

HL4017: Advanced Studies in Restoration and Eighteen-Century Literature

At Home in the World: Situating the Eighteenth-Century Body

Semester 2, AY2025-26

NB: This syllabus is subject to change

Instructor: Asst. Prof Peh Li Qi

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Office hours: By appointment, either on Zoom or in-person at SHHK #03-92

Time: Wednesdays, 9:30am—12:20pm

Venue: TBA

Course Description

Conceptions of the human body underwent significant development in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a time when the boundaries between the public and the private were constantly being drawn and re-drawn. Through select readings of seventeenth- and eighteenth- century essays, novels, and poetry, this course seeks to excavate the import of the fleshly body in the literature of this period, and more importantly, chart a history of individuality and subjectivity that is grounded in the material and the corporeal. Themes that will receive special attention include those of freedom and restraint, gender and sexuality, and reason and the passions. By the end of this course, you will come to see that ideas of the self during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were very much depended upon how one apprehended the tactility and solidity of others.

Mode of Assessment

Participation – 10%

Students are expected to participate in class discussions and any activities conducted within the classroom.

Presentation – 20%

Make an original argument about the week's primary text and back it up with close-reading evidence. If you wish, you may use AI to generate a sample argument, and then show us how you add to the argument in your presentation.

Final essay proposal – 20%

Your proposal should include a brief abstract, a rough essay outline, and an annotated bibliography of at least 5 sources.

Final essay – 50%

Write a 3000-word essay comparing at least two texts in this course. This essay should advance an original scholarly argument that is backed up with close-reading evidence.

Use of AI tools

All uses of AI tools (such as ChatGPT) have to be cited in this class.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (14/1)	Introduction	Introduction, historical overview
Week 2 (21/1)	Freedom and Censorship	John Milton, <i>Areopagitica</i> (1644) and selected poems
Week 3 (28/1)	Forging New Worlds	Margaret Cavendish, <i>The Blazing World</i> (1666)
Week 4 (4/2)	The Rise of the Novel	Samuel Richardson, <i>Pamela</i> (1740), Part 1
Week 5 (11/2)	The Style of Rape	Samuel Richardson, <i>Pamela</i> (1740), Part 2
Week 6 (18/2)	No class – Chinese New Year Break	
Week 7 (21/2)	Satirizing Rape	Henry Fielding, <i>Shamela</i> (1741)
No class – Recess Week		
Week 8 (28/2)	Women of Feeling	Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, <i>The Turkish Embassy Letters</i> (1763)
13/3 (Fri)	One-hour morning Zoom guest lecture for Week 12	
Week 9 (18/3)	Men of Feeling	Laurence Sterne, <i>A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy</i> (1768)
Week 10 (20/3)	Leaky Bodies	Tobias Smollett, <i>Humphry Clinker</i> (1771), Part 1
Week 11 (25/3)	Feeling Disgusted	Tobias Smollett, <i>Humphry Clinker</i> (1771), Part 2
Week 12 (8/4)	No class – short make-up lecture on 13 th March (Friday)	
Week 13 (15/4)	Recap	