British Literature I, 1400-1785

English 261, British Literature Survey I; Spring 2013, Section 002; CRN 11209
101 Chitwood Hall
TR 10:00-11:15am

Instructor: Teresa M. Pershing
Office: G03 Colson Hall
Office Hours: Tuesday 11:15a-12:15p
Mailbox: 100 Colson Hall
E-mail: tpershin@mix.wvu.edu

COURSE INFORMATION:
CHANGE NOTICE: This syllabus is an outlined plan of the course; I reserve the right to make any changes.

DESCRIPTION: English 261 fulfills the GEC requirements for Objective 3 (The Past and Its Traditions: Apply knowledge, methods and principles of inquiry to understanding the past) and Objective 5 (Artistic Expression: Apply methods and principles of critical inquiry to the analysis of literary or artistic expression). English 261 is required for English majors, and can be used to fulfill the requirements for the English minor.

The course introduces students to the genres and modes of early modern British literature, beginning with Evelina (published in 1778) and then travelling back through time to the Middle Ages in order to work chronologically toward the 18th century. Students will 1) study early and early modern British literature in the context of its history and culture; 2) be introduced to a series of critical methodologies to guide them through literary and cultural texts; and 3) practice critical thinking and writing about literature. Students will learn to 1) understand the historical context of the literature that we read; 2) enhance their understanding of early British literature in terms of genre, style, and period; 3) develop a thesis about a literary text, and support that thesis with textual evidence; 4) analyze literary evidence in detail, at times paying attention to particular themes and methodologies; and 5) recognize and develop multiple analyses for a single literary text. We will explore how literature reflects and challenges the ways that we imagine the past and present. Additionally, we will pay close attention to literary periods, trends, themes, genres, and approaches to studying literature. Of course, we can’t read everything written during this vast period—doing so would be impossible. I do want us to engage in the complexities and messiness of culture through the lens of literature while providing a strong foundation for your future interests in this subject.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:


You must have the required textbooks for this course. You will have assigned readings from this text for every class period. Please bring your book to class daily, unless I indicate otherwise. I strongly suggest also having a folder and notebook that you bring to class every day. Keep all materials for this course.
(quizzes, responses, exams, etc.) until the course is over. You are also required to have an active, public
Twitter account for use in this course. You should also have access to your MIX account and eCampus.

RECOMMENDED PREPARATION: English 101 and English 102 (or equivalents) are not prerequisites but
will better prepare you for success in English 261. I strongly dissuade you from taking this course unless
you have completed, or are currently completing, English 102.

OFFICE AND EMAIL HOURS: My office hours are 11:15am-12:15pm on Tuesdays in G03 Colson Hall.
You may drop in during these times or make an appointment with me to address any questions or discuss
your progress in the course. I’m happy to talk with you via email as well; during the week I usually
respond within 24 hours. You should not expect a response from 8pm to 9am. I cannot discuss grades via
email; if you have questions about your grade please visit my office. I will communicate important course
information to you via e-mail; you are responsible for checking your e-mail on a daily basis and coming
to class prepared.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
ATTENDANCE: You are allowed up to three absences for the semester without penalty. Each subsequent
absence will reduce your final course grade by 7%. If you accumulate more than seven absences you will
automatically fail the course. There are no excused absences (this includes illness, family issues,
transportation challenges, athletics, extracurricular activities, weather, etc.). Plan for the unexpected and
use your absences wisely! We are always doing something in class, so if you miss class, you miss
important, necessary material; obtain notes, handouts, and information from a classmate. (Students can
contact one another using the “Courses” tab in MIX.) If you are going to be absent the day an assignment
is due, you must turn it in prior to the class meeting time or it will not be accepted (or in the case of SCRs
will incur a late penalty). Students who are registered for the course but do not attend during the first two
weeks of the semester will automatically receive an F in the course. Students who wish to withdrawal
from the course must do so on their own using the STAR system.

