

ENGL 4460-01: GLOBAL CROSSROADS IN 18TH-CENTURY LIT

Spring 2017, TH 2:00-4:25, Stokes Hall South 207



Professor: Rebekah Mitsein
Office: Stokes Hall South 485
Email: mitseinr@bc.edu
Office Hours: T 12:15-3 and TH 12:15-1:50, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Caribbean sugar, Indian spices, Chinese silk, and African gold, what was eighteenth-century "Britain" made of? The era's literature has a reputation for being obsessively nationalistic, even xenophobic, written as it was at the dawn of Empire. But given the influx of global goods into the country, what stories, discourses, and ideas might have come along with them? How were British writers affected by contact with faraway peoples, places, ideas, objects, and texts?

In this seminar, we will consider some international roots of the British literary tradition. The syllabus includes works by British authors, but we will also situate these texts in global contexts. We will, for example, look at a travel narrative of India published in English but written by an Indian (Dean Mahomet, 1794), at excerpts from the first African biography of an Ethiopian woman (Wälättä Petros, 1672), at an anonymously authored text about gender and race in the early Atlantic (*The Woman Of Colour*, 1808), and at the material culture that brought the world to Britain.

BOOK LIST:

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*, ISBN: 978-0140439885
Ed. Frank Felsenstein, *English Trader, Indian Maid*, ISBN: 978-0801861062
Daniel Defoe, *Captain Singleton* (On Canvas)
Samuel Johnson, *Rasselas*, ISBN: 978-1551116013
Mary Wortley Montagu, *Turkish Embassy Letters*, ISBN: 978-1554810420
Ed. Michael Fisher, *The Travels of Dean Mahomet*, ISBN: 978-0520207172
Anonymous, *The Woman of Colour*, ISBN: 978-1551111766
Belle (Film)
Select critical and contextual readings on Canvas



Gujarat Cloth c. 1740

Books are available at the BC Bookstore. If you purchase your books from an online vendor, you must buy the editions listed so we can all be on the same page. Everyone must have their hard copy of the assigned book in class with them every day, unless it is a reading I have posted on Canvas. Those may be brought in on a tablet or laptop (not your phone).

ASSESSMENT:

Short Paper: 15%
Canvas Posts: 5%
Digital StoryMap: 15%
Annotated Bibliography: 10%
Research Proposal: 5%
Final Research Project: 35%
Participation and In-Class Work: 15%

Assignments: Like all Advanced Topic Seminars, this is a discussion intensive class intended to foster critical inquiry and independent research. Over the course of the semester, you will be building toward a final research project on a topic of your choosing. Your job will be to generate an original argument from this topic, support it with and also *differentiate* it from scholarly secondary sources (compiled in your annotated bibliography), and articulate the stakes or the significance of your research project. In other words, how does your argument encourage us to think in a new way about a text, context, or idea?



William Blake, "Europe Supported by Africa and America," 1796

In addition to your final research project, you will write a short, thesis-driven literary analysis paper. I will be looking for three things: 1.) your independent interpretation of a text or portion of a text; 2.) support for your interpretation, including close reading and the application of theoretical concepts from our secondary readings; and 3.) an explanation of what your interpretation of the text illustrates about the larger themes of the course. You will receive a prompt for this paper.

Because part of the objective of this class is to remap the ways we think about the movement of peoples, ideas, and objects, you will each be responsible for making a StoryMap of one of our novels (<https://storymap.knightlab.com/>). This assignment asks you to make a visual of the geographical scope of the text, chart the movement of material objects, and make connections between our texts and their global context. I will show you how the software works in class, and I will do the StoryMap of the first novel, *Oroonoko*, so you will have a concrete example. Two resources that will be helpful with this assignment are the image databases on the websites for the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Mini prompts for Canvas posts, which ask you to write a short paragraph reflecting critically on some aspect of the assigned reading, are listed in the schedule. **The Canvas posts are due by 11:59pm the night before we meet for class.** They will be incorporated into class discussion, so be prepared to expound on your observations if called on to do so.

Regular and thoughtful participation in class discussion is crucial not only for your grade but for making class time interesting and productive. If you're generally anxious about speaking in class, or if there is something in particular happening in the class that makes you reluctant to contribute, please come talk to me about it.

Grading Scale: Students who receive grades in the "A" range contribute to class discussion regularly and relevantly. They listen to and respond to their classmates. They write exemplary papers that are

organized and that build on (rather than repeat) in-class material. They show that they have read the assigned texts closely and understood the nuances of class lectures and discussions. They take academic risks. They ask questions in class if there is something they don't understand, and they come to office hours when they are struggling.

