**ENGL S-140 (CRN 35352): The Rise of the Novel**

Harvard Summer School 2022

Tuesday/Thursday 8:30-11:30

Leo Damrosch (damrosch@fas.harvard.edu, leodamrosch.com)

Literary narrative goes back to ancient times, but “the novel,” as the term is used today, did not appear until the seventeenth century (*Don Quixote* and *La Princesse de Clèves* are cele­brated pio­neers), and only in the eighteenth century did it establish itself as the dominant literary form of our culture. Recent scholarship on eighteenth-century fiction has focused on themes of current academic interest (class, gender, imperialism, etc.) and on texts that used to be thought of as marginal or infer­ior. This course goes back to the canon: the novels that were long considered the best and most important, both for their achieve­­ment in developing the possi­bilities of narrative, and for their continued ability to give pleasure to readers. Issues to be considered include genre (what was new about novels? is the novel a genre?); the repre­sentation of character and subjectivity; the sociological function of fiction; the attractions of plot and the reaction against it; the para­doxes of “realism;” moral didacticism and its subversion. The course ends with Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, which culminates the period’s experi­ments in narration and character.

There was constant interchange between English culture and French culture during the eighteenth century, and two brilliant French novels were directly influenced by English ones: *Jacques the Fatal­ist* by *Tristram Shandy*, and *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* by *Clarissa*. These have been included in the course, together with an example of the aristocratic fiction that preceded the middle-class novel, *La Princesse de Clèves*.

For further insight into about assumptions about genre and psychology, scenes from modern film adap­tations will be shown: Jean Delannoy’s *La Princesse de Clèves*, with screenplay by Jean Cocteau (1961); the classic 1963 Tony Richardson *Tom Jones* (which got Oscars for best picture and best actor); a 1991 BBC version of *Clarissa*; three adaptations of *Les Liasons Dangereuses*,by Roger Vadim (1960), Stephen Frears (1988), and Milos Forman (1989); an adaptation of *Jacques the Fatalist* by Antoine Douchet (1993); Michael Winter­bottom’s metacinematic *Tristram Shandy* (2006); and two drastically different versions of *Pride and Prejudice*, a 2001 BBC miniseries with Jennifer Ehle and Colin Firth, and a 2005 film with Keira Knightley and Matthew MacFadyen,

**CLASS ATTENDANCE:** you are expected to participate “live” in each class session, except in cases of illness or other emergency. If that should happen, please let me know by a personal email. During class, please do not use the “chat” feature, which I find distracting. There will be no need to mute your mic so long as people courteously take turns speaking; if you would like to ask a question, please wave your hand so that I can see it on my monitor.

**WRITING REQUIREMENT:** the grade will be based on **two short papers** (3-4 pages due **July 16**, and 4-6 pages due **July 30**) and a **final exam** (**Aug. 4**), which will be open-book, open-notes, and will be taken online (as will be ex­plained more fully during our first class meeting). Suggestions for the papers are given in the PAPER TOPICS page on the course website.

**Graduate students** will take the exam, but instead of the short papers will write a 12-15 page **term paper** (due on or before **Saturday, July 30**). You will develop your topic in consultation with me, in one or more private Zoom conferences.

Please submit each paper as a **Word document** attached to a **personal email** **to me**, rather than through Canvas. I will type in my comments in the body of your paper and return it by email. The short papers, the final exam, and participation/engagement in class will each count for approximately 1/3 of the final grade, but I will also take into account improvement over the course of the summer.

As to formatting, use double space in whatever font you like. There is no need for footnotes when you’re quoting from the text itself – you can just give page numbers in parentheses. If you’re using different editions than the ones listed below, indicate which ones they are.

**ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES** (probably not relevant for this online course)**:**

The Summer School is committed to providing an accessible academic community. The Accessi­bility Services Office offers a variety of accommodations and services to students with docu­mented disabilities. Please visit http://www.summer.harvard.edu/resources-policies/accessibility-services for more information.

