

ENGL 8001-01: THE GLOBAL EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Spring 2018, T 7-9:30, Stokes Hall South 207



Professor: Rebekah Mitsein
Office: Stokes Hall South 485
Email: mitseinr@bc.edu
Office Hours: T 4:45-6:45 and TH 10:00-11:45, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In the 69th issue of Addison and Steele's widely read periodical *The Spectator*, Mr. Spectator visits the London Exchange. Struck by the vibrancy of so many nationalities congregating in one place, Mr. Spectator declares, "I am a Dane, a Swede, or a Frenchman at different times; or rather fancy myself like the old philosopher, who upon being asked what countryman he was, replied that he was a citizen of the world." Similar sentiments are echoed in the writings of Oliver Goldsmith, James Boswell, and Ignatius Sancho, among others. What did it mean for such authors to declare themselves "citizens of the world?" Eighteenth-century British literature has a reputation for being obsessively nationalistic, defining a British Self against all foreign Others, but the eighteenth century was also a time of contact and exchange among all corners of the globe.

In this class, we will examine how British writers engaged questions of globalism and transnationalism during an era when the cultural understand of both "Britain" and "the world" were changing. The secondary material for this class comes from a variety of critical perspectives, including postcolonial and global theory, ecocriticism, geocriticism, and posthumanism/new materialism. We will discuss the different theoretical and political stakes these approaches bring to how we conceptualize the global.

BOOK LIST:

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*, ISBN: 978-0140439885
Ed. Frank Felsenstein, *English Trader, Indian Maid*, ISBN: 978-0801861062
James Grangier, *The Sugar-Cane* (On Canvas)
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
Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings* (On Canvas)
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, 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
Digital StoryMap and Presentation
Final Research Project
Participation and In-Class Work

Assignments: This is a discussion-intensive class intended to foster critical inquiry and independent research. Over the course of the semester, you will build 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, and articulate the stakes or the significance of your project. In other words, how does your argument encourage us to think in a new way about a text, context, or idea?

In addition to your final research project, you will write either a short, thesis-driven literary analysis paper or a pedagogy paper. In the literary analysis, 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. For the pedagogical option, explain how you would teach any text from our syllabus. You will need to articulate who the student audience would be, what the overall takeaway you would like them to get from the text would be (in other words, your learning objectives), which parts of the text you would highlight and why, and any other exercises or activities you would include to illuminate the text.

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 and giving a presentation on what you discovered. You can use the StoryMap website for this project (<https://storymap.knightlab.com/>), but students in the past have also used Google Maps and PowerPoint. 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 model the StoryMap for our first novel, *Oroonoko*. Two resources that might be helpful with this assignment are the image databases on the websites for the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Regular and thoughtful participation in class discussion is crucial 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.



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

Grading Scale:

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

POLICIES:

Attendance and Tardiness: You are 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.

Deadlines and Late Work: 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.

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

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).



Japanned Cabinet 1765

SCHEDULE:

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

UNIT 1: WHAT IS THE GLOBAL EIGHTEENTH CENTURY?

T. Jan 16: 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)

T. Jan 23: Edward Said, "Orientalism" (Canvas)
Mary Louise Pratt, excerpt from *Imperial Eyes* (Canvas)
Wendy Belcher, excerpt from *Abyssinia's Samuel Johnson* (Canvas)
Srinivas Aravamudan, excerpt from *Enlightenment Orientalism* (Canvas)

UNIT 2: EARLY COLONIZATION AND THE CARIBBEAN

T. Jan 30: Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*
Chi-ming Yang, "Asia out of Place: The Aesthetics of Incorruptibility in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*" (Canvas)
Francois d'Elbee on the Kingdom of Ardrah (Canvas)
Early Modern Arabic and Sahel Sources on the Trans-Saharan Trade (Canvas)

T. Feb 6: From *English Trader, Indian Maid* read:
Richard Ligon, excerpt from *The True and Exact History*
Addison and Steele, *The Spectator* 11
George Colman, *Inkle and Yarico*
Roxann Wheeler, excerpt from *The Complexion of Race* (Canvas)

T. Feb 13: James Grainger, *The Sugar-Cane*
Christobal Silva, "Georgic Fantasies: James Grainger and the Poetry of Colonial Discourse" (Canvas)
Monique Allewaert, "Insect Poetics: James Grainger, Personification, and Enlightenment Not Taken" (Canvas)

UNIT 3: AFRICA BEYOND BLANK SPACE

T. Feb 20: Daniel Defoe, *Captain Singleton* (Canvas)
Richard Jobson, excerpt from *The Golden Trade*
Rebekah Mitsein, "'Upon a journey and no journey': Mapping Africa's Waterways in *Captain Singleton*" (Canvas)

T. Feb 27: Daniel Defoe, *Captain Singleton* (Canvas)
William Dampier on the Mosquito Indians (Canvas)
Excerpt from Richard Frohock's *Buccaneers and Privateers* (Canvas)

