

## Studies in Later British Literature: British Abolition

Professor M. Soledad Caballero

Contact Information: Oddfellows 215, x4329

Email: [scaballe@allegheny.edu](mailto:scaballe@allegheny.edu)

Office hours: MW: 4:45-6:00

Tuesdays and Thursdays: 11-12:00 noon

Tuesdays: 3-4:30

### Required Texts:

- 1) *Oronoko* by Aphra Behn
- 2) *Manfield Park* by Jane Austen
- 3) *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings* by Olaudah Equiano
- 4) *English Trader, Indian Maid: Representing Gender, Race, and Slavery in the New World* editor Frank Felsenstein
- 5) *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave, Related by Herself*, by Mary Prince
- 6) *Cambridge*, Caryl Phillips

### Objectives:

Though England came late to slave plantation economy and to the slave trade in general, it perfected both and became the major European nation involved in slave trade. It also led the way in the abolitionist cause at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century at a time when the profits of the trade were astronomical. In this class we will read the literature of abolition, including the poetry and prose that took as a central focus the morality of trading in human cargo. We will focus on how blackness, slavery, Africa, and the slave trade are portrayed, and we will pay particular attention to how black bodies are represented, how their humanity is inscribed and complicated, specifically around questions of intellectual capacity, morality, and instinct. In a particular we will see how this literature creates literary tropes for understanding blackness in a white, European context and examine the legacy of such tropes since this volatile period in British history and literature.

### Requirements:

2 (out of four) 2-3 page essays 30% (there are four times in the semester when these are due, students pick the two they'd like to write. It's a student's responsibility to write these without prompting from me.)

One 4-5 pages: 35%

One in class mid-term: 10%

One Take home Final 15%

Class Participation, etc. 10%

**Sakai:** Get comfortable with it. Learn to love it, and learn to use it. All reading material not found books will be on Sakai. You will deliver your essays, out of class writing, etc. via Sakai. Essay topics will be posted here as well. All relevant information, discussion questions, etc. will be on Sakai. And you'll receive graded essays this way too. If you've got questions, ask, and get familiar with Murray Hall, and with the help desk, ext. 2755. No excuses for not being able to do this, etc.

Please be aware that all writing that is not done in class must be typed, double-spaced with 1" inch margins and in an appropriate font (Times New Roman in 12 point is usually standard),

paginated, dated, and with your name at top of the first page. Do not add any unnecessary spaces between paragraphs or before the first line of your essay. Use MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation format when necessary.

Students are encouraged to avail themselves of the tutors in the Learning Commons as they begin and work through assignments.

### **Participation:**

Class participation is central to the success of your experience in this class. This means that you have carefully read each assignment, have thought about it in the context of our other classes and conversations, are ready with questions and concerns that you have, and are energized and excited about our class time. You may find the material difficult to follow and hard to read, and for this reason, class discussion is a crucial. This is not a time to be “timid” or “shy;” remember that a well-asked and well thought out question is as valuable in a discussion as a declarative statement. Keep in mind, however, that quantity of comments and questions does not trump quality. Talk often and insightfully. Not doing so will detrimentally affect your grade.

A participation is marked by its active nature, its consistency, and its quality. An **A** participant doesn't wait to respond to questions that the instructor poses but initiates discussion by coming prepared with questions, ideas, observations about the reading assigned that day. This participant will also be consistently engaged in class discussion, always letting me know that she/he has engaged the reading thoroughly and thoughtfully. Finally an **A** participant will not try to substitute quantity of participation for quality (being consistent is not the same thing as dominating a discussion). To earn the highest grade for your participation, you will want to make it possible for others to participate productively too (this is not a competition); thus, habits such as interrupting others and taking up too much conversational space will not enhance your grade. It will also do you no good to participate if you haven't done the reading. I expect participation to be firmly grounded in careful and thoughtful reading. As the **A** reader reads, she or he prepares to participate in a class discussion with other readers.

A **B** participant is less consistent than an **A** in initiating discussion but is active in responding to questions or problems posed by the professor and other students. To get a **B** in participation, you will need to be in class and talk regularly-- more, certainly, than once during a class session once a week or so. Regular means regular. This level of class participation will also communicate clearly to me that you have done all the reading for the day and that you have done it thoughtfully. This level will also include productive discussion habits, such as engaging the ideas of others, not dominating, listening carefully, etc.

A **C** grade for participation means that you have contributed in an average way to the discussion. Your contributions have been less frequent than those of the **B** participant or have let me know that you are not always keeping up with the reading or have, in some way, interfered with good discussion--for instance, a “dominator” would get credit for participating often but would get knocked down to a **C** for taking over and not engaging others in discussion. In short, you have not been silent or absent or altogether uninvolved, but your involvement did not work consistently to make the class a productive learning experience.

A **D** grade means that you were there physically most of the time and maybe even piped up three or four times during the semester but that's it. It's just the grade it should be--a minimal

passing grade.

An **F** grade should need no explanation.

All work must be submitted to pass the course. Active, engaged class participation and attendance are expected. *Four or more absences will result in automatic failure for the class.* Remember that excused and unexcused absences are not distinguished. Late essays are not accepted and will be knocked down one full letter grade for each day they are late, including weekend. Late short essays are not accepted.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: If you do not bring your books, handouts, materials to class, you will be asked to leave and get them and then return to class. Too many of these incidents will detrimentally affect your final grade.**

**Other Information:**

Students should schedule appointments during office hours. Students may contact Professor Caballero via email. Please allow 2 business days for email responses.

