the allowed number will lose 1/3 of a letter grade for each additional day absent, deducted from the final letter grade. Please see me if you have an extended illness or exceptional circumstances.

Quizzes

Quizzes will be held every Friday. You may take up to two quizzes by email in cases of sickness (student athletes – please see me for accommodation). If you are getting low grades on the quizzes, this is a sign you may need to drop the class.

Presentations

On Wednesdays, groups will help **lead class discussion** (starting week 2). This involves carefully reading the assigned text, drawing up and printing out questions to ask the class (either large or small group work, as you wish), pointing out passages that merit special attention, and suggesting possible links to other themes and texts covered in class.

Papers

Written work is due in class on the day assigned, unless you have made prior arrangements with me (this means that if you are sick you email me before the essay is due and I will grant an extension.) Late work will be penalized. Do **not** consult any Internet sources when writing your papers. Many such sources are unreliable and may even be plagiarized.

Paper one: 4 pages

This will be an essay on *Robinson Crusoe*, responding to specific questions based on themes covered so far in the course (a handout will be available).

Paper two: 4 pages

You may write on any relation of objects in the “it” narratives, poems, and Lady Mary’s narrative (a handout will be available). Please refer to one of our secondary readings.

Final paper: 6 pages

This 6-page paper will discuss an object using two primary texts (a handout will be available). Your paper should include some reference to the critical reading for the course.

Academic Honesty

All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented.

See the Library's website for more information about plagiarism in general, and about specific UO policies:

<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/>

Academic dishonesty will result in an automatic failing grade for this course. For more information about the consequences of academic dishonesty, refer to the Student Conduct Code (especially Articles V.A and XII.A):

http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/programs/student_judi_affairs/conduct-code.htm

Please see me if you have any questions about your use of sources, or about this policy.

Students with disabilities

If you have a disability (physical or learning), or any other issue, which you think may affect your performance in this class, please see me during the first week of term so that we can make arrangements, if necessary, for your full access to all classroom activities.

Formatting essays

** Please use 12-point Times or Times New Roman, with regular margins. Essays with extra-large fonts, wide gaps, or less than the required number of pages will be penalized.

In literary essays, MLA style indicates you need only the **page number in parentheses** followed by a period. You do not need to cite the author as in other disciplines (eg. Conrad, 87) if this is obvious from the context. You must have a **Works Cited** page or paragraph.

Longer quotes should be indented, with no quotation marks, with the period coming *before* the page number.

Examples of MLA style:

In *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad describes the company manager as inspiring “neither love nor fear, nor even respect” (87).

Carretta and Gould explain that:

The black writing that appeared during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – which included the genres of spiritual autobiography, captivity narrative, travel narrative, public epistle, sea adventure, and economic success story – is a literature of diasporic movement and cultural encounter. Born to enslaved African parents on a ship in the Middle Passage bearing its human cargo from Africa to the Americas and then brought to England, Sancho might serve as an emblem of most of the writers discussed in *Genius in Bondage*. (5)

Works Cited:

Carretta, Vincent, and Philip Gould, eds. *Genius in Bondage: Literature of the Early Black Atlantic*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2001.

Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. New York: Norton, 1972.

Learning Outcomes

- Identify the role of objects to eighteenth-century British society and their reflection of a growing consumer-driven and colonial Europe.
- Apply theorists on the role of objects in our lives to eighteenth-century fictional and nonfictional texts.
- Evaluate literary texts, not merely for plot or comprehension, but with a heightened sensitivity to linguistic ambiguities, competing interpretations, cultural history, and generic traditions.
- Identify how eighteenth-century literature reflects historical conditions, including colonialism, gender roles, and literary movements.
- Apply critical thinking skills to develop sophisticated oral and written interpretations of texts.