PARTICIPATION (10%): Participation includes coming to class prepared and on time, bringing all
necessary materials, actively taking part in class discussions, asking questions, contributing your
knowledge and insights in whatever form is appropriate, and striving to make all your contributions
excellent on a daily basis. It also includes doing the reading and writing for each class. Students should
expect to be called on randomly throughout the semester. Your attendance in class assumes that you are
prepared for discussion and able to actively contribute to the conversation.

A: You are prepared for every class period and contribute to class discussion every (or almost every)
day; this includes bringing the course readings on a daily basis. You have insightful and relevant
contributions and go “above and beyond” an average engagement with the day’s readings. You
respond to your peers’ comments and questions and help facilitate dialogue in the classroom.

B: You are prepared for every class period and contribute to most class discussions; you usually have
the course readings. Comments are relevant and insightful and demonstrate a careful reading of the
texts assigned. You respond to others’ comments on a regular basis.

C: You are typically prepared for class and contribute to class discussion approximately half of the
time; you bring the course readings about half of the time. You do not regularly display careful
reading and/or understanding of the assigned texts. Sometimes your contributions are off-topic or
prevent dialogue from moving forward. During group work, you take on a quiet role.

D: You rarely comment or add insight to class discussion; you only sometimes bring the course
readings. You do not display your preparedness for class, which is reflected by class discussion
and/or low quiz scores. During group work you are distracting and/or off-topic. You may show little
interest in the material and are off task during class (reading non-relevant material, sending text
messages, sleeping, etc.). You occasionally arrive late to class or leave early.
F: You regularly arrive late to class or leave early, are unprepared for class discussion, haven’t read the assigned materials, distract others, intentionally offend others, and/or fail to follow the classroom policies and procedures.

**QUizzes (10%)**: Unscheduled quizzes should be expected throughout the semester. Quizzes cannot be made up and will not be administered if you arrive 5 or more minutes late; missed quizzes will be recorded as a zero. Quizzes ensure that you are reading the required material, help you gauge your reading practices, and help you prepare for exams. (Keep your quizzes!) If you read carefully, you should pass the quiz. If you find that you are having trouble with this aspect of the course, despite reading the assigned materials, come talk to me. We can go over strategies for preparing for quizzes, reading critically, and retaining what you read.

**Thesis Statements and Impromptu Assignments (10%)**: Students will submit 11 thesis statements throughout the semester according to the established schedule; the lowest thesis statement grade will be dropped at the end of the semester. Drafting thesis statements will help students test ideas by distilling them into a sentence or two. This provides students with an opportunity to practice writing thesis statements for literary works, serves as a way to foster class discussion, and helps to brainstorm potential SCR topics. A successful thesis statement does the following: 1) takes on a subject upon which reasonable people could disagree (e.g. the statement is debatable and justifies discussion); 2) deals with a subject that can be adequately treated given the nature of the assignment (e.g. a short essay or class discussion—not a 10 page paper or dissertation); 3) expresses one main idea; 4) asserts your conclusions about a subject; and 5) is specific. Thesis statements will receive a numerical grade ranging from 0 to 5 based on whether the thesis statement meets the 5 criteria listed above. Thesis statements which 1) are not statements, 2) fail to display close, careful reading of the assignment, 3) do not address the literary work assigned for the day, and/or 4) simply restate what’s been discussed in class will receive a 0. Please see the “How to Write a Thesis Statement” handout on eCampus for information on writing thesis statements.

At times students will be asked to complete a short writing or group activity in class or at home. If an assignment is meant to be done at home, students will have at least 24 hours to submit it. These are short assignments (less than 1 typed page) and will sometimes include participation via Twitter. Impromptu assignments will receive a numerical grade ranging from 0 to 5 points based on 1) student’s engagement with the activity, 2) ability to follow directions and properly complete the assignment, and 3) evidence of close reading and knowledge of the primary text(s). If you are absent, you cannot make up these assignments.

**Short Critical Responses (SCRs) (20%)**: Throughout the semester, you must complete 4, 2-3 page SCRs. These short response papers should critically and analytically engage with readings from the current unit. See the guide for writing which is posted on the course eCampus page. In a course like this, we don’t have time to go over all of the nitty gritty aspects of writing, so I expect that you look to this guide for help. Consult this guide often for SCRs.

