

Fresher/Sophister Module Description Template 2025-26

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

Short Name: Writing the Body

Lecturer Name(s) and Email Address(es): Prof. Aileen Douglas (adouglas@tcd.ie); Dr Amy Prendergast (prende1@tcd.ie)

ECTS Weighting: 5

Semester Taught MT/HT: MT

Year JF/SF/JS/SS: SF

Module Content:

This module explores the eighteenth century's fascination with the body and constructions of the self through a range of literary texts. 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. Slavery, 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.

1. Introduction: The Body in the Long Eighteenth Century (AD & AP)
2. The Enslaved Body I: Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko* (1688) (AP)
3. The Anguished Body: Alexander Pope, *Eloisa to Abelard* (1717) (AD)
4. Illness and the Body: Daniel Defoe, *Journal of the Plague Year* (1722) (AD)
5. The Repulsive Body: Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) (AP)
6. Clothing the Body: selected Poetry by Mary Barber & Laetitia Pilkington; selections from Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *Turkish Embassy Letters* (AD)
7. Reading Week - No lectures or tutorials
8. Staging the Body: Oliver Goldsmith, *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) (AP)
9. The Military Body: Tobias Smollett, excerpts from *Roderick Random* and *Humphry Clinker* (AD)
10. The Sexual Body: Elizabeth Inchbald, *A Simple Story* (1791) (AD)
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.

Preliminary Reading List:

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko, and Other Writings*. Ed. Paul Salzman. OUP, 2009
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
Elizabeth Inchbald, *A Simple Story*. Ed. J. M. S. Tompkins. OUP, 2009
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.

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.