

English 323—Irish Literature in the 18th Century
Fall 2020
MW 9:30-10:45
CCC 240

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Syllabus

Required Texts:

- Julia Wright, ed. *Irish Literature 1750-1900: An Anthology*, Blackwell.
- Jonathan Swift, *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Claude Rawson, Norton.
- Elizabeth Sheridan, *The Triumph of Prudence Over Passion*, Four Courts Press.
- Maria Edgeworth, *Castle Rackrent*, Oxford.

English 323 usually focuses on “British Literature” from the 1680s to 1800, but this semester we will focus in on Irish authors writing in English during this period. Many of the canonical figures in 18th century “English Literature”—Congreve, Farquhar, Swift, Goldsmith, Sheridan, Burke, Sterne, Edgeworth, and others—were themselves Irish or had Irish roots; however, their work is usually seen as part of English or British literature in general, and they themselves would likely have seen it this way. Instead of leaving “Irishness” in the background of eighteenth-century literature, though, I wanted to bring it into the foreground this semester by focusing on the specific literary contributions of Irish writers, paying particular attention to the local contexts within which they wrote and the ways in which they addressed Irish themes and concerns in their work.

Many of the authors we will read could be identified as “Anglo-Irish,” a term that usually refers to members of the “Protestant Ascendancy” class that dominated 18th-century social and political life in the English-speaking parts of Ireland. This group would include people—like Swift and Goldsmith—whose families were originally from England as well as people from long-standing Irish families—like the Sheridans—who converted to the established (Anglican) church. The Anglo-Irish were among those most likely to speak and read English; however, literacy in English was becoming more widespread over the course of the 18th century and many Irish Catholics, especially middle-class families in Dublin—like Thomas Moore’s—were making their mark on “English literature” as well as Irish political life.

In addition to looking at how these authors contribute to larger 18th-century literary and cultural themes, we will be examining ways in which “Irishness” is understood and portrayed during this period. Also, this focus will allow us to consider a literary community that is both connected to and distanced from the dominant streams of British culture.

Requirements: You will be expected to complete all reading assignments by the day they are due and be prepared to participate in class discussions. “Cohorts” will take turns preparing questions, observations, and key passages for in-class discussion. Readings, including specific titles and page numbers, will be posted in Canvas prior to the day they are due. Handouts and other materials will be available on Canvas.

Weekly Participation: (120 points total, 10 points per week)

Individual contributions to weekly online discussion forum. You will need to post at least 2 100+ word responses to questions posted by me or classmates each week (basically, one for each class period). The first response is worth 2 points, the second is worth 3 points; one point may be deducted from any response that doesn’t meet minimum requirements (too short, off topic, inappropriate, etc.)

Cohort contributions. When it is your cohort’s turn, you will need to post one of the following at least 30 minutes prior to the class period: a) a question about the reading and how you would answer it, b) a key passage that stood out to you from the reading and why (interesting, confusing, reminded you of something, etc.), or c) a recommendation of another text that you think provides valuable comparison or contrast. These contributions will count as one of the 2 required online contributions.

Attendance. You will receive 5 points per week for attendance (2 points for the 1st day and 3 for the 2nd). *If you are in an online cohort and you are unable to meet live via Zoom, you may complete an additional 100+ word discussion response for each day you are unable to attend.* If you are in a face-to-face cohort, you can make up 2 points per day by completing an additional discussion response.

Weekly Quizzes: (240 points total, 20 points per week)

By Friday of each week (starting Sept 11), you will need to complete an online quiz that tests your familiarity with that week’s assigned readings, lectures, and concepts brought up in online or in-class discussions. The vast majority of questions will focus on content from reading assignments.

ECCO Report. (120 points total, 20 for proposal, 100 for final paper). Each of you will search through the Gale Eighteenth-Century Collection Online database and identify one text that is not on our class syllabus but that you find interesting. It should also connect to one or more assigned readings in some way (similar themes, same author, contrasting views, similar or different genre, etc.). You will turn in a 2-3 page report on that describes this text, explains how it relates to the other reading(s), and makes a case for how it contributes to our understanding of Irish literature during this period.