**SCR Goals and Guidelines:**
- Do **not** use sources outside of English 261 for SCRs; these short essays should be brief close-readings of primary texts.
- Some SCRs have specific prompts. If there is not a prompt, the topic of the SCR is up to you. SCRs should **not** simply rehash class discussion. Perhaps you compare two separate readings, apply a critical methodology, or explore a theme or motif in a particular text—it is completely up to you.
- Include a clear thesis (see thesis criteria in “Thesis Statements” assignment) in the first paragraph.
- Avoid personal reaction—instead focus on analytical argument.
- Support claims with evidence (quotes) from the primary text(s).
- Use proper MLA citation, including in-text (for quoted, paraphrased, and summarized material) and Works Cited citations.
- Follow the standard of work outlined in the syllabus.
- Display purpose and careful attention to structure and organization.
• Essay is unified; all ideas and sentences relate to the thesis.
• Essay is coherent; paragraphs and sentences flow logically and smoothly into one another.
• Draft is carefully revised and proofread; proper spelling and grammar are utilized.
• SCR check sheet is attached. This check sheet is available on our eCampus page.

**SCR Organization:** For these assignments, your organization should look something like this:

• Introduction: Gains readers’ attention and includes thesis statement that clearly articulates your argument.
• Body Paragraphs:
  
  I. Topic Sentence: Should begin each paragraph. Topic sentences are often claims that help to support your thesis statement.
  
  II. Explanation: A couple of sentences that articulate the details of your argument and/or of the reading in your own words. Any specific ideas should be cited with MLA in-text citations.
  
  III. Quotation/Example: You should present evidence to support your argument (from the primary text that you are analyzing, for example).
  
  IV. Interpretation: This is where you clearly explain how the example/quotation connects to your main point of the paragraph that is articulated in the topic sentence/thesis statement. This is the most important part of an analysis paragraph. Do not assume that your reader will draw the same conclusions that you do. You must explain the connections you are making.

• Conclusion: A brief paragraph that brings everything together.

**SCR Grade Descriptors:**

**A:** Excellent work; the assignment has been completed in a professional and timely manner and meets all of the assignment goals. The assignment has a clear, relevant thesis and organization, chooses compelling evidence to substantiate the analysis, and engages with the subject at hand in a thoughtful and thought-provoking manner. Written work requires no substantive or stylistic revisions.

**B:** Good work; the assignment has been completed in a professional and timely manner and meets most of the assignment goals. The assignment has a viable thesis and shows substantial engagement with the subject, but the analysis is partially incomplete, involving weak evidence, or manifests some difficulty with organization. Written work requires substantive revisions, but few or no stylistic ones.

**C:** Average work; the assignment has been completed, but not necessarily in a professional or timely manner and fails to meet many of the assignment goals. The analysis is incomplete, includes inappropriate evidence (or a lack of evidence), or shows significant difficulties with organization. Written work requires significant substantive or stylistic revisions.

**D:** Less than average work; the assignment has not been completed in a professional or timely manner and neglects most of the assignment goals. The assignment shows lack of engagement with the assignment. Written work lacks analysis, evidence, and organization; extensive substantive and stylistic revisions are needed.

**F:** Inadequate work; the assignment has not been completed and/or fails to meet the goals. Work, when submitted, shows a significant lack of thoughtfulness and/or understanding on the part of the student; there is an absence of analysis, evidence, and organization; engagement with the course materials is necessary before extensive revisions are even possible.

**Midterm Exam (20%) and Final Exam (30%):** A large portion, if not all, of the exams will take place in class. (They may also have a take-home portion.) The mid-term exam will evaluate students’ knowledge and critical thinking skills in relation to texts from Units 1-2 and the final exam may address the entire course. Further details will be provided prior to exams.

