



2026 Spring

## ENGL2362 World Literature through The Renaissance

Section: 061

Office Hours: Mon 10 am – 1 pm, and by appointment

Professor: Dr. June Oh

Course Times: Online Asynchronous

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## ENGL2362, World Lit

# “Old Books,” New Eyes

Dig into the scandal, moral panic, and experimentation that made the novel a revolutionary form in the 1700s.

Contact Dr. June Oh ([joh@uttyler.edu](mailto:joh@uttyler.edu))

## Course Information

Classical to early eighteenth-century world literary figures not covered in ENGL 2322 or ENGL 2323, with special attention given to multi-continental and intercontinental literature. Periods and writers covered vary from year to year.

## Course Overview

### “Old” Books, New Eyes: The 18th-Century Novel in Context

Why do we call the novel the “new” genre when its origins are 300 years old? This course invites you to dig into the scandal, satire, moral panic, and experimentation that made the novel a revolutionary form in the 1700s. We’ll read popular and infamous works that shaped literary history—from castaway survival stories to criminal confessions to seductive letters and metafictional chaos.

Alongside these novels, we'll examine the print culture that sold them, the gender politics that shaped them, and the social fears they exposed. Expect to discover why these "old" texts are still relevant, strange, and entertaining today.

The class is fully online and asynchronous. You'll read a lot, write a lot, debate on discussion boards, and create satirical rewrites. This class will ask you to be curious, creative, and willing to look closely at language—even when the sentences are long!

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Recall and describe key historical, cultural, and aesthetic contexts that shaped the development of the British novel in the 1700s.
2. Analyze the formal features, narrative techniques, and thematic concerns of selected early novels.
3. Collaborate as active members of an online learning community by contributing thoughtful and respectful responses.
4. Create original interpretations that connect 18th-century novels to contemporary issues, media, or personal perspectives.

## **Required Textbooks and Readings**

### **Required Textbook:**

- Daniel Defoe, *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719); Recommend Oxford Classics or Penguin Classics edition
- Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders* (1722); Recommend Oxford Classics or Penguin Classics edition
- Additional required readings will be posted on Canvas

### **Special Course Note:**

#### Technology

- Students are required to have reliable access to a laptop and the Internet. Students are responsible for staying updated with course schedules, announcements, and materials. For technical issues, contact Canvas or UT Tyler "Help Now."
- Students are expected to maintain regular communication with the instructor throughout the semester.

## **Course Structure**

This class is built as an online class. It will ask you to read deeply, think critically, write analytically, and collaborate actively. It has 5 units (each lasting 2-5 weeks) that trace the rise of the 18th-century novel in its social, cultural, and moral contexts.

Each week, you will be provided with big ideas and guiding questions to help you through the primary reading materials (mostly sections of a novel). Additional required readings which you'll need to complete the response discussion will be uploaded on Canvas.

Every other week, you'll post your response on the discussion board and reply to peers to build a collaborative learning space where we share ideas and learn from each other. These assignments are designed to help you practice close reading, critical analysis, and academic argumentation—sometimes informally (“tell me what you think”), sometimes as more formal, evidence-based writing.

During the last month of the semester, we'll shift toward more creative work. You'll take on an 18th-century role-playing activity that immerses you in the debates and moral tensions of the time. You'll also have the chance to translate 18th-century themes and characters into today's world by creating memes that bring these novels into our modern “feeds”—highlighting their relevance, strangeness, and humor.

### Tips for Success in this Course

1. **Read and write.** This is a literature course. You will be reading and writing a lot. And to state the obvious, that takes time. Find your joy and its beauty in that.
2. **Engage, deeply.** The online nature of this class will push you to take an active role in the learning process. You will do this by thinking deeply and collaborate with the readings, the instructor, and other students' ideas on all assignments—beyond what is “required.”
3. **Use Canvas notification settings but don't trust it to do your job.** Canvas can ensure you receive timely notifications in your email or via text ([Canvas Notification Guide](#)). Note that some assignments like the discussion posts and responses have “hidden” due dates. Buy a planner or keep a digital calendar to help manage your workload.
4. **Ask for help.** If you have questions or concerns, I expect you to reach out to me or your classmates for support. I am happy to help.

### Course Grade

Component	points
Reflections	15
Deep Reading and Writing (re: Response videos)	55
“From the Coffeehouse”; Roleplay	20
“Into New Feeds”; 18C Memes	10
Total	100

### Grade Scale

A	90 to	100	points
B	80 to	89	points
C	70 to	79	points
D	60 to	69	points
F	0 to	59	points

### Minimum Requirement to Earn a C in the Class

To earn a C or above in the class, students must earn a C or above on all components.

