

ENG 319: Age of Sensibility  
Eastern Connecticut State University  
Fall 2010  
MWF 12-12:50am, Webb Hall 214

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1-3pm; and by appointment

## Age of Sensibility

The period in British literature between roughly 1740 and 1800 is sometimes called “the Age of Sensibility,” in recognition of the high value that many Britons came to place on explorations of feeling and emotion in literature and the other arts. Like most such labels, however, “the Age of Sensibility” conceals nearly as much as it reveals. Fascination with the power of emotion over the human mind did not suddenly emerge in the 1740s (even the most classicist of the “Augustans” acknowledged the power of feeling), nor did the taste for “sentiment” and “finer feeling” sweep all before it (examples of skepticism and parodic responses to “the cult of sensibility” are to be found throughout the period). This class offers an advanced introduction to fiction and poetry of the later eighteenth century (though without any particular emphasis on the literature of Sensibility), and turns attention to the workings of the literary marketplace by examining questions of authorship, publishing, and bookselling.

As an upper-division English course, this class aims to help students extend their mastery of important concepts and practices in literary studies. The course is designed to help students develop facility in:

- Reading analytically and engaging intelligently with both primary and secondary sources;
- Testing ideas in light of the views of other scholars, critics, and writers;
- Exploring complex ideas and arguing a thesis at length and in depth;
- Producing focused, organized, coherent and persuasive/convincing texts.

**Required Texts** (available at the campus bookstore and fine internet retailers everywhere...)

James Boswell, *London Journal, 1762-63* (Yale University Press)  
Frances Burney, *Evelina* (Oxford World’s Classics)  
Samuel Johnson, *The Major Works* (Oxford World’s Classics)  
Charlotte Lennox, *The Female Quixote* (Oxford World’s Classics)  
Samuel Richardson, *Pamela* (Oxford World’s Classics)

Other readings will be provided as handouts or available online (either on the open internet or through the Library’s research databases).

## COURSE POLICIES

**Please Note:** If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact the Office of AccessAbility Services at 465-5573. Please understand that I cannot provide accommodations based upon AccessAbility until I have received an accommodation letter from the Office of AccessAbility Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Students are encouraged to use the support offered by the **Academic Services Center** located on the ground floor of the Library. Tutoring, Math, Writing, and supplemental Advising Services are available for students in the Center at the following times: Sun. 2-9; M.-Th. 9-9, Fri. 9-5. (Closed Sat.) For further information call 465-4272 or check the ASC website at <<http://academicaffairs.easternct.edu/ASC-FAQs.html>>.

### About the class

While some background material will be provided through lectures, the emphasis will be on discussion. It is *essential* that you come to each class prepared to talk about the texts under discussion: this will require you not simply to have *done* the reading, but also to have *thought about* the reading. Make sure you allow yourself adequate time to read the texts carefully and to form some impressions of them.

### Assignments

#### Individual assignments

The principal individual assignment for the class will be a relatively long (10-12 page) final project. You may choose between two options for the final assignment: 1) a standard research paper (in which you develop a reading of a text or group of texts in dialogue with the work of other scholars); or 2) a collection of links to at least ten later eighteenth-century texts available through Google Books and/or the Internet Archive (that is, scans of later eighteenth-century editions of texts—*not* modern editions of later eighteenth-century texts), accompanied by a “curatorial” essay explaining why those texts can be considered to belong together as members of a coherent group.

Additionally, you will submit one-paragraph abstracts of three of our secondary readings over the course of the semester. Your abstracts should offer a clear and succinct summary of the critic’s central argument, along with an account of the most important features of that argument. Abstracts should be submitted via Blackboard Vista before class on the day the secondary piece is to be discussed. You may choose which pieces you wish to write abstracts of, but you must turn in one abstract by October 1, one by November 12, and one by December 8.

#### Group presentations

Students will work in groups of five to prepare three presentations over the course of the semester. The presentations will introduce and orient the class to later eighteenth-century texts not on our syllabus that are available through Google Books or the Internet Archive. The presentations should be brief (**fifteen minutes**, strictly enforced) and focused. Each presentation

will be supported by a posting to Blackboard Vista that: 1) identifies the texts discussed; 2) notes the English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC) number for the texts; and 3) provides links to the texts in Google Books. These lists should be posted to Blackboard the day before your presentation.

**A note on academic integrity:** In the world of the university, plagiarism is a very serious offense. If I discover that you have attempted to pass of someone else’s work as your own, you will receive a grade of “F” for the course. In keeping with Eastern’s academic misconduct policy, I will also refer cases of academic dishonesty to the university’s judicial officer. You can find Eastern’s academic misconduct policy at: <http://kb.easternct.edu/al/12/3/article.aspx?aid=1522&bt=4>

**Attendance and Participation**

Participation in discussion is an integral part of this class. Since it’s not possible to participate in a discussion at which you’re not present, that means attendance is pretty important, too. If you miss classes, you should expect the participation portion of your grade to suffer. Of course, that is also true if you are mentally absent from classes at which you are physically present.

