
ENGL 4243 / 6243: Studies in British Literature News and the Early English Novel

Instructor.	Dr. Darryl P. Domingo	Office Hrs.	Mon. / Wed. 11:40 – 12:40
Location.	Patterson Hall 307	Phone.	(901) 678-3458
Time.	Mon. / Wed. 12:40 – 2:05	E-Mail.	dphnrhnd@memphis.edu
Office.	Patterson Hall 407	Session.	January 17 – May 4, 2023

Course Description. In this combined section of ENGL 4243 and 6243, we will examine the development of the newest and most controversial of the many inter-related genres competing for cultural ascendance in England between the late-seventeenth and mid-eighteenth century: the eponymous novel. Although it is now difficult for us to think of it as something that could ever have been new, during its formative years the novel provoked considerable anxiety among critics who dismissed the genre as an upstart without classical precedent and who associated it with gossip-mongering, criminality, pornography, and printed trash. This course will analyze why the early novel provoked such anxiety, how early novelists attempted self-consciously to legitimize prose fiction by theorizing it, and what caused this theory to be at frequent odds with the actual practice of writing and reading. We will focus, in particular, on the surprising intersections of early novels and newspapers, both of which draw attention to the minutiae of daily life and cater to the public desire for contemporaneity—for the latest thing. How does journalism influence the form and content of novels? How is “truth” constituted and what does the problem of “fake news” suggest about fictionality? What was *new* about the *novel* and how did writers like Behn, Defoe, Swift, Haywood, Richardson, and Fielding exploit the genre’s *novelty* to divert and instruct readers who were invariably also newsmongers?

Required Reading. *The Commerce of Everyday Life: Selections from The Tatler and The Spectator*, ed. Erin Mackie (Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1998 / 9780312163716); Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko and Other Writings*, ed. Paul Salzman (Oxford, 2009 / 9780199538768); Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders*, ed. Albert J. Rivero (Norton, 2003 / 9780393978629); Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels*, eds. Claude Rawson and Ian Higgins (Oxford, 2005 / 9780199536849); Eliza Haywood, *Fantomina and other Works*, eds. Alexander Petit *et al.* (Broadview, 2004 / 9781551115245); Samuel Richardson, *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded*, eds. Thomas Keymer and Alice Wakely (Oxford, 2001 / 9780199536498); Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews and Shamela*, ed. Thomas Keymer *et al.* (Oxford, 2008 / 9780199536986).

Method of Evaluation. Two seminar presentations (2 x 15%); essay proposal and annotated bibliography (15%); 10-page (for undergraduate students) / 15-page (for graduate students) research essay (35%); informed participation in classroom discussion (20%).

Learning Outcomes. Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Identify basic narrative forms and define literary terms related to the novel as genre.

- Describe the particular contributions of literary figures associated with the “rise” of the British novel.
- Distinguish the conventions and characteristics of the various literary and para-literary genres that influenced the development of the early novel.
- Appreciate the vital reciprocal relationship between literary text and cultural context in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England.
- Orally discuss critical issues concerning the “rise” of the novel and write about these issues in a clear and coherent manner.
- Undertake advanced research, drawing upon the arguments and evidence of critical and literary-historical scholarship to illuminate the texts and contexts of the course.



“The Coffeehouse Mob.” Frontispiece to Edward Ward,
Vulgar Britannicus: or, The British Hudibras (1710), IV.
 (Reproduced Courtesy of the Domingo Library)