Please note that since the final exam will be open book and not proctored, you will not need to make special arrangements if you need extra time.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STANDARDS:**

You are responsible for understanding Harvard Summer School policies on academic integrity

(http://www.summer.harvard.edu/policies/student-responsibilities) and how to use sources res­pon­­­s­ibly. Not knowing the rules, misunderstanding the rules, running out of time, submitting the wrong draft, or being overwhelmed with multiple demands are not acceptable excuses. To support learning about academic citation rules, visit Resources to Support Academic Integrity (http://www.summer.harvard.edu/resources-policies/resources-support-academic-integrity) and the Harvard Guide to Using Sources (https://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu).

**PUBLISHING OR DISTRIBUTING COURSE MATERIALS**

Students may not post, publish, sell, or otherwise publicly distribute course materials without the written permission of the course instructor. Such materials include, but are not limited to, the following: lecture notes, lecture slides, video, or audio recordings, assignments, problem sets, examinations, other students’ work, and answer keys. Students who sell, post, publish, or distribute course materials without written permission, whether for the purposes of soliciting answers or otherwise, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including requirement to withdraw from the Summer School.

**TEXTS**: I will be using the Penguin editions listed here, which can be ordered from Amazon or (as used books) from Abebooks.com. However, for our Zoom sessions I will show every passage on the screen that I’ll be looking at with you, so if you have different editions that won’t be a problem. If you do choose to read some texts in different editions or online, rather than in book form, I've given chapter numbers whenever possible to help you locate the assigned sections. Several of the novels, however, don’t have chapters, and it would be preferable to read them in these editions so that the sections will be easy to locate.

Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*

Diderot, *Jacques the Fatalist*

Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling*

Laclos, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*

Lafayette, *The Princesse de Clèves*

Richardson, *Clarissa, or, The History of a Young Lady*

Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*

Voltaire, *Candide*

**website**: brief **required readings** for some class meetings, as listed below, are in the **ASSIGNED TEXTS** folder on the website.

**NOTE ON ABRIDGED READING ASSIGNMENTS**: ideally one would read every novel in its entirety, but in the brief summer semester that would be a superhuman achieve­ment. You may take comfort from Fielding’s remark in *Tom Jones*, “We have, ourselves, been very often most horridly given to jumping, as we have run through the pages of voluminous historians.” In any case it would be impossible in the time available to read the whole of *Clarissa*, which runs to more than a million words, and I have suggested abridged readings for the longer texts. **You are asked to come to class having read at least the sections assigned here**.

**IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT THE READING LOAD:**

Even in abridgement, the reading assignments may be difficult for students with multiple com­mit­ments. Please be assured that you will not be criticized or penalized in any way, so long as you do read at least parts of each novel with thoughtful attention. The important thing is to read enough to enter into their imaginative worlds. In class we will often look closely at specific passages, and that will encourage a collective engagement with these great works, even if you have not been able to read all the sections that were assigned for each day.

There are also **questions for discussion** for each class meeting. Please do give thought to these.

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GET A HEAD START BEFORE THE TERM BEGINS**: three of these novels especially repay being read in their entirety, in this recommended order of prefer­ence: *Les Liaisons Dangereuses, Pride and Prejudice,* *Tom Jones*. And in the case of *Pride and Prejudice*, which is close to four hundred pages long, abridged assignments don’t really work, so it’s especially important to find time to read it in its entirety if you aren’t already familiar with it.

June

Tu 21 INTRODUCTORY CLASS

Th 23 **Mme. de Lafayette, *La Princesse de Clèves*** (1678)

**website**: **rochefoucauld.text** (aphoristic “maxims” by a close friend of Mme. de La­fayette, which resonate interestingly with her novel)

**Questions for discussion**:

Does it weaken this novel to have very little physical description of people, places, etc.?

In what ways does the narrator show insight into her characters’ inner life, and in what ways does she refrain from describing it?

Is the psychol­ogy in the *Maxims* of La Rochefoucauld the same as that of this novel?

Why is it so gratifying to Nemours to spy on the Prin­cesse (pp. 147-48)?

Why does the Princesse reject Nemours at the end? and why do the final pages seem so anticlimactic?