Schedule

Week 1

Mon 4 Jan – Introduction

Wed 6 Jan – Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*
Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race* – both in Packet
Subjects, objects, speaking objects, & things

Fri 8 Jan

Please make a 5-7-minute presentation on one of these objects. Please Google:

1. 18th century umbrella
2. South Seas bubble
3. 18th century gold dust
4. 17th and 18th century breeches
5. 18th century trade
6. This article on ship's cargos <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/sunken-18th-century-slave-ship-found-south-africa-180955458/?no-ist>
7. Automaton

Here are some texts to check out on Eighteenth Century Collections Online (UO Library databases)

Jonathan Swift's "Description of a City Shower" (umbrella)
<https://britlitwiki.wikispaces.com/A+Description+of+a+City+Shower>

Swift, "The Bubble"

<http://www.online-literature.com/swift/poems-of-swift/43/>

Charles Dibin, *Hannah Hewit; or, the female Crusoe*. Search for “bubble” and “automaton” on ECCO

(heroine’s background of industrialism at beginning drives her to leave England, moves to London to be a japper, investment in tin mine is disaster and need to be rescued from debtor’s prison, goes to France, England and then hopes to go to India to find brother; shipwrecked off coast of Africa and ends up on island)

Defoe, *A New Voyage Around the World*. Search for “gold” on ECCO. (A novel about circumnavigating the world going to the Philippines and then Chile, crossing South America.)

Week 2

Mon 11 Jan – *Robinson Crusoe* 5-42

Wed 13 Jan – *Robinson Crusoe* 42-71

Fri 15 Jan – *Robinson Crusoe* 71-110

Week 3

Mon 18 Jan – Martin Luther King Day

Wed 20 Jan – *Robinson Crusoe* 110-152

Fri 22 Jan – *Robinson Crusoe* 152-193

Week 4

Mon 25 Jan – *Robinson Crusoe* 193-230

Wed 27 Jan – *Robinson Crusoe* 230-end

Fri 29 Jan – Marx, “The Fetishism of the Commodity”
Lamb, *The Things Things Say* (Packet)

Week 5

Mon 1 Feb – Bellamy, “It-Narrators and Circulation”
The History and Adventures of a Lady’s Slippers and Shoes (packet)

Wed 3 Feb – *Adventures of a Rupee, The Memoirs and Adventures of a Flea* (packet)

Fri 5 Feb – *The Adventures of a Pin*, Smollett, *Adventures of an Atom* (packet)
Essay one due on Canvas

Week 6

Mon 8 Feb – *Chrysal, Adventures of a Guinea* (Packet)

Wed 10 Feb – Poems: Thomas “On Sir J____ S____,” Montagu, “Saturday: The Small-Pox,” Tollet, “On a Death’s Head,” Teft, “On Viewing Herself in a Glass,” Leapor “An Essay on Women”

Fri 12 Feb – Poems: Leapor “The Epistle of Deborah Dough,” “Upon her Play being returned to her, stained with Claret,” Barbauld, “Washing-Day,” Moody, “Sappho Burns her Books,” Alcock, “A Receipt for Writing a Novel”

Week 7

Mon 15 Feb – Montagu, *Turkish Embassy Letters* (introduction & 1-57)

Wed 17 Feb – *Turkish Embassy Letters* (57-120)

Fri 19 Feb – *Turkish Embassy Letters* (120-167)

Week 8

Mon 22 Feb – *The Castle of Otranto* (5-38 end chap 1)

Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (Packet)

Wed 24 Feb – *The Castle of Otranto* (39-79)

Botting, *Gothic* (Packet)

Fri 26 Feb – **Essay 2 due on Canvas**

The Castle of Otranto (80-115)

“The Architecture of Imagination” about Walpole’s gothic mansion (on Canvas). Examine these websites about the villa:

<http://images.library.yale.edu/strawberryhill/index.html>

<http://www.strawberryhillhouse.org.uk/rooms.php>

Week 9

Mon 29 Feb – *Northanger Abbey* (1-50, end chap 9)

Wed 2 Mar – *Northanger Abbey* (50-90, end chap 14)

Hill, *Servants*

Fri 4 Mar – *Northanger Abbey* (90-120, end chap vol 2, chap 4)

Hecht, *The Domestic Servant*

Week 10

Mon 7 Mar – *Northanger Abbey* (120-167, end vol 2, chap 10)

Byrne, *The Real Jane Austen*

Wed 9 Mar – *Northanger Abbey* (167-to end)

Fri 11 Mar – Essay workshop

Finals Week

Final Essay due Tuesday 15 March at 10am on Canvas.