

Writing London  
M/W 2:00-5:00 PM

In Writing London, we will read literature from the eighteenth century up to contemporary literature in order to understand how the city of London was formative for British literature, and how British literature formed our imagination of London. In this course, we will focus in particular on London as a global city that housed an emergent middle class alongside of new extremes of poverty, modern democratic subjects and a multitude of people (freed slaves, Indian sailors, Irish “others”) unrecognized as citizens, and banks that financed the slave trade alongside of bars in which conspiracies against the government were hatched. The course will include at least one walking tour that will follow the route of the 1780 Gordon Riots, which set the city ablaze. Contemporary novels, autobiography, and documentary film will explore connections between London and the West Indies and issues of identity, diaspora, and race.

The course will be conducted mainly as a seminar, in which students will participate through oral presentations and class discussion, with introductory lectures when appropriate. Please note that this course includes several novels of varying lengths, and you are advised to start reading them ahead of time.

Upon Completion of this Course, students will be able to:

- Read and think about literary texts in the context of London’s history over different periods
- Identify a variety of literary forms – e.g. novel, poem, essay, short story – and consider them in relation to the city’s own various spaces, shapes and forms.
- Recognize particular genres and figures: lyric poetry, science fiction, detective fiction, picaresque, etc.

Required Texts

Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders* (Penguin Classics)

William Earle, *Obi, or the History of Three Fingred Jack* (Broadview Press)

Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park* (Penguin Classics)

Jordy Rosenberg, *Confessions of the Fox* (One World)

Charles Dickens, *Barnaby Rudge* (Penguin Classics)

Thomas de Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (Broadview Press)

Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone* (Penguin Classics)

### ***Confessions***

Session 1	Daniel Defoe, <i>Moll Flanders</i>
Session 2	Robert Wedderburn, <i>The Axe Laid to the Root</i> and William Earle, <i>Obi, or the History of Three Fingred Jack</i>
Session 3	Thomas De Quincey, <i>Confessions of an Opium Eater</i>
Session 4	Jordy Rosenberg, <i>Confessions of the Fox</i>
Session 5	William Wordsworth, <i>Prelude</i> and John Clare <i>Decay, A Ballad</i> ” “[The Lament of Swordy Well],” “[Field-Mouse’s Nest],” “[Birds at Evening],” “The Eternity of Nature,” “Recollections of Journey from Essex” (1820-1864)
Session 6	Wilkie Collins, <i>The Moonstone</i>
Session 7	Nathalie Olah <i>Steal As Much as You Can</i>

### ***Familiar Strangers***

Session 8	Virginia Woolf, <i>Orlando</i>
Session 9	William Blake, <i>Songs of Innocence and Experience</i> and “America: A Prophecy”
Session 10	Charles Dickens, <i>Barnaby Rudge</i>
Session 11	Jane Austen, <i>Mansfield Park</i>
Session 12	Stuart Hall, <i>Familiar Stranger</i>
Session 13	Denise Riley, <i>Selected Poems</i>
Session 14	Keston Sutherland, <i>Stupefaction</i>
Session 15	China Mieville, <i>Perdido Street Station</i>

### **Grade Distribution**

- **Participation (10%):** Participation is crucial to your success in the course as it will inform and improve the outcome of your papers, exams, and quizzes. We do not count participation strictly as making one or two general comments in the duration of the course, but also as active listening and responding to your peers, as open-ended and curious question-asking about the texts we read, and as focused attention to a specific passage or section from those texts. **Such participation requires reading your course texts in advance of lecture and discussion section**, annotating and marking up your text and/or keeping notes as you read, and a brazen willingness to express naivete!
- **Weekly Forum Posts (20%, 250-300 words)**

- **First Paper (20%)**
- **Final Paper (30%)**
- **Presentation (20%)**

### **A Note on Participation**

University classrooms provide the space and time to engage with strange, provocative, and sometimes difficult objects. In that space and time, we have the exceptional and risky opportunity to engage those objects with people who may be complete strangers to us, and to communicate experiences, thoughts, and struggles that may push us to our cognitive limits with them. This formation of community, with its intensity and alterity, is almost impossible to find on a regular basis otherwise. The extent to which we can create a collective, social situation out of this bizarre arrangement depends upon each, individual contribution.

Participation requires that we each read, prepare, and annotate our texts before coming to class; that we express interest in others' ideas and offer ours in exchange during *each class*; and that we treat each other respectfully. Please make an effort to respond directly to other classmates, to build on their ideas with your own, and to not shy away from offering provisional or unfinished thoughts.

### **COURSE POLICIES**

#### Assignments

Detailed assignment instructions will be distributed in class and made available on NYU Classes. If you are away the day an assignment is distributed, please access it online. You are encouraged to read the description closely and ask for clarification early. Assignments are due on the days indicated on the syllabus (double-spaced, 12-pt font, Times New Roman or Cambria) on NYU Classes. Handing in assignments late prevents your instructor from giving your work timely attention and feedback; please be respectful of our work schedules and hand them in on time. Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day.

#### Attendance

Course assignments are entirely premised on our readings and in-class discussion. For this reason, it will be very difficult to receive a satisfactory overall grade if you do not attend all classes except in the case of an emergency. If you miss more than 2 classes, you will receive a failing grade.

#### Electronics

This class is an opportunity for us to engage one another through discussion and listening. As you probably know from unsociable siblings, inattentive significant others, and/ or working in customer service, good conversations are impossible to have when laptops, cell phones, tablets, e-readers, etc. get in the way. For this reason, they are not allowed in the classroom. Please bring print copies of all

readings to class. Be respectful of your classmates and teachers and turn cell phones off upon entering the classroom.

#### NYU Classes Website

Assignment details and course readings (as pdfs) will be posted on the NYU Classes site. Weekly writing prompts, weekly writing responses, and resources for our Keywords projects will also be located here.

#### Communication

For questions about course content, assignments, assessment and special situations, the best thing to do is stop by office hours and speak to instructors in person. If emailing, we will try to respond within 24-48 hours. If you do not respond in that time frame, it is likely because the answer to your question is on the syllabus.

#### Disabilities

(We use the term disability on this syllabus to recognize that that we live in a world that systematically discriminates between some abilities and others, not as a term that accurately describes any bodies or lives.) The Moses Center for Students with Disabilities ([mosescsd@nyu.edu](mailto:mosescsd@nyu.edu); 726 Broadway, 2nd Floor; tel. 212.998.4980) can provide assistance in making arrangements for assignments to ensure your full participation and contribution to this course. We must be notified **at the beginning of the semester** if you have made such arrangements with the Center.

#### Academic Integrity Policy

NYU's policies regarding plagiarism/academic integrity are available online at [cas.nyu.edu/page/ug.academicintegrity](http://cas.nyu.edu/page/ug.academicintegrity). These policies are strictly enforced.