F. March 2: Short Paper due on Canvas

March 5-10 – Spring Break

T. Mar 13: Samuel Johnson, *Rasselas*
Wendy Belcher, excerpt from *Abyssinia's Samuel Johnson* (Canvas)
Excerpt from the *Kebrä Nägäšt* (Canvas)

UNIT 4: ENLIGHTENMENT ORIENTALISM

- T. Mar 20:** Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Turkish Embassy Letters*
Excerpt from ibn Tufayl's *Hayy bin Yaqzan*
Denys Van Renen, "Montagu's Letters from the Levant: Contesting the Borders of European Selfhood" (Canvas)
- T. Mar 27:** Oliver Goldsmith, selections from *The Citizen of the World*
Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, "The Question of Who: Chinese in Europe"
Eugenia Zuroski Jenkins, "Orientalism and the English Novel"

March 29-April 2: Easter Break

- T. Apr 3:** *The Travels of Dean Mahomet: An Eighteenth-Century Journey Through India*
Michael H. Fisher's Introduction and Biographical Essay

UNIT 5: RACE AND PLACE IN THE LATE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY

- T. Apr 10:** Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings*, ed. Vincent Carretta
(Link to e-book on Canvas)
Embedded slave narratives from *The Early Caribbean Digital Archive*
- T. Apr 17:** Anonymous, *The Woman of Colour, A Tale*
Regulus Allen, "'The Sable Venus' and Desire for the Undesirable" (Canvas)
- T. Apr 29:** In-class film: *Belle*
Ian Baucom, excerpt from *Specters of the Atlantic*

May 4-7 – Study Days

May 8-15 – Finals Week: Final Research Project Due



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

Unit 1: What is the Global Eighteenth Century?

Various cultural critics have argued that in the wake of Descartes and Kant, “modern” Europeans apprehended and recreated the world, first imaginatively, through storytelling, and then literally through colonization. These representational practices went hand-in-hand with the development of Enlightenment literature and knowledge-making methodologies in the eighteenth century—the time when Europeans allegedly first began objectifying the world through empirical epistemologies and through the privileging of the eyewitness account. However, as Simon Gikandi and Wendy Laura Belcher have observed, a colonizer’s most coercive tool is the fiction that they are more powerful than they actually are (xv; 2-4). Longstanding critical frameworks that treat the European subject as an impenetrable self, fully in control of his or her representational practices maintain these fictions. They gloss over the ways that non-European peoples, histories, objects, and animals influenced European texts and minds. In this class, we will consider these questions:

- In what ways do classic postcolonial assumptions about eighteenth-century “worldviews” hold up in our texts?
- In what ways might reading against the grain or paying attention to the extreme globality of the eighteenth-century world change the way we picture the eighteenth-century self and the connection between the self and world?
- Are there ways we can trace how the world and worldviews of the “other” left an indelible mark on eighteenth-century British literature?
- Can we justify analyzing spaces, places, ecologies, non-human animals or even inanimate objects as agents in the production of eighteenth-century literary texts? What are the costs and benefits of these approaches?

Unit 2: Early Colonization and The Caribbean

In the early half of the long eighteenth century, the notion of a British Empire on which the sun never set was a distant fantasy, not a political or institutional reality. In what is sometimes referred to as the “First Empire” (1583-1783), Britain held only a handful of overseas territories. The most lucrative of these by far were the territories in the Caribbean, or West Indies. Compared to Barbados, Jamaica, or St. Kitts, Massachusetts, for instance, was considered a drab, backwater colony full of religious zealots. That Britain would become a global superpower was by no means a foregone conclusion in our early texts, and the ones set in the Caribbean were a kind of “sandbox” for Britain’s colonial identity.

- What ideas about colonization, empire, slavery, and polity emerge in our texts set in the Caribbean?
- How do these ideas change between texts written in the early eighteenth century and texts written in the later eighteenth century (when the British Empire of the nineteenth century began to become more of a reality)?
- How did contact with the unfamiliar peoples, plants, animals, climates, and geographies of the Caribbean influence the way Enlightenment thinkers and writers represented the self and world more broadly?

Unit 3: Africa Beyond Blank Space

Chinua Achebe wrote in 1977 that in European texts, “Africa is to Europe as the picture is to Dorian Gray—a carrier onto whom the master unloads his physical and moral deformities so that he may go forward, erect and immaculate” (251). Achebe suggests, and many literary critics have agreed, that there is no space for any kind of “real” understanding of Africa in these representations—the ideologically coercive feedback loop that Foucault termed the power-knowledge field simply does not allow for it. However, every eighteenth-century text about Africa notes the limitations of European methods, scientific instruments, political access to the continent, or even material bodies each time they wrote about Africa. The anthropologist Julian Fabian reminds us that “There is overwhelming indirect evidence that European travelers seldom met their [African] hosts in a state we would expect of scientific explorers: clear-minded and self-controlled. More often than not, they...were ‘out of their minds’ with extreme fatigue, fear, delusions of grandeur, and feelings ranging from anger to contempt” (3). This figure often surfaces in eighteenth-century texts, standing in stark opposition to, for example, the “seeing man,” who collectedly casts his gaze over foreign landscapes and orders them in accordance with Enlightenment principles of rationality. Furthermore, the “image” of Africa that was transported from travelers and geographers into even fictional representations of Africa were often furnished by Arabic accounts of the continent, or by the details of African potentates and guides chose to share with their European visitors.

