

English 8240 — Varieties of Eighteenth-Century Fiction

Dr. Stephen Karian

Office: Tate Hall, Room 235

Office Hours: by appointment

Phone: 882-1784

Email: karians@missouri.edu

Spring 2025

W 4:00-6:30

<https://sites.google.com/umsystem.edu/karians/research-links>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will explore major works of eighteenth-century fiction, with attention to a diverse range of forms and themes. We will also focus on important secondary materials relevant to the study of eighteenth-century fiction, including but not limited to debates about “the rise of the novel.” This course will also introduce students to various arguments and methods concerning the study of literary history. Upon completion of this course, students will be familiar with some of the main works of eighteenth-century fiction as well as the main trends in the relevant criticism, know how to use the major research tools (both printed and electronic) to research fiction from this period, and complete a major research paper on a topic relevant to this course.

TEXTBOOKS

Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, ed. John Richetti, Penguin, ISBN 9-780141-439822

Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, ed. Claude Rawson and Ian Higgins, Oxford World's Classics, ISBN 9-780199-536849

Richardson, *Clarissa: An Abridged Edition*, ed. Toni Bowers and John Richetti, Broadview, ISBN 9-781551-114750

Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, ed. Melvyn and Joan New, Penguin, ISBN 9-780141-439778

Burney, *Evelina*, ed. Margaret Anne Doody, Penguin, ISBN 9-780140-433470

Other readings listed below appear in the course packet available at the bookstore or possibly on Canvas.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Brief analyses of assigned essays: For each week that we're reading a piece of criticism, write a 1-page double-spaced analysis of one of the assigned essays. Your discussion should briefly state the essay's argument, and it should more extensively assess its use of evidence as well as its method. Upload your discussion as a pdf file to Canvas no later than noon on the Tuesday before class. The purpose of this assignment is to help you understand the methods and practices of scholarship and criticism in a way that should help you improve your own scholarly writing. I'm providing a model for this brief analysis in a separate handout.
- 2) Leading class discussions: For one 30-minute session, lead our discussion of some aspect of the assigned primary texts. You should email discussion questions to me and your classmates prior to the class day.
- 3) Book review: In a 5-7 page essay, evaluate a scholarly book directly relevant to the content of this course and situate your evaluation in the context of other published reviews of the

same book. This essay is due March 12. Further details about this assignment appear in a separate document.

- 4) Proposal for the research paper: In no more than one page, directly state your research question, outline your topic, note which primary materials you intend to discuss and which secondary materials you will consult, and describe how you will proceed. The proposal is due April 2.
- 5) Annotated bibliography: Evaluate between 8 to 10 secondary sources (articles or book chapters) that you intend to cite in your research paper. Your annotations should be limited to 3 to 4 sentences each, and they should address the source's methods, strengths, and limitations. The bibliography (and the research paper) should follow either MLA or Chicago Style format. The annotated bibliography is due April 23.
- 6) Oral presentation of the research paper: Make a 20-minute, formal presentation of your research to your classmates on April 30 or May 7.
- 7) Research paper: Write a 20-page research paper on a topic directly relevant to this course. You do not have to limit yourself to the texts or even the authors that we study, though you must focus on something directly related to British fiction of the long eighteenth century. Because our library subscribes to EEBO and ECCO, two remarkable collections of searchable digital images, I want to encourage you to explore primary materials beyond the bounds of what I have assigned. You should also situate your discussion in relation to published scholarship. The research paper is due Wednesday, May 14.

All assignments must be completed to pass the course. Plus-minus grading will be used to calculate grades, including final course grades.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

In my undergraduate courses, I include a statement about academic dishonesty and plagiarism. That statement emphasizes the importance of honesty in an academic setting and attempts to define plagiarism in the context of my courses. I also stress how seriously I take this form of intellectual fraud. Because this is a graduate course, I believe that lengthy descriptions of such matters should not be necessary. Suffice it to say that I expect that each of you will conform to professional standards while conducting your research. You must not only be honest during all phases of your research; you must also be scrupulous in keeping track of where your words and ideas begin and those of others end. And you must ensure that this distinction is completely clear in the work that you submit. If you have *any* questions about such matters, do not hesitate to ask.

