

ENGL W3706x
18th-Century Texts:
Poetry, Progress, and Religious Sentiment

309 Hamilton W6:10-8:00pm

Prof. Marianne Giordani

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Seminar. A careful study of neoclassical and romantic poems and critical prose, with regard to religious ideas that came to bear in developing the modern criteria for poetry. Close attention to rhetorical and prosodic elements; to characteristic genres, such as the hybridized epic and georgic in the long philosophical poem, as well as ode, hymn, song, epistle, epitaph, elegy and, later, the "conversation" poem. Upon addressing in context various religious dispositions in relation to the aesthetic ones of language and imagination, we shall also examine modes of satire, in which untenable social disparities are targeted, as are the vices associated with them; likewise, we shall heed the intersection of spirituality, science, and natural description, which drew variously from neo-Platonic metaphysics, biblical mythopoesis, and the psycho-physiology of passion. Authors include Dennis, Addison, Watts, Finch, Pope, Thomson, Akenside, Gray, Johnson, Blake, Wesley, Cowper, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats.

REQUIREMENTS & PROTOCOL

Regular and prompt attendance, participation in class discussion, and timely completion of assigned readings and written work are mandatory. More than one absence might significantly lower a student's grade. Arriving at a session late or leaving early shall be considered a half-absence at my discretion. Required written work consists of regularly scheduled, informal responses to the readings; a medium-length essay at mid-semester; and a longer (12-15 page) final essay, the latter also requiring my approval of the topic and entailing both a preliminary meeting with me and the submission of a prospectus in writing. In addition to punctuality, the usual rules of seminar etiquette apply, e.g., no eating; no laptops, recorders, nor other electronic devices; no disruptive comings-and-goings while the meeting is in session.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Books (available at campus Barnes & Noble)

David Fairer & Christine Gerrard (eds.). *Eighteenth-century poetry: An annotated anthology* (2nd edition). Blackwell Publishing, 2006. ISBN-10: 1405113197.

D. A. Russell & M. Winterbottom (eds. & trans.). *Classical Literary Criticism*. Oxford World's Classics. ISBN-10: 0192839004.

William Wordsworth. *The Major Works*. Oxford World's Classics. ISBN-10: 0192840444.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge. *The Major Works*. Oxford World's Classics. ISBN-10: 0192840436.

Course-pack, for purchase at The Village Copier, Amsterdam & 118th, contains the following:

John Dennis, "The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry" [1701] and "The Grounds for Criticism in Poetry" [1704], edited by E.N. Hooker, Johns Hopkins: Baltimore, 1939-43.

Joseph Addison, "The Pleasures of the Imagination" [1712], Nos. 411-421 of *The Spectator*, in *Critical Essays from the Spectator by Joseph Addison*, 2 vols., edited by Donald F. Bond, Oxford UP, 1970.

Photocopies distributed in class include:

Abraham Cowley, "Preface to *Poems*" (1656), with ode "Resurrection."

Joseph Addison, "An Essay on Virgil's *Georgics*" (1697).

William Congreve, "A Discourse on the Pindaric Ode" (1706)

Isaac Watts, "Preface to *Horae Lyricae*" (1706).

Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, "Concerning Enthusiasm" (1706).

James Thomson, poem "Winter" (1726).

Edward Young, "On Lyric Poetry" (1728).

Samuel Johnson, "On Epitaphs" (1740).

Mark Akenside, "Preface to *The Pleasures of the Imagination. A Poem*" (1772).

Robert Lowth, from *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (1753, 1787).

Percy Bysshe Shelley, "A Defence of Poetry" (1821)

Other

As indicated on the schedule of meetings, you shall have to download a few required readings either from files posted in CourseWorks; from one or more of the electronic databases to which Columbia subscribes, i.e. *Literature Online (Lion)*; *British Periodicals I*; *Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO)*; *English Poetry Database*; and *Past Masters*; or from free web-sources, such as *Project Gutenberg*; *Representative Poetry Online*; and *The William Blake Archive*. Those readings include works by Isaac Watts, William Blake, Percy Shelley, and John Keats .