Term Paper. (240 points total, 10 for proposal, 10 for draft submitted on time for peer review, and 10 ea. for responses to two classmates' drafts). This will be a 5-page (min.) essay on a topic relevant to one of the themes or texts or authors from the course.

Your final grade average will be computed in the following manner:

Weekly Participation	120
Weekly Quizzes	240
ECCO Report	120
Term Paper	<u>240</u>
Total	720 points

Zoom meetings. To manage attendance during this unusual semester, we will all stick to our regularly scheduled time slot—MW 9:30-10:45—and meet “live” only during those times. This means that only one cohort at a time (5 students max) will be able to meet in person in the classroom (CCC 240) and the rest will join us in a Zoom meeting. This way everyone will be able to meet together at the same time, as in a regular semester. But since I think Zoom meetings that last longer than 30 minutes or so are not ideal, I plan to keep these in-person experiences to around 30 minutes and focused on interactive discussion and Q&A. I will be available to work with people one-on-one and in small groups during the remainder of each live class period. The online portion of the course will involve recorded video lectures (again, I’ll try to keep these to no more than 30 min), quizzes, and online discussions.

Covid-19 stuff. Masks are required in all classrooms. We are not allowed to hold class unless everyone is wearing a mask. If you are feeling any flu-like symptoms, please stay home. Wash your hands and follow the appropriate social distancing guidelines. Please be patient with everyone, because we’re all trying to figure this thing out. For more information on this, please refer to the UWSP Covid-19 website:

<https://www.uwsp.edu/coronavirus/Pages/default.aspx>.

Semester Calendar

(schedule subject to change; refer to Canvas for specific page numbers and assignments)

Sept 2—Course Introduction; Carleton	(Cohort 1)	
Sept 9—Swift, essays	(Cohort 2)*	Part 1: Jonathan Swift
Sept 14—Swift, poems	(Cohort 2)	
Sept 16—Swift, poems	(Cohort 1)	
Sept 21—Swift, <i>Gulliver's Travels, part 3</i>	(Cohort 2)	
Sept 23—Swift, <i>Gulliver's Travels, part 4</i>	(Cohort 1)	
Sept 28—Thomas Sheridan	(Cohort 2)	Part 2: The Sheridan Family
Sept 30—Frances Sheridan	(Cohort 1)	
Oct 5—Richard Brinsley Sheridan	(Cohort 2)	
Oct 7—Alicia Sheridan; Samuel Whyte	(Cohort 1)	
Oct 12—Elizabeth Sheridan, <i>Triumph of Prudence ...</i>	(Cohort 2)	
Oct 14—Elizabeth Sheridan, <i>Triumph of Prudence ...</i>	(Cohort 1)	
Oct 19—Oliver Goldsmith, Thomas Gray	(Cohort 2)	Part 3: Irish Poetry
Oct 21—Whyte, Dermody, Orr	(Cohort 1)	
Oct 26—Brooke, Walker, Owenson	(Cohort 2)	
Oct 28—Drennan, Lover	(Cohort 1)	
Nov 2—Thomas Moore	(Cohort 2)	
Nov 4—Thomas Moore	(Cohort 1)	
Nov 9—Edmund Burke	(Cohort 2)	Part 4: Irish Prose
Nov 11—Goldsmith, R.B. Sheridan, Owenson	(Cohort 1)	
Nov 16—Irish newspapers, education, and print culture	(Cohort 2)	
Nov 18—Carleton, Edgeworths	(Cohort 1)	
Nov 23—Maria Edgeworth, <i>Castle Rackrent</i>	(Cohort 2)	
Nov 25—Maria Edgeworth, <i>Castle Rackrent</i>	(Cohort 1)	

Nov 30—**ECCO Report** due

Dec 2—paper proposal due

Dec 7—paper draft due

Dec 9—peer review

Dec 17 (Thur)—**Final Paper** due

* Sept 9 is the only day Cohort 2 will meet on Wed.