

**HL 2003: Introduction to Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature**  
 Growth and Decay in the British Atlantic World  
 Semester 1, AY 2022-23

**NB: This syllabus is subject to change.**

Instructor: Asst Prof. Li Qi Peh  
 Office Hours: TBA  
 Time: Thursdays, 9am-12 noon  
 Venue: TBA

**Course Description**

During the eighteenth century, Britain emerged as a global superpower. This rise was built upon the cultivation and exploitation of its colonies in the Americas and the Caribbean, and shaped the forms and subjects of the many literary texts produced during this period. In this course, we will examine a selection of natural histories, poems, novels, short stories, and plays that engage—either directly or indirectly—with Britain’s global traffic of goods and people. Throughout, we will pay special attention to how different writers harnessed the rhetoric of growth and decay to frame particular bodies and spaces and spaces as more effective for the expansion of empire. By studying the political, ethical, and literary implications of such rhetoric, we will work to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the concepts of modernity, race, death, and the human.

**Course Readings (to be purchased)**

\*Please purchase the stated edition! All other readings will be provided in soft-copy.

Richard Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados* (Hackett Publishing Company, 2011)  
 Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko, the Rover, and Other Works* (Penguin Classics, 2003)  
 Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (Penguin Classics, 2001)  
 John Gay, *The Beggar’s Opera and Polly* (Oxford World’s Classics, 2013)  
 Sarah Scott, *Millenium Hall* (Broadview Press, 1995)  
 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels* (Penguin Classics, 2003)  
 M. NourbeSe Philip, *Zong!* (Wesleyan University Press, 2011)

**Mode of Assessment**

Short writing exercises (100-200 words) – 10%  
 Response paper (750-1000 words) – 10%  
 Final essay (2000-2500 words) – 30%  
 Final essay exam – 50%

## Tentative Course Schedule

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>The Global Eighteenth Century</b> Introductions Course Overview
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Cultivating Empire</b> Richard Ligon's <i>A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados</i> (1657)
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Death and Injury in the Plantation Zone</b> Aphra Behn's <i>Oroonoko</i> (1696)
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Cultivating Property</b> Daniel Defoe's <i>Robinson Crusoe</i> (1719) Selections from John Locke's <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> (1689)
<b>Week 5</b>	<b>Cultivating the 'Ideal' Body</b> Daniel Defoe, <i>Robinson Crusoe</i> (1719), continued
<b>Week 6</b>	<b>Putrid Bodies</b> Selected poems from Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, and John Gay
<b>Week 7</b>	<b>Porous Bodies</b> John Gay's <i>Polly</i> (1728)
MID-TERM BREAK	
<b>Week 8</b>	*Class cancelled*
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>Disabled Bodies</b> Sarah Scott's <i>Millenium Hall</i> (1762)
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>Rethinking Personhood</b> Selections from James Thomson's <i>The Seasons</i> (1730)

<b>Week 11</b>	<b>Influences of the New Science</b> Jonathan Swift's <i>Gulliver's Travels</i> (1726)
<b>Week 12</b>	<b>Rethinking the Figure of the Human</b> Jonathan Swift's <i>Gulliver's Travels</i> (1726), continued
<b>Week 13</b>	<b>The Atlantic Slave Trade and Social Death</b> M. NourbeSe Philip's <i>Zong!</i> (2008)
<b>Week 14</b>	<b>The Eighteenth Century Now</b> M. NourbeSe Philip's <i>Zong!</i> (2008), continued