RECOMMENDED REFERENCE SOURCES

Encyclopedias, Dictionaries for peculiarities of 18th -c. diction and usage, and for definitions and explanations of relevant technical terms, genres, and of concepts and practices in rhetoric, poetics, literary criticism, aesthetics, and philosophy:

A Dictionary of the English Language (1775) by Samuel Johnson (*Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, Columbia; and Penguin Classics edition, selected & edited by David Crystal [PE1620.D53 2006g]).

Dictionary of the History of Ideas (DHI) OR *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas (NDHI, 6 vols., 2005)*. [CB9 .N49 2005 (non-circ)]; <http://etext.virginia.edu/DicHist/dict.html>.

The Encyclopedia of Aesthetics. 4 v., 1998. [BH56.E53 (non-circ)].

The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics. Alex Preminger and T.V.F. Brogan (Eds.). 1993. [PN1021.P75].

Oxford English Dictionary (OED online, Columbia).

Oxford Companion to English Literature (Oxford Reference Online, Columbia).

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (SEP) (online, Columbia).

Silva Rhetoricae: The Forest of Rhetoric <http://humanities.byu.edu/rhetoric/Silva.htm>

Critical Companions on the full range of topics for 18th c. literary study. Older editions of both the Cambridge and the Blackwell Companions, which are shelved alongside these later editions, remain relevant and worth consulting:

Fairer, David (ed). *English Poetry of the Eighteenth Century, 1700-1789*. London: Longman-Pearson, 2003. [PR551 .F35]

Gerrard, Christine (ed). *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2006. [PR553 .C66]

Sitter, John (ed). *The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge UP, 2001. [PR 551 .C27]

SCHEDULE (subject to change)

(Unless otherwise indicated the recommended critical articles are available as e-text documents from JSTOR.)

September

03 Introduction; (photocopies) selections from Cowley, Watts, others.

REC: (*Lion* and *ECCO*) Isaac Watts, Preface and *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*; Preface and *The Psalms of David*; odes, *Horae Lyricae*.

(*Project Gutenberg*) Samuel Johnson, "Life of Isaac Watts" in *Lives of the English Poets, Vol. II*. Carolyn Robbins, "Faith and Freedom (c.1677-1729)," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, v.36 no.1 (Jan.-Mar., 1975) pp47-62.

J.F. Maclear, "Isaac Watts and the Idea of Public Religion," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, v.53 no.1 (Jan.- Mar., 1992) pp25-45.

- 10 (Russell & Winterbottom) Longinus, *On Sublimity*, (course-pack) John Dennis, "The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry" and "The Grounds for Criticism in Poetry."

REC: Horace, "A Letter to Augustus," and "The Art of Poetry."
(photocopy) Shaftesbury, "Concerning Enthusiasm."

- 17 Isaac Watts, (course-pack) "Preface to *Horae Lyricae*," "The Adventurous Muse," (*Lion*) "The Incomprehensible;" Anne Finch, "The Spleen;" William Collins, "Ode on the Poetical Character."

- 22 Joseph Addison, (photocopy) "An Essay on Virgil's Georgics;" (course-pack) "The Pleasures of the Imagination" essays, Nos. 411-421 from *The Spectator*; Jonathan Swift, "Description of the Morning," "Description of a City Shower," John Gay, "Trivia, Book II."

REC: (*Project Gutenberg*) *Georgics* by Virgil (English trans. by J. B. Greenough, 1900).
Donald F. Bond, "The Neo-classical Psychology of the Imagination," *ELH*, v.4 no.4 (Dec. 1937).

October

- 01 James Thomson, "Spring," (photocopy) "Winter;" Edward Young, (photocopy) "On Lyric Poetry;" Mark Akenside, "The Pleasures of Imagination. A Poem. Book I" and (photocopy) prefaces to the poem.