Tu 28 **Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*** (1719). **Read at least this much**: pp. 3-56, 63-71, 92-108, 130-31, 154-225 (note: there’s a helpful glossary of unfamiliar words on 242-47)

**website**: **mrs. veal** (an example of reportage by Defoe), **defoe prefaces** (comments by Defoe on his novel), **bunyan.text** (excerpts from *Pilgrim’s Progress* and *Grace Abound­­ing*, in the Puritan tradition that Defoe adapted in *Crusoe*)

**Questions for discussion**:

How does Defoe strive to simulate realism in *Robinson Crusoe* and in *The Apparition of Mrs. Veal*—both in the things that are described, and in the way the narrator presents himself?

On p. 3, and at greater length in Defoe’s prefaces to Volume II on the website, why does he feel it necessary to claim that these events actually happened, even while admitting that the book is an allegory of his own experience? (He spent time in debtors’ prison, implicitly compared to isolation of a desert island.)

Why does Crusoe become convinced of the importance of Providence? How convincing are his religious musings?

What does Defoe’s attitude seem to be toward slavery and toward cannibalism? Why do Xury and Friday love Crusoe?

Does the ending of the story confirm the advice of Crusoe’s father (p. 6) that it’s best not to try to rise above the “middle state” of society?

Th 30 **Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa*** (1747). In addition to page numbers, letter numbers are given here to make them easier to find in other editions – BUT not all modern editions use the same sequence of numbers, and in his own successive editions Richardson him­self added more letters ands renumbered them accordingly.

**Read at least this much** (letter numbers in **bold** followed by Penguin page numbers): **Letter 1** (39-41), **4** (53-54, the grandfather’s will), **10** (67-73), **16** (87-94), **22-24.2** (116-121), **28** (134-35), **311**(42-48), **62-64** (260-72), **78** (302-20), **84** (342-45), **94-98** (372-87), **99** (399-403), **110** (426-31), **131** (472-73) (though Clarissa doesn’t realize it, Mrs. Sinclair is the madam of a high-class whore­house, and the women there are prosti­tutes in Lovelace’s pay), **138** (492-93), **169-170** (555-58), **200-201** (640-53), **220** (704-6), **225-226** (722-31), **228-233** (736-80)

**website**: **milton** (excerpts from *Paradise Lost* on sexuality, temptation, sin)

**Questions for discussion**:

To what extent do the letter writers have different styles and personalities?

In what ways is marriage treated as a financial transaction between families, and what freedom of choice is permitted to a young woman in this system?

Why is the grandfather’s will, though well intentioned, a fatal obstacle to happiness?

Is Clarissa’s virtuousness noble, or is it (as her sister believes) sanctimonious and self-promoting?

To what extent is Clarissa to blame for falling into Lovelace’s snare?

What relationship can you see between Milton’s account of sex before the Fall and Love­lace’s description of Clarissa’s “wantoning” ringlets (p. 399)?

Were readers wrong to have a more positive impression of Lovelace than Richardson expected they would?

July

Tu 5 ***Clarissa***, **Letters** **237-240** (802-16) (“Captain Tomlinson” is another accomplice of Lovelace’s), **246** (846-48), **255-258** (874-83), **261-262** (888-98), **281** (945-52), **293** (964-69), **302-306** (981-86), **329-334** (1045-68), **378** (1160), **396-398** (1184-86), **402-408** (1192-97), **412-418** (1204-19), **421** (1233-35), **440** (1271-76), **450-451** (1303-7), **459** (132l-28), **474-492** (1350-76), **497-502** (1383-1404), **536**, plus “**Conclusion**” and “**Postscript**” (1484-99) [CONTINUED]

**website**: **rochester.text** (an example of the libertine ethos that Lovelace reflects)

**Questions for discussion**:

Are Lovelace’s struggles with his conscience believable? Why can’t he back off and stop tormenting Clarissa?

When the rape finally happens (p. 883), why is it left undescribed? [CONTINUED]

What insights and self-knowledge are implied in Clarissa’s distressed jottings (890-93)? What is the meaning of the symbols on her coffin (1305-6)?

Why does Clarissa think it important to use a double meaning to deceive Lovelace (1233, 1274), rather than an outright lie?

Why are all of the Harlowes so cruel to Clarissa, and given that they are, how believable is their final grief and repentance?

How convincing is the moral lesson that Richardson presents in the final Postscript (1495-99)? And is it possible that he identified vicariously with the libertine, Rochester-like Lovelace more than he was prepared to recognize?

