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# English 766

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### Marilyn Francus, ENGL 766, Spring 2004, Eighteenth-Century Seminar

Prof. Marilyn Francus

English 766, Eighteenth-Century Seminar: (Re) configuring the Circle: Hester Thrale, Frances Burney, and the Streatham Circle

Thursdays, 4:00-6:50

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2:30-4:30 and by appointment.

January 15 Introduction

January 22 Burney, Frances. Journals and Letters, The Apprentice Years (pp. 1-85)

Burney, Frances. Evelina

January 29 Burney, Frances. Journals and Letters, Evelina and

Streatham Park (pp. 86- 177)

Burney, Frances. Evelina

February 5 Thrale, Hester. Excerpts from The Family Book, pp. 112- 174 (photocopy) and Thraliana, pp. 226-415.

February 12 Johnson, Samuel. Preface to The Dictionary (Brady/Wimsatt edition, pp. 277-298); Preface to The Plays of William Shakespeare (B/W edition, pp. 299-336); excerpts from Lives of the Poets (Milton, Pope, Gray; B/W edition, pp. 385-444, 473-559, 633-642); and Taxation no Tyranny (photocopy).

February 19 Thrale, Hester. Excerpts from The Family Book, pp. 175-244 (photocopy) and Thraliana (pp. 416-600)

February 26 Burney, Frances. Journals and Letters, Cecilia and Prelude to the Court, pp. 178-209

Burney, Frances. Cecilia

March 4 Burney, Frances. Cecilia

March 11 Burney, Frances. Cecilia

In-Class Workshop of Essay Proposals

March ] 8 Spring Break

March 25 Murphy, Arthur. Know Your Own Mind (photocopy)

Garrick, David. The Clandestine Marriage (co-authored with George Colman; photocopy)

April 1 Baretti, Guiseppe. The Sentimental Mother: the legacy of an old friend and last moral lesson to Mrs. Hester Lynch Thrale (photocopy)

Goldsmith, Oliver. She Stoops to Conquer (available on Project Gutenberg)

April 8 Reynolds, Sir Joshua. Excerpts from Discourses on Art (available at Project Gutenberg)

Burke, Edmund. Excerpts from Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (pp. 63-81)

Archive Assignment Due; brief discussion of archive findings and experience in-class

April 15 Burke, Edmund. Excerpts from speeches on the American Revolution (pp. 254-292) and parliamentary speeches (pp. 155-182).

April 22 Boswell, James. Excerpts from The Life of Johnson (p p. 1120-1155; 1190-1202; 1236-1237; 1326-1332).

Bibliographic Assignment Due; brief discussion of bibliographic findings and experience in class

April 29 Essay Workshop

May 4 Final Essay Due

**Course Description:** The Thrale homes in Streatham and London were centers of literary and cultural exchange in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, as the Thrales not only hosted luminaries like 16 Samuel Johnson and Frances Burney for months at a time, but held gatherings that were frequented by David Garrick, Edmund Burke, James Boswell, and Sir Joshua Reynolds. The members of this social circle were well known and prolific; the available documentation by this group is unusual in its breadth .. and depth, as their many published works and their volumes of correspondence and journals attest. The documentation about this group is significant as well, as they were regularly mentioned in poems, periodicals, and even in plays during the period. By studying the Streatham circle,

students in this course will work with canonical and non-canonical texts in order to reconstruct a moment in history, functionally participating in a practicum in historical and cultural studies. Students will assess literary, historical, and cultural data, and attempt to develop coherent cultural narratives from disparate sources; inevitably, students will grapple with issues of ideology, epistemology, narratology, and cultural studies as a critical practice. This course content will focus on eighteenth-century representations of gender and domesticity economics, production and circulation; and aesthetics.

### **Course Objectives:**

1. To provide students with a guided research and writing experience in 18th-century studies.
2. To provide venues for students to develop their own archives of primary and secondary texts, and to evaluate the process of developing an archive, and the contents of archives.
3. To analyze gender relations in 18th-century England, so as to familiarize students with the strategies of gender analysis.
4. To analyze the status of literature in culture, patterns of cultural and social influence, and the circulation of cultural capital.
5. To evaluate critical practice regarding the study of literature.

**Course Assignments and Grading:** The article-length essay will count for 40% of your final grade. The archive assignment will count for 20% of your final grade. The bibliographical assignment will count for 20% of your final grade. The leading of class discussion will count for 20% of your final grade. The

essay proposal will not be graded.