REC: (*Global Ministries: The United Methodist Church*) John Wesley, "New Birth" [Sermon #45], <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/umhistory/wesley/sermons/45/>

- 08 Alexander Pope, "Eloisa to Abelard;" Thomas Warton, "The Pleasures of Melancholy;" Joseph Warton, "The Enthusiast. Or the Lover of Nature;" Collins, "Ode. On the Poetical Character."

REC: Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757), Oxford World's Classics.

- 15 Thomas Gray, "Elegy in a Country Churchyard;" Goldsmith, "The Deserted Village;" Samuel Johnson, "The Vanity of Human Wishes," "On the Death of Dr. Levet," (photocopy) essay, "On Epitaphs."

REC: Richard E. Brantley, "Johnson's Wesleyan Connection," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, v.10 no.2 (Winter 1976-77), pp143-168.

- 22 **Short paper due;** (photocopy) Robert Lowth, from *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*; Christopher Smart, "My Cat Jeoffry;" "A Song to David;" William Blake, selected songs, to be announced, from *The Blake Archive*, <http://www.blakearchive.org> which provides hypertext versions of all of William Blake's engraved poems, links to numerous historical and critical sources and to the e-text of David V. Erdman's revised standard, scholarly edition, *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake* (2001): <http://www.blakearchive.org/blake.erdman.html>

REC: V. de S. Pinto, "Isaac Watts and William Blake," *The Review of English Studies*, v.20, no.79 (Jul., 1944), pp214-223.

W.H.Stevenson, "Blake's Progress," *Essays in Criticism*, v. 49, no. 3 (July 1999)

Robert F. Gleckner, "Blake's Religion of Imagination," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, v.14 no. 3

(Mar., 1956), pp359-369.

- 29 William Cowper, "The Task, Book I," "The Cast-away," "Hatred and Vengeance."

REC: (Butler Reserve) James Sambrook (edit.), "Introduction," *The Task and Selected Other Poems* by William Cowper, Longman (1994).

November

- 05 William Wordsworth, prose, Advertisement to *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* and Appendix (1800), Letter to John Wilson (1802), Preface to *Poems* (1815), Essay, Supplementary to the Preface; poems, "We Are Seven," "The Idiot Boy," "The Old Cumberland Beggar," "Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey," "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud."

REC: Vicki Tolar Burton, "John Wesley and the Liberty to Speak: The Rhetorical and Literacy Practices of Early Methodism," *College Composition and Communication*, v.53, no. 1 (Sep., 2001), p65-91.

David Perkins, "Wordsworth, Hunt, and the Romantic Understanding of Meter," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, v.93, no.1 (Jan.1994), pp1-17.

(*Romanticism on the Net*) David S. Miall, "Locating Wordsworth: 'Tintern Abbey' and the Community with Nature." *Romanticism On the Net* 20 (November 2000)
<http://www.erudit.org/revue/ron/2000/v/n20/005949ar.html>

- 12 Wordsworth, (to be announced) selections from *The Prelude* [1805], "The Ruined Cottage."

- 19 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," "The Nightingale," "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison," "The Eolian Harp;" (to be announced) selected chapters from *Biographia Literaria*.

REC: (*Wilson Database*) Robert J. Barth, "Mortal Beauty: Ignatius Loyola, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and the Role of Imagination in Religious Experience," *Christianity & Literature*, v.50, no.1 (Autumn 2000), pp69-78.

Philip C. Rule, S.J., "Coleridge's Reputation as a Religious Thinker: 1816-1972", *Harvard Theological Review* 67 (1974), pp289-320.

- 26 Shelley, (*Lion*) poems, "Mont Blanc," "Ode to the West Wind," "Ode to Intellectual Beauty;" (photocopy) essay, "A Defence of Poetry."

REC: William O. Scott, "Shelley's Admiration for Bacon," *PMLA*, v.73 no.3 (Jun., 1958), pp228-236.

December

- 03 John Keats, (*Lion*) odes "On a Grecian Urn," "On Melancholy," "To a Nightingale;" (*Lion*) selected letters, to be announced

- 17 Paper due.