- How do bodily limitations and the vulnerability of the travelling subject change the way we imagine “the contact zone” between Africans and Europeans?
- How might altering the way we characterize the power dynamics in the African/European contact zone change how we theorize about how eighteenth-century global texts are made?
- What role might non-European discourse have played in shaping Enlightenment worldviews?

Unit 4: Enlightenment Orientalism

Just as Africa has been read as “blank space” in eighteenth-century literature, the “Orient” in eighteenth-century texts has been read more as the projection of European fantasies about the self than as a geographical space with a tangible referent. In *Enlightenment Orientalism*, Srinivas Aravamudan complicates this notion, observing that, “Enlightenment interrogation was not innocent—no knowledge ever is—but it was a complex questioning, with multiple objectives and orientations.... Not just bent on the domination of the other but also aimed at mutual understanding across cultural differences, for Enlightenment the self was under critique as much as any ‘other’” (3).

- What are the critical and political stakes of revisiting both how we define “Enlightenment” and how we define “Orientalism” in literary criticism?
- How does it change the way we imagine the relationship between the self and world more broadly?
- Turkish dress, “chinsoiree,” and Indian cloth increasingly made up much of Britain’s luxury goods. Can we analyze such material culture as “texts” that might signify into British culture in unexpected ways?

Unit 5: Race and Place in the Late Eighteenth Century

Like “empire,” “race” in the eighteenth century is a complicated category that will take on dramatically different meanings and associations across our texts. In the earlier half of the century, the word “race” might refer to the color of one’s skin, but it also might refer to one’s nation, to one’s heritage, etc. The idea of race as immutable biological difference was not a very widespread one in the eighteenth century, but the idea that race was tied to geographical location was rampant (climate theory was de rigueur among men and women of science well into the late eighteenth century).

- How do notions of race change across the course of our texts from the late seventeenth century to the early nineteenth?
- In what ways do eighteenth-century cultural conversations about race anticipate cultural conversations about race that we are having now?
- If race was not considered a biologically stagnant category in the eighteenth century, what cultural conditions caused power imbalances to break down along what we now see as racial lines?

Timeline of the British long 18th Century (1660-1837)

- 1660 – The Restoration of the Monarchy (Charles II)
 - The Royal Society is founded
 - Women begin performing on stage in England for the first time
 - The Royal African Company is founded
- 1688 – The Glorious Revolution: James II is dethroned in favor of William and Mary, Anne
 - English politics breaks roughly into a two-party system of Whigs and Tories
 - Aphra Behn publishes *Oroonoko*
- 1689 – John Locke publishes *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*
- 1707 – Acts of Union officially unite Scotland and England into Great Britain
- 1708 – The East India Company enjoys a trade monopoly due to a merger
- 1713 – The Treaty of Utrecht ends the War of Spanish Succession; Britain gains several global territories and the right to trade slaves in the Spanish colonies.
- 1714 – Queen Anne dies childless; the crown passes to the Hanovers (the Georges)
- 1715 – First major Jacobite Rebellion (Scots and some Tories trying to put James II's heirs on the throne in place of the Hanovers)
- 1716-18 – Lady Mary Wortley Montagu travels to Turkey
- 1720 – The South Sea Bubble burst
 - Daniel Defoe publishes *Captain Singleton*
- 1721 – Robert Walpole becomes the first Prime Minister of Great Britain
- 1737 – The Licensing Act; the British government begins censoring plays, leading to more prose publications
- 1745 – Second major Jacobite Rebellion
- 1755 – Samuel Johnson completes his Dictionary
- 1759 – Samuel Johnson publishes *Rasselas*
- 1756-1763 – The Seven Years' War (French and Indian War); Britain gains territory in North America
- 1760 – Oliver Goldsmith begins to publish *The Citizen of the World* in the *Public Ledger*
- 1764 – James Grainger publishes *The Sugar-cane*
- 1769-1770 – Captain James Cook's voyage around the world
- 1757 – Britain begins colonial rule in India
- 1775-1783 – American Revolution
- 1787 – George Colman's *Inkle and Yarico* is staged for the first time
- 1789-1799 – The French Revolution
- 1789 – Olaudah Equiano publishes his *Interesting Narrative*
- 1792 – Dean Mahomet publishes his *Travels* in English
- 1791-1804 – The Haitian Revolution
- 1807 – The Slave Trade Act abolishes the slave trade in the British Empire
- 1808 – *The Woman of Colour, a Tale* is published
- 1833 – The Slavery Abolition Act abolishes slavery throughout the British Empire
- 1837 – Victoria takes the throne
 - Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters are published in full