**Comments on Course Requirements:**

One article-length essay (20+ pages).

An essay proposal.

An archive assignment, in which you locate a non-canonical 18th-century text that is relevant to the study of Burney, Thrale, or Johnson. You will be asked to make copies of the text for everyone in the class, and write a brief (2-3 page) commentary on its relevance for our study. There will be a brief discussion about archives and primary texts in class on the day that the archive assignment is due. The goals of this assignment include providing experience in locating and assessing archival materials, and learning how to build and evaluate an archive on your own. By doing this assignment as a class, functionally we will extend the class archive of primary texts on Burney, Thrale, and Johnson. A bibliographical assignment, in which you locate a contemporary piece of scholarship on Burney, Thrale, and/or Johnson (preferably published within the past 5 years). You will be asked to make copies of the text for everyone in the class, and write a brief (2-3) evaluation of its merits (or lack thereof). . There will be a brief discussion about current scholarship in class on the day that the bibliographic assignment is due. The goals of this assignment include providing experience in locating and assessing scholarly and critical materials, and learning how to build and evaluate an critical/scholarly archive on your own. By doing this assignment as a class, functionally we will extend the class archive of secondary materials on Burney, Thrale, and Johnson. Leading class discussion. Every student will be expected to lead class discussion on one of the contextual

figures on the syllabus (Baretti, Murphy, Goldsmith, Garrick, Reynolds, Burke, Boswell) and the works assigned for that day. Every discussion leader should be prepared to lead discussion for 45 minutes up to an hour. Discussion leaders should have a sense of the primary issues/ideas that they want the class to grapple with during the session. Discussion leaders are encouraged to pursue supplemental reading/research in preparation for class discussion. Discussion leaders may pursue a variety of pedagogical strategies, such as bringing supplementary materials to class, developing classroom activities to instigate engagement with the course materials, and so on. Discussion leaders are not expected to lecture. Discussion leaders should expect that everyone in class will have read the text (s) assigned for the day, and be prepared to participate. You will be expected to check your MIX e-mail account at least twice a week.

### **Grading Criteria:**

A (90-100) - Excellent work; the assignments for this course have been completed in a professional and timely manner. The written assignments are clearly organized, choose compelling evidence to substantiate the analysis, and engage with the subject at hand in a thoughtful and thought-provoking manner. Written work requires no substantive or stylistic revisions.

B (80-89) - Good work; the assignments for the course have been completed in a professional and timely manner. The written assignments show substantial engagement with the subject at hand, but the analysis is either partially incomplete, involving weak evidence, or manifests some difficulty with organization. Written work requires substantive revisions, but few or no stylistic ones.

C (70-79) - Average work; the assignments for the course have been completed, but not necessarily in a professional or timely manner. The written assignments show effort by the student, but 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 (60-69) - Less than average work; the assignments for the course have not been completed in a professional or timely manner. The written assignments show a lack of effort on the part of the student, and a lack of engagement with the assignment. Written assignments lack analysis, evidence, and organization; extensive substantive and stylistic revisions are necessary.

F (<59) - Inadequate work; the assignments for the course have not been completed. Written assignments, when submitted, show a significant lack of effort on the part of the student, and a lack of engagement with the assignment and the subject matter of the course. Such work is marked by the absence of analysis, evidence, and organization; engagement with the course materials is necessary before extensive revisions are even possible.

**Academic Dishonesty.** The following definitions are from the West Virginia University Graduate Catalog 2002-2004. Please see the section on Academic Integrity/Dishonesty (pp. 34-36) for the full definition and discussion of procedures.

Cheating: Cheating includes "dishonesty practices in connection with examinations, papers, and projects, including but not

limited to: a. Obtaining help from another student during examinations. b. Knowingly giving help to another student during examinations, taking an examination or doing academic work for another student, or providing one's own work for another student to copy and submit as his or her own. c. The unauthorized use of notes, books, or other sources of information during examinations. d. Obtaining without authorization an examination or any part thereof."

Plagiarism: "Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to: submitting, without appropriate acknowledgment, a report, notebook, speech, outline, theme, dissertation, or other written, visual, or oral material that has been copied in whole or in part from the work of others, whether such source is published or not, including (but not limited to) another individual's academic composition, compilation, or other product, or commercially prepared paper."

Cases of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of "F" for the course and appropriate academic discipline. If you have any questions about how to document sources, etc., please contact me.

### **Social Justice Policy**

West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to foster a nurturing environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.



If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with Disability Services (293-6700).

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