

Writing the Body, 1690-1800: Gender, Race, and Power

Module convenor: Dr Amy Prendergast (Prende1@tcd.ie)

Lecturers: Dr Jennifer Buckley, Dr Amy Prendergast

ECTS weighting: 5

Year: SF

Term taught: Hilary Term, 2027

Assessment: Essay

Module Description:

This module explores the eighteenth century's fascination with the body and constructions of the self by considering literary representations of the body. Ideals of beauty will be examined, as well as anxieties surrounding sexuality and the roles of both men and women. The module will also investigate material considerations, reflecting on clothing and disguise. Enslavement, incarceration, and the body in pain are particular concerns in writing from this period, and theories engaging with class and race will inform our analysis of social relationships and power structures. This module will explore the eighteenth-century body across a range of genres, engaging with novels, poetry, and drama, as well as periodicals.

Module Outline:

1. Introduction: The Body in the Long Eighteenth Century (AP & JB)
2. The Enslaved Body I: Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko* (1688) (AP)
3. The Anguished Body: Alexander Pope, *Eloisa to Abelard* (1717) (JB)
4. Illness and the Body: Daniel Defoe, *Journal of the Plague Year* (1722) (JB)
5. The Repulsive Body: Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) (AP)
6. Staging the Body: Oliver Goldsmith, *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) (AP)
7. Reading Week - No lectures or tutorials
8. Mind and Body: *The Hypochondriack* (1777–83) (JB)
9. Clothing the Body: Frances Burney, *Evelina* (1778) (JB)
10. The Military Body: John O'Keefe, *The Poor Soldier* (1783) (JB)
11. The Enslaved Body II: Selections from Olaudah Equiano, *Interesting Narrative* (1789) (AP)
12. The Maternal/Incarcerated Body: Mary Wollstonecraft, *Maria, or The Wrongs Of Woman* (1798) (AP)

Learning Outcomes:

Students will gain:

- an ability to discuss a range of literary texts in their historical and critical contexts
- an ability to articulate knowledge and understanding of concepts and critical theories relating to representations of the body
- critical skills in the reading and analysis of texts

Learning Aims:

- With a particular focus on representations of the human body, this module aims to broaden awareness of literary form and to develop interpretative skills

Assessment Details:

This module is assessed by one essay (2,000-2,500) which forms 100% of the assessment.

Primary Texts:

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko, and Other Writings*. Ed. Paul Salzman. OUP, 2009.

Frances Burney, *Evelina*, Ed. Vivien Jones and Edward A. Bloom. OUP, 2008.

Daniel Defoe, *Journal of a Plague Year*. Ed. Louis Landa and David Roberts. OUP, 2010.

Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings*. Ed. Vincent Carretta. Penguin, 2003.

Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*. Ed. Claude Rawson and Ian Higgins. OUP, 2008.

Mary Wollstonecraft, *Mary, and The Wrongs Of Woman*. Ed. Gary Kelly. OUP, 2009.

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