

ENGL E-140: The Rise of the Novel fall 2015

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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 Liaisons Dangereuses*, by Roger Vadim (1960), Stephen Frears (1988), and Milos Forman (1989); a metacinematic adaptation of *Jacques the Fatalist* by Antoine Douchet (1993); Michael Winterbottom’s equally 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).

WRITING REQUIREMENT: the grade will be based on **two short papers** (3-4 pages due **Oct. 26**, and 4-6 pages due **Dec. 7**) and a **final “project,”** not a formal exam (**Dec. 14-15**), which

will be open-book, open-notes, and will be taken online. **Graduate students** will do the project, but instead of the short papers will write a 12-15 page **term paper** (due on or before **Dec. 10**). Papers should be uploaded to the drop box on the course website.

TEXTS: if possible please use these editions, so that you can refer easily to specific passages that will be discussed during the lectures. ISBN numbers are included; they can be easily obtained through amazon.com.

Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Penguin 0141439513)
Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (Penguin 0141439823)
Diderot, *Jacques the Fatalist* (Penguin 9780140444728)
Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling* (Penguin 0140436227)
Laclos, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (Penguin 0-14-044116-1)
Lafayette, *The Princesse de Clèves* (Penguin 0-14-044587-0)
Richardson, *Clarissa, or, The History of a Young Lady* (Penguin 0140432159)
Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (Penguin 0141439777)
Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (Oxford Worlds Classics 0199536848)
Voltaire, *Candide* (Signet 9780451531159)

Brief website readings are included for several class meetings; you will find them in the **SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS** folder. These and several other parts of the website are **accessible only to registered students after logging in with their ID**.

Occasional **handouts are available in the HANDOUTS folder** (during the “live” version of the course these were handed out as hard copies in class).

NOTE ON ABRIDGED READINGS AS INDICATED BELOW: ideally one would read every novel in its entirety, but given the pace at which the course moves and the length of some of the novels, that would probably be a superhuman achievement. You may take comfort from Fielding's remark in *Tom Jones*, “We have, ourselves, been very often most horribly 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 abridged readings are indicated for most of the books. The lectures, therefore, will present an overview of the important aspects of each novel, but you are asked to read *at least* the sections assigned here before each lecture. **To make it easy to locate these passages, you should use the assigned editions if at all possible.** The only exceptions are *Tom Jones* and *Tristram Shandy*, which are divided into short chapters that can be easily located in any edition.

There are also **questions for discussion** for each class meeting, which may help you to focus your thinking in advance of the lectures.

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*, and *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.

NOTE: There will be 14 lectures, which were originally given "live," with participation by students able to attend the sessions in Cambridge, in the fall term of 2014. We have retained the Thanksgiving break from that year (no lecture on Nov. 23), since if we didn't do so, a fifteenth lecture would have to be added. Note also that the second lecture will be posted on a Friday (Sept. 4) since the following Monday will be the Labor Day holiday and the Extension School offices will be closed.

Kris Trujillo returns as TA and will be available in real time for email advice and to lead an online discussion section. Leo Damrosch will read the Discussion Forum contributions each week and add comments there.

August

- 31** **INTRODUCTORY CLASS**
 handouts: Spenser and Milton; title pages

September

4 (Fri.) Mme. de Lafayette, *La Princesse de Clèves* (1678)

Additional readings: Rochefoucauld Text (aphoristic "maxims" by a close friend of Mme. de Lafayette, which resonate interestingly with her novel)

Handouts: Clèves; Rochefoucauld

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?

- 14** **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)

Additional readings: 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*)

Handouts: Texts for Crusoe; Joyce on 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?

21 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726)

Handouts: Swift

Questions for Discussion:

How would you describe the balance in this book between novelistic narrative, satire, and fantasy?

The name Gulliver suggests "gullible," and sometimes he does boast naively about horrible behavior in his own homeland. Is he indeed gullible, or are those just moments when Swift is using him as a vehicle to make a point?

The book is filled with what were once obvious contemporary references: in Lilliput Flimnap stands for Sir Robert Walpole, the prime minister Swift hated, and the war between Lilliput and Blefuscu alludes to the long-standing rivalry between Britain and France. How well does the story hold up for readers who don't know or care about any of that?

Is the account of then-modern science in the third Voyage reactionary and unfair, or does Swift have an important point to make about how science can be misused?

Do the Houyhnhnys (the rational horses, pronounced "Whinnims," like whinnying, represent an ideal utopia? And is Gulliver right when he decides that human beings are really Yahoos?

28 Voltaire, *Candide*

Handouts: Voltaire; Decline and Fall

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"?

October

- 5 **Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa* (1747), Read at least this much** (when a letter begins or ends at the middle of a page, read only the complete letter; thus, on page 41, stop at the end of Letter #1): pages 39-41, 53-54 (the grandfather's will), 67-73, 87-94, 116-121, 134-35, 142-48, 260-72, 302-20, 342-45, 372-87, 399-403, 426-31, 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), 492-93, 555-58, 640-53, 704-6, 722-31, 736-80

Additional readings: Milton (excerpts from *Paradise Lost* on sexuality, temptation, sin)

Handouts: Stinstra; Clarissa London

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?

- 12 ***Clarissa***, pages 802-16 ("Captain Tomlinson" is another accomplice of Lovelace's), 846-48, 875-83, 888-98, 945-52, 964-69, 981-86, 1045-68, 1160, 1184-86, 1192-96, 1204-19, 1233-35, 1271-76, 1303-7, 1321-28, 1350-76, 1383-1404, 1484-99

Additional readings: Rochester Text (an example of the libertine ethos that Lovelace reflects)

Handouts: Blake; Withers 1 and Withers 2

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?

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?

19 **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)

Handout: Some Texts in connection with *Tom Jones*

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?

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?

26 ***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).

Additional readings: Reeve Text (18th century critique of Richardson and Fielding)

Handouts: Frye; *Tom Jones* diagram

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?

REMINDER: FIRST SHORT PAPER (3–4 PAGES) DUE OCTOBER 26November**2 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)

Additional readings: Duration**Handouts: Shandy Reactions****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?

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

Additional readings: Acting Text (Diderot vs. Rousseau on role playing)

Handouts: Some Terms for *Jacques the Fatalist*

Questions for discussion:

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

How does *Jacques* differ from a conventional novel?

On 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?

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

On 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?

On 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?

- 16 **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

Additional readings: Laclos Text (Laclos on women’s education)

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?

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?

- 23 [THANKSGIVING BREAK]

- 30 ***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?

December

7 Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813)

Additional readings: Wollstonecraft Text (excerpts from the pioneer feminist work)

Handouts: Austen Map

Second paper due (4-6 pages)

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?

REMINDER: SECOND SHORT PAPER (4-6 PAGES) DUE DECEMBER 7

REMINDER: GRADUATE TERM PAPER (12-15 PAGES) DUE DECEMBER 10

14-15 FINAL PROJECT