

Full Name: Reading at the Margins: Dissent, Desire, and (Dis)enfranchisement in Eighteenth-Century Literature

Short Name: Reading the Margins

Lecturer Name(s) and Email Address(es): Dr Jennifer Buckley, **tbc**

ECTS Weighting: 10 ECTS

Semester Taught MT/HT: HT 2027

Year JF/SF/JS/SS: JS

Module Content:

Print has long been considered a medium of protest – a way to encourage activism, to give voices to the marginalized, and to highlight unspoken elements of the human existence. Focusing on the eighteenth-century, when print culture first exploded and several new literary genres emerged, this module considers the role of print in advocating for social change and explores the different genres and printed formats in and through which dissenting views and marginal voices were heard.

In thinking about the place of dissent in eighteenth-century print culture, the module combines critical reading of the set texts with a material texts approach: as well as thinking about dissenting literature, we will reflect on the implications of the formats in which marginalized ideas and voices circulated. We will consider how authors not only use language to agitate for change, but how they use every element of the page to shape the reception of their work through paratextual details including advertisements, subscription lists, footnotes, and dedications. Over the course of the module, we consider different approaches to writing about dissent, desire, and disenfranchisement – and explore the social, political, and economic contexts that prompted such modes of writing. Over the course of the term, we will address questions of sexuality, race, and gender across a range of genres including novels, poetry, pamphlets, and drama.

Provisional schedule:

Week	Text(s)
1	Introduction
Gendered dynamics	
2	Mary Astell, <i>Some Reflections Upon Marriage</i> (1700)
3	Eliza Haywood, <i>Fantomina</i> (1724)
Social frustrations	
4	Jonathan Swift, <i>A Modest Proposal</i> (1729) <u>and</u> 'Verses on the Death of Dr Swift' (1731)
5	Samuel Johnson, <i>Rasselas</i> (1759)
6	Sarah Scott, excerpts from <i>Millenium Hall</i> (1762)
7	Reading week
Revolutionary forms	
8	Selection of short materials by Ignatius Sancho and Phillis Wheatley Peters
9	Richard Brinsley Sheridan, <i>The Camp</i> (1778)
Paratextual politics	
10	Maria Edgeworth, <i>Castle Rackrent</i> (1800)
11	Charlotte Smith, <i>Beachy Head</i> (1807)
12	Conclusions

Learning Outcomes:

- Gain knowledge of the ways genres are adapted to promote dissenting views and encourage reform.
- Gain knowledge of print culture to develop a foundational knowledge of how Book History shapes the study of historical texts.
- Use key resources that are central for eighteenth-century studies, such as Eighteenth-Century Collections Online (ECCO).
- Write critically about literature from the long eighteenth century.

Learning Aims:

On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- Critically analyze the set texts in relation to their social, cultural, and political contexts.
- Become familiar with relevant critical and historical material.
- Undertake independent research, identifying topics of interest and employing appropriate research methods.
- Evaluate how ideas of dissent in the eighteenth century are examined in a range of literary genres.

Assessment Details:

- Number of Components: 2
- Name/Type of Component(s): short written piece (mid-term assignment); final essay (end of term)
- Word Count of Component(s): 1,300-1,500-word mid-term; 4,000-word final essay
- Percentage Value of Component(s): mid-term (25%), final essay (75%)

Preliminary Reading List:

- Samuel Johnson, *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia* ed. Thomas Keymer (Oxford World's Classics, 2009)
- Maria Edgeworth, *Castle Rackrent* (Oxford World's Classics, 2008)

Additional primary texts will be available electronically via Blackboard or the library databases.

Please note:

- Curricular information is subject to change.
- Information is displayed only for guidance purposes, relates to the current academic year only and is subject to change.