Th 7 **Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones*** (1749), Books I-IX

Book and chapter numbers are given, to make it easy to find the selections in any edition. Page numbers in the Penguin edition are given in parentheses. **Read at least this much**: I.i-II.iii (35-80), III.ii-vii (109-29), IV.ii-iv (140-48), IV.x (167-71), IV.xiii (178-81), V.iv-v (198-208), V.ix-x (224-31), VI.i (240-43), VI.x-xiv (272-88), VII.ix (317-21), VIII.iv-viii (364-83), IX.ii-v (433-50)

**Questions for discussion**:

How does this omniscient narrator differ—in style, and in relationship with the reader—from the one in *The Princesse de Clèves*?

This is the first novel we’ve read that’s divided into “books” and chapters, often with elaborate titles; what effects does that create?

Fielding was much praised (also criticized) for his “realism.” How can characters be realistic when they have names like Allworthy, Thwackum, and Square?

In IV.ii, what means does Fielding use to convey the charms of Sophia?

[CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE]

How are paired characters employed: Allworthy/Western, Tom/Blifil, Thwackum/Square, Sophia/Molly?

In V.x, how does Fielding play with different modes or styles of language?

In VI.i, what is Fielding’s philosophy of love, and how does it contrast with the novels we’ve read so far?

In VI.xii-xiii, how realistic is it psychologically to analyze Tom’s and Black George’s emotions with a series of abstractions (Honour, Pride, Avarice, etc.)?

In V.iv and VII.ix, what are the implications of the muff as a plot device?

How does the narrator make clear that there’s nothing very bad about Tom sleeping with Mrs. Waters in the inn at Upton?

Tu 12 ***Tom Jones***, Books X-XVIII

**Read at least this much** (shortened assignment since the paper is due today): X.v (474-78), XII.iii-iv (551-59), XII.x (578-82), XII.xiv-XIII.i (597-603), XIII.vi-xii (619-48), XV.v (700-706), XV.ix (720-25), XVI.ii (738-44), XVII.i-ii (776-80), XVII.vii (798-801), XVIII.i-iv (812-25), XVIII.vii-viii (834-46), XVIII.xii plus “Chapter the Last” (864-75).

**website**: **reeve.text** (18th century critique of Richardson and Fielding) [CONTINUED]

**Questions for discussion**:

If you’ve read *Don Quixote*, how does Partridge resemble Sancho Panza?

Why does Tom agree to be Lady Bellaston’s lover? To what extent does this make him a less attractive character? And how does he manage to get free from her?

How does Western’s boisterous rustic style contrast with London sophistication?

To what extent does Western’s attitude on marrying his daughter coincide with that of the Harlowe family?

What role does the lawyer Dowling play in the plot, and what does his relationship to Blifil seem to be? (There’s an important clue in XVII.vii).

When Tom’s real parentage is finally revealed, did Fielding plant clues to it along the way, knowing that we wouldn’t notice them?

Th 14 **Voltaire, *Candide* (1759)**

**Questions for discussion**:

*Candide* is obviously a satire; to what extent is it also a novel? Is Candide himself ever more than a mouthpiece for the author?

Is El Dorado a utopia, and why does Candide leave there?

Why is the Pope’s daughter so proud of her afflictions?

How serious a conclusion is represented by the final words, “We must cultivate our garden”?

Sat 16 **First paper due**

Tu 19 **Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*** (1759-1767)

I.i-xii (5-30), I.xxi-xxii (56-64), II.iii-xiii (79-102), III.viii-x (148-53), III.xvi-xix (169-73), III.xxix-xxxi (194-97), IV.xiv (258-59), IV.xvii-xix (263-65), IV.xxvii-xxx (286-97), V.vii-xiv (324-34), V.xliii (365-66), VI.vi-x (375-85), VI.xviii (394-96), VI.xxv (407-8), VI.xl (425-27), VII.xxxi (468-70), VIII.xi (499-500), VIII.xxixxvii (520-27), IX.viii (554-56), IX.xx (567-68), IX.xxvii-xxxiii (581-88)

**website: duration** [CONTINUED]

**Questions for discussion**:

Tristram, the narrator, is conceived in Vol. I but not born until Vol. III; why the delay?