**Grade Breakdown:**

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<td>A+</td>
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<td>89-88</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>79-78</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>69-68</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>D-</td>
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COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

STANDARD OF WORK (BASED ON MLA GUIDELINES):

- Unless instructed otherwise, all work, including daily assignments, must be typed using MLA guidelines: 12 point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1” margins.
- All assignments must use the appropriate heading: name, course title, instructor’s name, assignment name, date.
- Assignments longer than one page must be stapled or clipped together. (And no, I do not carry a stapler.)
- Include page numbers and your last name (in the header) on all assignments longer than one page.
- Carefully edit and proofread all texts to eliminate problems in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Use spell-check and read your documents aloud so you can hear your prose.
- Do not fiddle with the physical appearance of an assignment in an attempt to achieve the illusion of length. This assumes that I cannot tell the difference between quantity and quality. A paper that is shorter than the assigned length but presented honestly will earn far more respect.
- Documents that do not meet these and other assignment-specific requirements may be dropped as much as one full letter grade. Pay attention to these details when handing in your final drafts. Superficial errors do not signify poor thinking; but they can indicate, for some readers, a lack of precision and nonchalance toward the task.
- I suggest that you purchase a writing handbook (such as Easy Writer) to aid your writing. Such texts offer guidelines and activities to help you with mechanics. The Writing Center is another resource available to you—to help you to brush up on your understanding of basic skills, but also to support you in all aspects of the writing process.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR: Our classroom is a community, and I expect professional, courteous behavior. This class will discuss a variety of opinions and ideas that you may or may not agree with or find interesting. Respect everyone and come to class curious, not hostile or indifferent. This is a discussion-driven class and it is important that you are prepared to speak at any point during the discussion; for this reason having food in the classroom is unacceptable. Treat your classmates as you wish to be treated; for example, try not to interrupt while others are speaking. Failure to observe these policies and those outlined below will result in an F in participation for the semester and possible removal from the class session.

ELECTRONICS POLICY: I welcome the use of electronics (such as laptops, eReaders, and tablets) in the classroom. Students who use electronics inappropriately, are not focused on class discussion, and/or are distracting their peers will be asked to stop using such devices and will earn a 0 in participation for the day. Chronic misuse of electronics by class members will result in all electronics being banned from the classroom. Cell phones and music devices should be turned off and/or silenced before coming to class; there is to be absolutely no text messaging. Electronic device use of any sort during quizzes and exams will not be tolerated; if you use your cell phone, laptop, eReader or other web-linked device during a quiz or exam you will automatically receive a zero on the assignment (in addition to any consequence outlined in the Student Conduct Code).

E-MAIL: Assignments are not accepted via e-mail unless the assignment calls for e-mail submission or you make arrangements in advance of the due date. Do not email me your work; you will receive a 0. In cases where email submission is appropriate, make sure you attach your document in .doc, .docx or .rtf format. All assignments must be sent to tpershin@mix.wvu.edu.

When communicating via email it is important to practice professional, courteous writing. Do so by honoring the conventions of the genre. Emails (in all communication other than that with a casual correspondent) should have an address (e.g. hello, dear, etc. and the addressee’s name) and a signature (e.g. thank you, regards, etc. and your name), and be written using full sentences and proper grammar. Communicating with your professor via email is professional correspondence; please treat it as such.
EXTENSIONS: Deadlines are non-negotiable after you’ve missed them. If you ever have a problem with understanding an assignment or meeting a deadline, or if you are going to miss class on the day of a deadline, talk to me at least 48 hours in advance of the deadline and we may be able to negotiate an extension and/or arrange for submission of the assignment.

LATE WORK: I do not accept late work unless the assignment is an SCR. If you miss an SCR deadline your SCR grade will be reduced by 5% for every weekday the assignment is late. Because I know things happen—PRT, printers breaking, etc.—I will count an SCR as on time if you put it in my mailbox by 12:00pm the day it is due.

PLAGIARISM/CHEATING: Academic dishonesty is wholly unacceptable and will be dealt with accordingly. It will behoove you to review WVU’s definition of plagiarism in the “Student Conduct Code,” as well as the outlined consequences; note that plagiarism also includes intent. Please see <http://studentlife.wvu.edu/studentconductcode.html>. You cannot use work from other courses in this course; you fail to meet the requirements of this individual course by doing so. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses that will result in failure of the assignment and/or the course. Plagiarism cases will always be filed with the university. If you have questions about plagiarism/cheating or are confused by MLA please visit my office.