Students who receive grades in the "B" range contribute to class discussion often. They are attentive when their classmates are speaking. They write papers that are organized and engage with in-class material in a critical, thoughtful way. They show that they have read the assigned texts and understood the bulk of class lectures and discussions. They take academic risks. They ask questions in class if there is something they don't understand, and they come to office hours when they are struggling.

Students who receive grades in the "C" range contribute to class discussion a few times a semester. Their papers meet the requirements of the assignment. They show that they have read the assigned texts and understood the gist of class lectures and discussions. They are comfortable repeating in-class material. They are less likely to ask questions in class if there is something they don't understand or come to office hours when they are struggling.

A grade of a "D" or an "F" usually results from students not doing the reading, missing too much class, and/or habitually turning in assignments late (or not at all).

A	94-100	B	83-86	C	70-75
A-	90-93	B-	80-82	D	60-69
B+	87-89	C+	76-79	F	59 and below

Grade Contestations: If you wish to contest a grade, I am always open to discussion. You must submit your request in writing (an email is fine) and include evidence from the assignment prompt and rubric that the grade you received was unjust. Your concerns will be taken seriously into consideration but will not guarantee a grade change.

POLICIES:

Professionalism: Putting our intellectual selves out in the open can be intimidating and awkward. Some of our readings and class discussions may cover uncomfortable themes. We may challenge each other's beliefs and values; however, there is a commonsense difference between academic disagreement and disrespect. Harassment, bullying, threats, belittlement, violence, or slanderous or discriminatory language will not be tolerated.

Please be respectful of your fellow classmates by listening when others are speaking. This means no sleeping, putting your heads down on your desks, or finishing your chemistry homework in class. This also means keeping your cellphones on silent and in your bag—if I see you on your phone, I will count it as the equivalent of a tardy (three will equal an absence).

Attendance and Tardiness: Since we only meet once a week, you are only allowed **1** unexcused absence from this class. If you are dealing with extenuating circumstances, such as a debilitating and documented illness (mono, clinical depression, a hospitalized injury, etc.) or a death of a loved one, please let me know. There are a few out-of-class activities for this ATS that you should try your hardest to attend. If you absolutely cannot make it to one, let me know and I will give you an equivalent assignment.

Deadlines and Late Work: I don't allow makeup Canvas posts. Papers will be docked a shaded letter grade from the final grade for each day (24 hour period) they are late. I offer extensions under extenuating circumstances; however, arrangements should be made 24 hours before the assignment is due.

Disabilities: I'm happy to make reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Please contact Kathy Duggan, (617) 552-8093, at the Connors Family Learning Center regarding learning disabilities, or Paulette Durrett, (617) 552-3470, in the Disability Services Office regarding all other types of disabilities. The Disability Service Office website has more information: http://www.bc.edu/offices/dos/subsidiary_offices/disabilityservices.html.

Athletics and Other Extracurricular University Programs: If you need to miss class for a university event, please provide prior permission from your coach or program organizer and a written schedule of the days you will miss. Days missed due to university activities will not count towards your allotted absences. You are responsible for getting the notes and announcements for that day from a fellow classmate.

Academic Integrity: BC's Statement on Academic Integrity defines plagiarism as "the act of taking the words, ideas, data, illustrations, or statements of another person or source, and presenting them as one's own. Each student is responsible for learning and using proper methods of paraphrasing and footnoting, quotation, and other forms of citation, to ensure that the original author, speaker, illustrator, or source of the material used is clearly acknowledged."
http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/univcat/undergrad_catalog/policies_procedures.html

Taking even seemingly benign phrases about a text or author from websites like Wikipedia or sparknotes.com is plagiarism. Such sources will be useless to you for this class anyway, so it is best to just stay away from them. When you do consult an outside source, cite it and use quotation marks where appropriate.

Email and Course Website: Your BC email address will be used to conduct all official communication for this class. Check Canvas for announcements and changes to the schedule. I check my own email often, but can't always instantly respond, so if you have questions about an assignment, email me at least a day before it is due.

Rough Draft Policy: I encourage you to seek feedback on rough drafts in person either during my office hours or by making an appointment to meet with me. Please note that while I am always happy to answer questions about assignments via email, I will not comment on rough drafts via email except under extenuating circumstances (I'm out of town at a conference, for example).

SCHEDULE:

The following schedule is tentative.
I will post any major changes to it on Canvas.

Note: We will have two special events this semester, dates TBA.
One will be a digital research workshop, which we will attend with



Japanned Cabinet 1765

Professor Harrison-Kahan's ATS class, put together by BC's Senior Digital Scholarship Librarian. The other is a field trip to the Gore place in Waltham, which will take place during scheduled class time. I will provide transportation to and from campus for those who need it.