Does he establish the same kind of relationship with the reader as Fielding did, or is it significantly different?

What attitude toward conventional novels is implied in VII.xxxi?

What is the relationship between Walter and Toby Shandy? between Walter and his wife? between Toby and Trim? between Toby and the widow Wadman?

In III.xviii, Sterne invokes the philosopher Locke on “duration;” what is its rele­vance to this book?

In IV.xxvii, what is supposedly witty about Yorick’s action with the chestnut?

In V.xliii, what is Sterne suggesting about how language works?

In VI.vi-x, the story of the death of Le Fever is immensely sentimental; does Sterne mean this seriously, or is he joking?

Sterne uses sexual double entendres all through the book; what is their effect?

How is the theme of death handled?

Th 21 **Denis Diderot, *Jacques the Fatalist*** (begun ca. 1765, pub.1796): at least 21-45, 67-76, 100-203, 245-54

**Questions for discussion**:

p. 21: why does the narrative begin in this challenging way?

How does *Jacques* differ from a conventional novel?

p. 30: why does Diderot cancel out the pursuing mob, and what is the significance of what he goes on to say about fictional truth?

p. 108: how does it affect the story of Madame de la Pommeraye to have it interrupted in this way?

pp. 116-18: what is implied in the “same” story happening to two different pairs of people? (7) pp. 147-151: how do the various characters interpret the ending of the Pom­meraye story? does Diderot imply that there’s a correct way to interpret it?

[CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE]

pp. 200-201, how do Diderot (and Sterne) address double entendres, euphemisms, and sexual explicit­ness in language?

If everything that happens is written in the great scroll up above, are we utterly lacking in free will? and if so, is that alarming?

Tu 26 **Choderlos de Laclos, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*** (1782)

**Read at least this much**: letters 1-10, 15, 20-23, 38-44, 47-48, 61-66, 71, 79, 81, 84-87, 90-91, 93-106

**Questions for discussion**:

Letters 10 and 15: why does Merteuil feel that her treatment of the Chevalier shows her total mastery, and why does Valmont argue that she’s mistaken? [CONTINUED]

Letter 48: what do Valmont’s cunning double entendres reveal about the untrust­worthiness of language?

Letter 63, p. 132: how is Merteuil “like the Deity” in her treatment of Mme. de Volanges and Cécile?

How does Letter 81 (at the center of the novel) express Merteuil’s personal manifesto, and what does it mean to say *je suis mon ouvrage*, “I am what I have created” (p. 181)?

Letter 96, pp. 223-24: does Valmont make a disturbingly convincing point when he talks about enjoying tragedies on stage and in life?

Th 28 ***Les Liaisons Dangereuses***

**Read at least this much**: letters 113-115, 123-125, 128, 130, 138-139, 141-153, 161-175

**Questions for discussion**:

Letter 125: why does Tourvel finally give herself to Valmont? how does he react to what happened? and why does Laclos make Valmont, not Tourvel, describe it?

Letters 128 and 143: how does Tourvel interpret what has happened, and what accounts for the change in her attitude?

Letter 153: why does Merteuil proclaim: “Very well, then. War!”

Is Merteuil’s disfiguring smallpox a novelistic way of punishing her for her deeds?

Sat 30 **Second paper due**

August

Tu 2 **Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*** (1813)

**website**: **wollstonecraft.text** (excerpts from the pioneer feminist work)

**Questions for discussion**:

In the opening chapter, how does the narrator interweave her own comments with the dialogue between Mr. and Mrs. Bennet?

At what point do we begin to realize that Elizabeth will be at the center of the book?

What are some specific moments at which Darcy’s “pride” and Elizabeth’s “prejudice” are revealed?

Why is Elizabeth’s visit to Pemberley the crucial turning point?

How is Elizabeth’s situation illuminated by contrast with Jane/Bingley, Charlotte Lucas/ Mr. Collins, and Lydia/Wickham?

In what ways does *Pride and Prejudice* differ from a conventional romance novel, even though it’s about two people falling in love and arriving at marriage?

Th 4 **FINAL EXAM**