WVU WRITING CENTER is located in G02 Colson Hall. Call 304-293-5788 or visit the Writing Center’s website to schedule an appointment or stop by to see if a tutor is available.

SOCIAL JUSTICE: I am committed to a classroom that strives to use inclusive language, minimize assumptions, emphasize respect of difference, honor privacy, and employ topics that allow but do not require exploration of gender, sex, sexuality, race, nationality, ability, class and so on. These topics make for productive, thoughtful, but sometimes tough discussions. If for any reason you find yourself feeling uncomfortable, feel free to come and speak with me. I will do my best to ensure that this classroom is a space where everyone feels comfortable and respected. If you feel offended (so much so that you cannot critically respond to the work) come and talk to me. I maintain an open door policy regarding such issues. My only request is that we participate in honest inquiry and respectful, informed debate. If you have a conflict between a religious holiday and a graded assignment, please contact me in advance so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

DISABILITY AND ACCOMMODATION: If you have a disability that could affect your progress in this course, please contact the Office of Disability Services (www.wvu.edu/~socjust/disability/). ODS can be contacted at G30 Mountainlair, by phone at (304)293-6700 voice/TDD (304)293-7740, or email at access2@mail.wvu.edu. We can arrange to accommodate your learning style based on ODS recommendations. Please notify me at the semester’s beginning of your learning needs.

COURSE SCHEDULE
NOTE: ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE ON THE DATE LISTED.

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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>REQUIRED READING AND ASSIGNMENTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>T, Jan. 15:</td>
<td>Introduction to course</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>UNIT 1: Evelina (1778)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>R, Jan. 17 (Last day to add/drop: 1/18): Evelina, Preface - Volume (Vol.) 1, Letter (Ltr.) XIV (ix- 45); Doody (474-485)</td>
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R, Jan. 31: *Evelina*, start of Vol. 3 – Vol. 3, Ltr. VI (224- 255); Straub (411-430)


**SCR #1 due: A Criticism Exercise.** We read three critical responses to *Evelina*. For this SCR you will respond to one point from any one of those critical responses.
- Your essay must include a thesis statement regarding the critic’s comment; take a position regarding the critic. Your position could be “Critic X misinterprets…,” or “Critic X's argument about… aligns with…,” “Critic X’s position on…..,” etc.
- Your SCR should include, and elaborate upon, at least three reasons in order to substantiate your thesis.
- Use your knowledge of *Evelina* to substantiate your position.
- The more detailed evidence you provide, the better.
- Review the SCR assignment guidelines on p. 3-4 of syllabus.

**UNIT 2: THE MIDDLE AGES (CA. TO 1485)**

R, Feb. 7: Introduction to the Middle Ages (3-19 [stop @ “Medieval English”]); Judith (109-117)

T, Feb. 12: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (183-238); **Thesis 1**

R, Feb. 14: Christ’s Humanity (395-6); Margery Kempe, From *The Book of Margery Kempe* (424-438); **Thesis 2**


**SCR #2 due: A Close Reading Exercise.** Select any of the texts from this unit and write your SCR in which you provide a close reading of a short passage.
- Your essay must include a thesis statement regarding the passage; in other words, take a position regarding the passage: “This passage is significant because…,” “This passage is atypical…,” etc.
- Your SCR should include, and elaborate upon, at least three reasons in order to substantiate your thesis.
- Use the details from the passage as evidence to support your claims. The more details you use, and the more you analyze those details, the more convincing your argument will be. You may focus on tone, character, plot, imagery, etc.
- You should use your knowledge of the rest of the text to analyze the passage you’ve selected, but do not let contextual information lead you astray. Stray focused on the passage.
- Review the SCR assignment guidelines on p. 3-4 of syllabus.