**Grading**

Your grade for the course will be *no lower than* the grade arrived at by the following formula:

Group presentations	30% (3@10% each)
Abstracts of secondary readings	15% (3@5% each)
Course participation	25%
Final project	30%

When calculating grades for this class, I will use the 4.0 grade scale outlined on p. 60 of the University Catalog.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**  
(Some shifting may occur)

Week 1	M	8/30	Introductions
	W	9/1	Samuel Richardson, <i>Pamela</i> , pp. 3-75 (“O pity / Your distressed Daughter”) Samuel Johnson, <i>The Rambler</i> , no. 4 (in <i>the Major Works</i> , pp. 175-79)
	F	9/3	Samuel Richardson, <i>Pamela</i> , 75 (“I” Must write on ...) – 131 (“I must try to please her, and then she won’t.”)
Week 2	M	9/6	No class – Labor Day
	W	9/8	Samuel Richardson, <i>Pamela</i> , 132 (“Well, I am but just come off from a Walk in the Garden ...”) – 208 (“... has Meaning too much in it, not to alarm and honest Body.”)
	F	9/10	Samuel Richardson, <i>Pamela</i> , 208 (“I Find I am watched and suspected ...”) – 299 (“... to bless him, and his Daughter”)

Week 3	M	9/13	Samuel Richardson, <i>Pamela</i> , 300 (“I Rose up early in the Morning”) – 360 (“... when I see you, as I now hope soon to do.”) Nancy Armstrong, from <i>Desire and Domestic Fiction</i> [Blackboard]
	W	9/15	Samuel Richardson, <i>Pamela</i> , 360 (“I Must still write on ...”) – 438 (“... and so I followed my Writing closely.”)
	F	9/17	Samuel Richardson, <i>Pamela</i> , 438 (“About Eleven o’Clock ...”) – 503
Week 4	M	9/20	Henry Fielding, <i>Shamela</i> Thomas Keymer and Peter Sabor, “Counter-fictions and novel production” (chapter 3 of <i>Pamela in the Marketplace</i> ) [Blackboard]
	W	9/22	GROUP PRESENTATIONS
	F	9/24	GROUP PRESENTATIONS
Week 5	M	9/27	Interlude – Bibliography Lab: The Case of Oliver Goldsmith’s <i>She Stoops to Conquer</i> William B. Todd, “The First Editions of <i>The Good Natured Man</i> and <i>She Stoops to Conquer</i> ” <i>Studies in Bibliography</i> 11 (1958): 133-43. [Blackboard]
	W	9/29	Charlotte Lennox, <i>The Female Quixote</i> , 3-55 Norma Clarke, <i>Dr. Johnson’s Women</i> , ch. 3 [Blackboard]
	F	10/1	Charlotte Lennox, <i>The Female Quixote</i> , 56-107
Week 6	M	10/4	Charlotte Lennox, <i>The Female Quixote</i> , 108-176
	W	10/6	Charlotte Lennox, <i>The Female Quixote</i> , 179-254
	F	10/8	Charlotte Lennox, <i>The Female Quixote</i> , 255-331
Week 7	M	10/11	Charlotte Lennox, <i>The Female Quixote</i> , 331-383 Patricia Meyer Spacks, “The Subtle Sophistry of Desire: Dr. Johnson and <i>The Female Quixote</i> ” <i>Modern Philology</i> 85.4 (1988): 532-42. [Available through JSTOR]
	W	10/13	Samuel Johnson, <i>Rasselas</i> , 335-373 (“... a man that had co-operated with the present system.”)
	F	10/15	Samuel Johnson, <i>Rasselas</i> , 373 (“Rasselas returned home full of reflections ...”) – 418 Robert Folkenflik, “ <i>Rasselas</i> and the Closed Field” <i>Huntington Library Quarterly</i> 57.4 (1994): 337-52. [Available through JSTOR]
Week 8	M	10/18	GROUP PRESENTATIONS
	W	10/20	GROUP PRESENTATIONS
	F	10/22	NO CLASS – Prof. Pauley at a conference

Week 9	M	10/25	Thomas Gray, “An Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” [See Blackboard for links]
	W	10/27	Thomas Warton, “Sonnet VI. To Mr. Gray” and “The Pleasures of Melancholy” [See Blackboard for links]
	F	10/29	Michael F. Suarez, S.J., “Trafficking in the Muse: Dodsley’s <i>Collection of Poems</i> and the Question of Canon” [Blackboard]
Week 10	M	11/1	INTERLUDE – Comparing <i>Collections</i> : Lab Day 1
	W	11/3	Lab Day 2
	F	11/5	GROUP PRESENTATIONS
Week 11	M	11/8	GROUP PRESENTATIONS
	W	11/10	Excerpts from Johnson’s Lives of Collins, Young, and Gray ( <i>Major Works</i> , pp. 759-69) Lawrence Lipking, “Touching the Shore: <i>The Lives of the English Poets</i> ” (chapter 10 of <i>Samuel Johnson: The Life of an Author</i> ) [Blackboard]
	F	11/12	James Boswell, <i>London Journal</i> , 39-113
Week 12	M	11/15	James Boswell, <i>London Journal</i> , 115-204 (“... a sacred ode by Dr. Brown.”)
	W	11/17	James Boswell, <i>London Journal</i> , 204 (“Sunday 27 February”) – 279 (“Nothing happened today.”)
	F	11/19	James Boswell, <i>London Journal</i> , 279 (“Wednesday 15 June”) – 333 Patricia Meyer Spacks, “Young Men’s Fancies: James Boswell, Henry Fielding” [Blackboard]
Week 13	M	11/22	Frances Burney, <i>Evelina</i> , 3-68
	W	11/24	NO CLASS – Thanksgiving
	F	11/26	NO CLASS – Thanksgiving
Week 14	M	11/29	Frances Burney, <i>Evelina</i> , 68-131
	W	12/1	Frances Burney, <i>Evelina</i> , 131-194
	F	12/3	Frances Burney, <i>Evelina</i> , 194-270
Week 15	M	12/6	Frances Burney, <i>Evelina</i> , 273-355
	W	12/8	Frances Burney, <i>Evelina</i> , 356-406 Gina Campbell, “How to Read Like a Gentleman: Burney’s Instructions to Her Critics in <i>Evelina</i> ,” <i>ELH</i> 57 (1990): 557-584. [Available through JSTOR]