Students will conduct themselves in a responsible and respectable manner towards fellow students and professors.

Please turn cell phones off, **not on vibrate** for class. If a cell phone rings, Professor Caballero will answer it.

**Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism is another word for stealing, that is taking what is not yours and passing it off as your own. When you plagiarize you directly or indirectly use the ideas and/or language of another person or persons without acknowledgement and claim these words and ideas as your own. Not only is it serious and grounds for academic expulsion, it is also against the law. You are plagiarizing if you do any or all of the following, though please keep in mind that these are not the only ways to plagiarize: 1) Use others' words directly without proper citation and quotations, 2) Use others' ideas and wording so closely (paraphrasing) that you are essentially quoting them without proper acknowledgement, 3) re-use assignments not written for this class and pretend that they are written for this class, 4) Borrow, buy, steal, download (you get the idea) others' essays, ideas, words, language, etc. and pass them off as your own. I should say that I regularly visit on-line websites that sell college essays and that I belong to a large network of websites that assist me in finding stolen essays students have bought on line. Please see me at any time if you have citation and documentation questions.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation for their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Learning Commons at 332-2898. It is your responsibility to do this and inform your professors ahead of time, not after assignments, tests, exams, etc are due or in progress.

Calendar

\*Calendar is subject to change and revision as the semester progresses.

**Week 1**

Thursday, Sept. 1

**Early Instantiations: Representing Slavery**

Introductions, William Blake "Little Black Boy"

**Week 2**

Tuesday, Sept. 6

Thursday, Sept. 8

Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* 3-40

*Oroonoko* 40-77

**Week 3**

Tuesday, Sept. 13

Thursday, Sept. 15

Richard Steele, *The Spectator*, no. II pg 81-88,

Frances Seymour, Countess of Hertford, "An Epistle from Yarico to Inkle, after He Had Sold Her for a Slave" and "An Epistle from Yarico to Inkle, after He Had Sold Her to Slavery" pg 89-98 (All in *English Trader, Indian Maid*)

Annonymous, "The Story of Inkle and Yarico, from the Eleventh Spectator," pg 101-107 and Edward

Jerningham, "Yarico to Inkle: An Epistle" pg 153-162

(All in *English, Trader Indian Maid*)

**(Short Essay #1 due)**

**Week 4**

Tuesday, Sept. 20

Thursday, Sept. 22

George Coleman the Younger, *Inkle and Yarico: An Opera in Three Acts*, pg 167-233 (In *English Trader, Indian Maid*)

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**Week 5**

Tuesday, Sept. 27

Thursday, Sept. 29

**Poetical Manifestations and Abolition**

Thomas Day and John Bicknell "The Dying Negro: A Poetical Epistle" (Sakai)

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**(Short Essay #2 due)**

**Week 6**

Tuesday, Oct. 4

Thursday, Oct. 6

Hannah Moore "The Black Slave Trade" (Sakai)

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**Week 7**

Tuesday, Oct. 11

Thursday, Oct. 13

Wordsworth sonnets (Sakai)

Mid-term (in class)

**Week 8**

Tuesday, Oct. 18  
Thursday, Oct. 20

**A Slave Writes Back**

Fall Break, no classes  
Olaudah Equiano *The Interesting Narrative of the life of Olaudah Equiano* pg 37-91

**Week 9**

Tuesday, Oct. 25  
Thursday, Oct. 27

Olaudah Equiano *The Interesting Narrative of the life of Olaudah Equiano* pg 92-177  
*The Interesting Narrative* pg 178-213  
**(Short Essay #3 due)**

**Week 10**

Tuesday, Nov. 1  
Thursday, Nov. 3

*The Interesting Narrative* pg 214-265  
Jane Austen *Mansfield Park* pg 5-85

**Week 11**

Tuesday, Nov. 8  
Thursday, Nov. 10

**White women and Slavery: The Sentiments of Abolition**  
*Mansfield Park* pg 86-163  
*Mansfield Park* pg 163-241

**Week 12**

Tuesday, Nov. 15  
Thursday, Nov. 17

*Mansfield Park* pg 242-291  
*Mansfield Park* pg 291-321  
**(Short Essay #4 due)**

**Week 13**

Tuesday, Nov. 22  
Thursday, Nov. 24

Catch up day  
Thanksgiving break, no classes

**Week 14**

Tuesday, Nov. 29  
Thursday, Dec. 1

**Testimonies of Slavery: Mary Prince**  
*History of Mary Prince* pg 55-125  
*History of Mary Prince* pg 127-166  
**(4-5 page essay due)**

**Week 15**

Tuesday, Dec. 6  
Thursday, Dec. 8

**Gender and Race: a modern retelling**  
*Cambridge* pg 3-80 (middle of page)  
*Cambridge* pg 80-129

**Week 16**

Tuesday, Dec. 13

*Cambridge* pg 133-184

Final Exam Schedule:

Study Days: Thursday, Dec. 15 to Friday, Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>

Exam: Take-Home final due Saturday, December 17<sup>th</sup> due by 10 pm