### Syllabus Changes

Per the UTT Syllabus Policy: "The information contained in the syllabus, other than the grading criteria and absence and make-up policies, may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice as long as the change is without prejudice to the students." See our class Canvas for course schedule.

#### Important Dates

Jan 26	Census date
March 9-13	Spring break for faculty and students
March 30	Last day to withdraw
April 27-30	Final

#### Public Writing

All writing in the class is public writing. As a class, and in small groups, we may discuss what is working in student papers and areas for improvement. If you would like me to not use a particular draft in class, please let me know.

#### Major Assignments

All writings done in this class are public and can be publicly shared. Contact the instructor if you have any issues.

**Reflections (15%)** Students will write two short reflections: one at the beginning of the semester and one at the end about their evolving understanding of the novel and your relationship to "old" literature.

**Deep Reading and Writing (55%)** It includes completing all assigned readings carefully and critically, writing close analyses, and participating meaningfully in online discussion. The online format means you'll take an active role—asking questions, re-reading, exploring beyond the surface through the discussion board. For each unit, students will complete "Responses" by uploading a post in a video format and responding to peers' posts on Canvas by the due dates. Late work will not be accepted. See late work policy below.

**"From the Coffeehouse" Roleplay (20%)** Students will be asked to step into the shoes of 18th-century authors or characters—and take sides in key debates that shaped the novel's early history. This activity asks you to analyze themes, adopt a persuasive stance, and engage critically with your classmates, recreating the lively moral, aesthetic, and cultural debates that surrounded these "new" forms of fiction in their own time.

**"Into New Feeds" 18C Memes (10%)** Students will be asked to make a meme that connects our 18th-century readings to contemporary culture. Choose a character, author, or situation from the course and create a shareable image with modern references or humor that shows you understand the text's themes, tone, and sociocultural critique during the print culture revolution. This assignment encourages you to interpret classic texts in a personal, creative way, showing their continued meaning. Along with their memes, students will explain and rationalize their choices. Students will upload their produce on the discussion board and respond to at least two other peers' memes.

**Commented [JO1]:** In the first reflection, you'll share your initial thoughts or assumptions about 18th-century novels: What comes to mind when you hear the term? What do you expect? What do you worry about? In the final reflection, you'll look back on what surprised you, what challenged you, and how your understanding of novels, authorship, or literary history has shifted. These reflections encourage you to *think critically and personally* about your learning journey, and to connect big-picture course themes—like genre, gender, print culture, and authorship—to your own experience as a reader and writer.

**Commented [JO2]:** For example, you might argue whether Crusoe represents a true spiritual conversion, whether Roxana is a moral tale or a cynical confession, or whether Defoe's realism can stand up to Sterne's experimental chaos.

**Commented [JO3]:** Imagine if Crusoe had Instagram, or if Roxana wrote on Reddit. Dear Elizabeth Bennet's sister, you would've loved TikTok. Dear Mrs. Bennet, you would've loved The Bachelor" Type of activity

## Important Policies and Resources

### Attendance

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. In an online setting, this means completing assigned tasks. Students who miss more than three weeks' work (e.g., missing discussion, due dates, etc.) will automatically fail the course unless they withdraw by the census date. See "Standard UT Tyler Syllabus Policies" for information on the census date.

### Submitting Written Work

To be counted for a grade, written work must be submitted (unless instructed otherwise) via Canvas. Assignments that do not follow the designated format, that are emailed, that are submitted to the wrong drop box, or that I cannot open (e.g., zipped files, ios files, .pages files, damaged files) will receive 0.

### Late Work

I do not accept late work. There will be absolutely no exceptions to this policy for late work for the discussion posts (re: "Response videos"). I also understand that life happens. If you have circumstances that impact your academic performance, contact me as soon as possible so we can figure out a plan together.

### Academic Dishonesty & Disruptive Behavior

This class has a **Zero Tolerance Policy** for academic dishonesty. Any act of academic dishonesty will result in immediate failure of the entire course and will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Intervention.

For the UTT definition of "academic dishonesty," go to the UT Tyler Syllabus Module in the class Canvas shell. Click on "University Policies and Information." Scroll to the "Academic Honesty and Academic Misconduct" section. Click on "Student Conduct and Discipline policy." Read Section 8-802 "Academic Dishonesty."

Disruptive behavior will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Intervention and may result in failing the class and/or University sanction. Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- hindering other students from working on the tangible learning activities taking place during face-to-face and online class sessions
- talking when the instructor is talking
- repeatedly arriving late and/or leaving early
- using technology for purposes other than working on the tangible learning activities taking place during the class period
- doing something other than working on the tangible learning activities taking place during the class period
- sleeping during class

For the UTT definition of "disruptive behavior," go to the UT Tyler Syllabus Module in the class Canvas shell. Click on "University Policies and Information." Scroll to the "Academic Honesty and Academic Misconduct" section. Click on "Student Conduct and Discipline policy." Scroll to Section 8-804 "Certain Other Offenses." Read item number four "Disruptive Behavior."

### ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) USE POLICY

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other

sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

For this course, I expect all work students submit for this course to be their own. While using artificial intelligence assistance can aid various parts of the writing and analysis process such as brainstorming, managing and analyzing data, editing, and peer review, in such instances, students should clearly indicate how much and which part of their writing and thinking process are facilitated by such programs. In other words, any unacknowledged AI-facilitated work and acknowledged AI-facilitated work *without considerable edition and critical revision* will be considered cheating and will be directly reported. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including full revocation of credit for the assignment, and other sanctions.

#### **Class Conduct**

All students are expected to behave in a respectful manner, both in-person and online. Sensitive topics may be addressed during discussion, and passionate opinions are welcome. However, each student should remain respectful and civil. We will approach topics with an understanding of their historical context and cultural nuances, recognizing that some issues may be uncomfortable from a modern perspective.

#### **Contacting the instructor**

If you have individual questions, you can set up a time to meet either in-person or via Zoom.

To contact me, use UTT email or Canvas messenger. Per the [UTT Email Policy](#), I will not reply to emails sent from non-UTT email addresses.

Emails and Canvas messages should provide a succinct overview of the topic and be written using complete sentences, reasonably correct grammar, and proper structure. In the subject line list the class (ENGL4374), your name, and a topic.

#### **University Policies and Information**

Go to our class Canvas for information relating University Policies.

#### **Student Resources**

Go to our class Canvas for information relating University Policies.

"Old" Books, New Eyes: The 18C Novel in Context*				
Week	Theme	Guiding Questions	Readings	Assignments
1	What's "novel" about the novel?	<b>What's "novel" about the novel?</b> How did print culture and 18C society shape it? Why scandal and moral panic?	Johnson on fiction; <b>Intro to Crusoe</b> (title page, preface)	Beginning Reflection Response 1
2		<b>Realism and individualism</b> Why did people believe Crusoe was real? How does realism work? How does the individual matter?	<b>Robinson Crusoe</b> (first 5–6 chapters)	
3		<b>Experiments in realism</b> Why is realism experimental? Cataloguing and detail?	<b>RC</b> (bread-making, stock-taking scenes)	Response 2 with Close reading essay
4		<b>Spirituality and capitalism</b> Is Crusoe's story spiritual autobiography or capitalist adventure? Are these in tension or alliance?	<b>RC</b> (conversion narrative sections)	
5		<b>Moral complexity</b> Is Crusoe moral? How does he treat Friday? Is there psychological depth? How does colonial context shape the story?	<b>RC</b> (the Friday dynamic, teaching scenes)	Response 3 with Close reading essay
6	Her Adventure Story	<b>Criminal confessional</b> Why were crime narratives so popular? How does gender change the stakes? Is confession moral or commercial?	<b>Moll Flanders</b> (opening and prison scenes); Armstrong excerpt on gender and crime fiction	
7		<b>Money and class in early capitalism</b> How does Moll navigate social class? Is she a victim or a strategist? How does the novel show economic desire?	<b>MF</b> (marriages, thefts); context on early capitalism	Response 4 with Close reading essay
8		<b>Adventure—for a woman</b> How does the female criminal adventure differ from Crusoe's male adventure? What freedoms and limits exist?	<b>MF</b> (transport scenes, repentance ending)	

9	Spring Break			
10	<b>Authorial voice and gender</b> How does the narrator shape our view of Moll? How does Defoe position himself as moral guide or sensationalist?	MF (select monologues or confessional moments); short piece on authorial persona in 18C fiction	Response 5 with Close reading essay	
11		Check-in week (optional conference week)		
12	"From the 18C Coffeehouse"	Can we call these novels moral tales? How do they negotiate realism vs. morality?	Review key texts & class-wide discussion	Roleplay Response 1
13			Class-wide discussion	Roleplay Response 2
14	"Into the New Feeds"	How can we translate 18C characters/themes to modern contexts? What does this reveal about their relevance?	Students choose text/character; brainstorm modern analogues	Meme & Rationale
15	Final	How has your idea of the 18C novel changed? Why read these "old" books? What will you take away?		Final reflection

\*This class has a flexible schedule and content that may change depending on class progress and student interests.  
See Syllabus Change policy.

*This syllabus is a product of many educators' hard work, generosity, and support along with my ChatGPT "dummy." I give special thanks to UT Tyler's English department faculties, staff, and students as well as my former colleagues at Michigan State University.*