T, Feb. 26: Optional mid-term review

R, Feb. 28 (Midterm: 3/1): Mid-term exam

**UNIT 3: THE 16th CENTURY/ THE EARLY 17th CENTURY (1485-1660)**

T, March 5: The 16th Century (531-563); Women in Power, Mary I, Letter to Henry VIII (721-24), The Oration of Queen Mary in the Guildhall
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>T, March 12</td>
<td>William Shakespeare (1166-70); <em>Twelfth Night</em> (editor’s introduction, Acts 1-2) (1187-1218)</td>
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<tr>
<td>R, March 14</td>
<td>remainder of <em>Twelfth Night</em> (1219-50); <strong>Thesis 5</strong></td>
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<td>R, March 21 (Last day to drop: 3/22)</td>
<td>Sir Frances Bacon, From <em>Essays</em>: “Of Truth, Of Marriage and Single Life” (1662-5); Katherine Philips, “A Married State” (1783-4); <strong>Thesis 7</strong></td>
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<td>March 23-March 31:</td>
<td><strong>Spring Recess; No Class</strong></td>
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| T, April 2: | Margaret Cavendish (1884-5), “The Blazing World” (1891), *The Description of a New World, Called The Blazing World* (1891-97) **SCR #3 due:** Topic of Your Choice. Select any of the texts from this unit to write your SCR. You may approach this SCR in any manner you’d like: you can do another close reading, compare and contrast text, etc. As always,  
- Your essay must include a thesis statement regarding the work of literature you’ve selected to write about.  
- Your SCR should include, and elaborate upon, at least three reasons in order to substantiate your thesis.  
- Use details from the text as evidence to support your claims. The more details you use, and the more you analyze those details, the more convincing your argument will be. You may focus on tone, character, plot, imagery, etc.  
- Review the SCR assignment guidelines on p. 3-4 of syllabus. |

**UNIT 4: THE RESTORATION AND THE 18TH CENTURY (1660-1785)**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>R, April 4:</td>
<td>Class meeting on Twitter <em>subject to change</em>; no formal class <strong>meeting:</strong> The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century (2177-2207); Samuel Pepys, From <em>The Diary</em> (2260-9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>T, April 9:</td>
<td>John Wilmot, “The Disabled Debauchee,” “The Imperfect Enjoyment” (2296-2300); <strong>Thesis 8</strong></td>
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<td>R, April 11:</td>
<td>Aphra Behn (2307-9), <em>Oroonock</em> (2313-58); <strong>Thesis 9</strong></td>
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<td>R, April 18:</td>
<td>remainder of <em>The Way of the World</em> (2382-2420); <strong>Thesis 10</strong></td>
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R, April 25: Eliza Haywood, *Fantomina; or, Love in a Maze* (2739-2758); 
Thesis 11

T, April 30: Frances Burney, From *The Journals and Letters*: [First Journal Entry], [Mr. Barlow’s Proposal], [A Mastectomy], and [M. D’Arblay’s Postscript] (2992-97, 3005-11)

**SCR #4 due:** Topic of Your Choice. Select any of the texts from this unit to write your SCR. You may approach this SCR in any manner you’d like; you can do another close reading, compare and contrast texts, etc. As always,
- Your essay must include a thesis statement regarding the work of literature you’ve selected to write about.
- Your SCR should include, and elaborate upon, at least three reasons in order to substantiate your thesis.
- Use details from the text as evidence to support your claims. The more details you use, and the more you analyze those details, the more convincing your argument will be. You may focus on tone, character, plot, imagery, etc.
- Review the SCR assignment guidelines on p. 3-4 of syllabus.

R, May 2: Optional final review

May 6-11: Finals week (Final exam: Mon. 11-1); final pick-up date T.B.D.

**RECORD OF MY GRADES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Midterm Exam:</th>
<th>Final Exam:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCR1: Thesis 1:</td>
<td>SCR2: Thesis 2:</td>
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<td>SCR3: Thesis 3:</td>
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<td>Impromptu 9: Impromptu 10:</td>
<td>Impromptu 11: Impromptu 12:</td>
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<td>Arrive Late / Leave Early:</td>
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