Th. Jan 19: First day of class: Why Globalism?
James Thomson, *Rule! Britannia* (In Class)
Addison and Steele, *The Spectator* 69 (In Class)
Excerpt from Ignatius Sancho's *Letters* (In Class)

Th. Jan 26: Edward Said, "Orientalism" (Canvas)
Mary Louise Pratt, excerpt from *Imperial Eyes* (Canvas)
Wendy Belcher, excerpt from *Abyssinia's Samuel Johnson* (Canvas)

Th. Feb 2: Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*
Chi-ming Yang, "Asia out of Place: The Aesthetics of Incorruptibility in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*" (Canvas)
Francois d'Elbee on West Africa (Canvas)

Canvas Post: In 5-6 well thought out critical sentences, identify some similarities between Francois d'Elbee's description of the court at Ardra (modern-day Allada) and Aphra Behn's description of the court at Corimantian. What might these intersections indicate about the relationship between realism and the imaginary in Behn's text? **Alternative:** Assuming Behn read d'Elbee's account, how might that support, challenge, or change Yang's argument in "Asia out of Place"?

Th. Feb 9: From *English Trader, Indian Maid* read:
Richard Ligon, excerpt from *The True and Exact History*
Addison and Steele, *The Spectator* 11
Roxann Wheeler, excerpt from *The Complexion of Race* (Canvas)
In-Class Research Exercise: Dissecting a Critical Argument

Th. Feb 16: From *English Trader, Indian Maid*: George Colman, *Inkle and Yarico*

Canvas Post: In 5-6 well thought out critical sentences, identify one way that the story of Inkle and Yarico changes from one of these texts to another. What are the political or critical implications of that change? How might it alter the ways the reader is invited to imagine the West Indies, the people who inhabit it, or the political stakes of Britain's gradual colonization of it?

Su. Feb 19: **Short Paper Due on Canvas by 11:59pm**

Th. Feb 23: Daniel Defoe, *Captain Singleton* (Canvas)
Early Modern Arabic and Sahel Sources on the Trans-Saharan Trade (Canvas)

Canvas Post: In 5-6 well thought out critical sentences, identify some similarities between early modern Arabic and Sahel representations of Africa and Defoe's account of Singleton overland journey across the continent. In what ways might these Arabic and Sahel sources have influenced Defoe's worldview? How might this more

global view be in tension with Singleton as a character (who in some ways seems the epitome of Pratt's "seeing man"?)

- Th. Mar 2:** Daniel Defoe, *Captain Singleton* (Canvas)
Excerpt from Richard Frohock's *Buccaneers and Privateers* (Canvas)
In-Class Research Exercise: Writing an Annotation

March 6-11 – Spring Break

- Th. Mar 16:** Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Turkish Embassy Letters*
In-Class Research Exercise: Navigating Databases

- Th. Mar 23:** Anonymous, *The Woman of Colour, A Tale*

- Th. Mar 30:** **No Class.** At some point this week, watch *Belle*. You can either get together and watch it together during normal class time or arrange to pass the copy around.

Canvas Post: Now that you have some background information on race and gender in the eighteenth century, in 5-6 well thought out critical sentences reflect on how Misan Sagay (writer) and Amma Asante (writer and director) chose to treat the intersection between these two identity categories in the film. Did any of their representational choices surprise you? If so, why?

- Th. Apr 6:** *The Travels of Dean Mahomet: An Eighteenth-Century Journey Through India*
Michael H. Fisher's Introduction and Biographical Essay

Canvas Post: In 5-6 critical sentences, examine Dean Mahomet's relationship with other Indians he encounters in the regions he travels through. How might a text like Dean Mahomet's challenge the way we think about the representational possibilities for nation, religion, or class in eighteenth-century literature?

April 13-17 – Easter Break

- Th. Apr 20:** Samuel Johnson, *Rasselas*
Wendy Belcher, excerpt from *Abyssinia's Samuel Johnson* (Canvas)

Excerpt from the *Kebrä Nägäst* (Canvas)

Set up a time to meet with me this week with your research paper proposal

- Th. Apr 27:** TBA (Either field trip to the Gore place or Excerpts from *The Life and Struggles of Wälättä Petros* and In-Class Research Exercise: Critical Dialogue)

- Su. April 30:** **Annotated Bibliography Due 11:59pm**

- Th. May 4:** TBA (Either field trip to the Gore place or Excerpts from *The Life and Struggles of Wälättä Petros* In-Class Research Exercise: Critical Dialogue)

Set up a time to meet with me this week with a draft of your final research project

May 5-8 – Study Days

May 9-16 – Finals Week: Final Research Project Due



Miniature (on African ivory) of an Englishwoman in Turkish dress, Gervase Spencer, 1755