POLICIES

For students with disabilities:

If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible.

If disability related accommodations are necessary, please register with the Office of Disability Services (<http://disabilityservices.missouri.edu>), S5 Memorial Union, 573-882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For other MU resources for students with disabilities, click on “Disability Resources” on the MU homepage.

On electronic devices in class:

To help facilitate active and attentive class discussion, I am asking you not to use laptop computers, electronic tablets, or similar devices in class—unless reasonable accommodations apply, as noted above. My hope is that this policy will not prove to be onerous and that it will improve your experience of the course.

My policy toward cellphones, iPhones, Blackberries, etc. is simple: during the class period, they should be neither audible nor visible.

On recording:

University of Missouri System Executive Order No. 38 lays out principles regarding the sanctity of classroom discussions at the university. The policy is described fully in Section 200.015 of the Collected Rules and Regulations. In this class, students may not make audio or video recordings of course activity *without my permission*, except for students permitted to record as an accommodation under Section 240/020 of the Collected Rules. All other students who record and/or distribute audio or video recordings of class activity *without my permission* are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of Section 200/020 of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.

Those students who are permitted to record are not permitted to redistribute audio or video recordings of statements or comments from the course to individuals who are not students in the course without the express permission of the faculty member and of any students who are recorded. Students found to have violated this policy are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of Section 200.020 of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Jan. 22 — Introduction

Robinson Crusoe, pp. 1-34

Furbank, P. N. and W. R. Owens. “Defoe and Francis Noble.” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 4 (1992): 301-14.

Jan. 29

Robinson Crusoe, pp. 34-241

Brown, Homer. “The Institution of the English Novel: Defoe’s Contribution.” *Novel* 29 (1996): 299-318.

Feb. 5

Fantomina

Reread *Robinson Crusoe*, pp. 37-38 to compare it to Gulliver nearly drowning in the first chapter *Gulliver’s Travels*, prefatory matter and Parts 1 and 2, pp. 1-137

Marschalk, Lacy, Mallory Anne Porch, and Paula R. Backscheider. “The Empty Decade? English Fiction in the 1730s.” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 26 (2014): 375-426.

Feb. 12

Gulliver’s Travels, Parts 3 and 4, pp. 139-277

Clarissa, first letter, pp. 33-35

Downie, J. A. “Mary Davys’s ‘Probable Feign’d Stories’ and Critical Shibboleths about ‘The Rise of the Novel.’” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 12 (2000): 309-26.

Feb. 19

Clarissa, first installment, pp. 27-221

Orr, Leah. “Tactics of Publishing and Selling Fiction in the Long Eighteenth Century.” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 81 (2018): 399-423.

Feb. 26

Clarissa, second installment, pp. 221-432. NOTE: after reading page 384, turn to the course packet to read the omitted letter XLII from volume 4 as well as the complete beginning of letter XLIII; then return to page 385 in the Broadview edition; then after reading the very top of page 432 in the Broadview edition, turn to the course packet to read letter VI from volume 5, which was originally the final letter of the second installment.

March 5

Clarissa, third installment, pp. 432-722

March 12

*** Book Review due ***

Tristram Shandy, vol. 1, pp. 1-70

March 19

Read your classmates' book reviews

Tristram Shandy, vols. 2-4, pp. 71-304

[Spring Break]

April 2

*** Proposal due ***

Tristram Shandy, vols. 5-7, pp. 305-486

April 9

Tristram Shandy, vols. 8-9, pp. 487-588

Booth, Wayne C. "The Self-Conscious Narrator in Comic Fiction before *Tristram Shandy*."

PMLA 67 (1952): 163-85.

April 16

Evelina, vol. 1 and vol. 2, letters 1-15, pp. 1-231

Brewer, David A. "Counting, Resonance, and Form, A Speculative Manifesto (with Notes)."

Eighteenth-Century Fiction 24 (2011-12): 161-70.

April 23

Evelina, pp. 231-450

*** Annotated Bibliography due ***

April 30

Oral Presentations of Research

To prepare for oral presentations, read William Germano's piece about presenting conference papers (link on Canvas)

May 7

Oral Presentations of Research

Final thoughts / Wrap-up / Discussion of Research Papers

May 14

*** Research Paper due ***