

English 363 Voice in the Eighteenth Century
Fall 2005 Mon., Thurs. 11:50 a.m. – 1:05 p.m. Blaustein 211

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Course Description:

What do we mean when we talk about “voice”? While often invoked by authors to describe their “craft” and much discussed in literary criticism and the teaching of literature, there are surprisingly few extended studies about the historical origin (if there is one) of the notion of voice. In an effort to reverse this trend, we will work closely with this concept so as to reexamine eighteenth-century literature and its relation to oral traditions. The central premise of the course is that significant literary, social, and historical transformations occur during the eighteenth century that alter our idea of what voice is and how it functions. These alterations include the creation of a viable, for-profit literary marketplace and a reliable reading public, the growth of literacy and changing ideas about the role of printed texts in modern life, and correspondent shifts in the perceived value of oral tradition and oral culture. At a moment when print is believed to have triumphed as the location of modern culture (and, in many cases, as the most important indication of a culture’s sophistication), what happens to oral culture and the more “traditional” ways that humans produce and reproduce customs and a sense of belonging? We will examine how all of these transformations are figured in a range of eighteenth-century literature, including poetry, novels, and critical prose, to get a better sense of where the idea of “voice” comes from and what happens when authors experiment with the representation of human voices on the printed page.

Required Texts:

--Samuel Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* and James Boswell, *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* (Penguin, 1984)

--William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads and Related Writings* Ed. William Richey and Daniel Robinson (Houghton Mifflin, 2002)

--*The New Oxford Book of Eighteenth-Century Verse* (Oxford, 1987) Ed. Roger Lonsdale

(All texts are available at the Connecticut College book store. Please be sure to have the proper edition of these works. Other editions will have different pagination and will make it impossible for you to follow in class.

--“Voice in the Eighteenth Century” Course packet (Available at the Connecticut College print shop)

Course Policies and Requirements

Attendance and Participation: This course is driven by your ideas about literature; therefore, coming to class prepared to discuss the readings is an essential part of this course. Be sure to read all of the assigned material before you come to class. **More than four absences may result in failing the course.** Excessive lateness or leaving early may be counted as absences, so please come to class on time.

Papers: You will be required to write **three original papers** for the course. Each paper will be **5-7 pages in length** (double-spaced). I will provide assignments for the papers that will introduce possible topics. The due dates for the papers are listed on the syllabus. Late assignments will be deducted $\frac{1}{2}$ letter grade for each class that it is late.

Grading: Your grade for the course will be calculated as follows: **your written work will account for 75% of your grade (averaged across the three papers); attendance and participation will account for 25% of your grade.** You must complete all of the written work for the course to receive a passing grade.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is not tolerated in this course, but is easy to avoid. Cite all sources appropriately. If you have any doubts about whether or how to cite a source, consult with the *MLA Handbook* or ask me individually.

Syllabus

[All poems from the Lonsdale anthology are listed as “L.” All other works are separate books or contained in the course packet.]

9/ 1 **Introduction**

9/ 5 **Voice and the Oral I: Theoretical Frames**

Bruce Smith, “Introduction” to *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England* (1999)

Roland Barthes, “The Grain of the Voice” (1973)

9/8 **Voice and the Oral II: Historical Frames**

Jean Jacques Rousseau, from *Essay on the Origins of Languages* (1763)

Eric Griffiths, from *The Printed Voice of Victorian Poetry* (1989)

POPULAR CULTURE AND ORALITY

9/12 **Urban Orality I**

John Gay, *Trivia, Or the Art of Walking the Streets of London* (1716)

Joseph Addison, *The Spectator* #251 (“The London Cries”) (1713)

Bruce Smith, from *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England*

9/15 **Urban Orality II**

William Wordsworth, Bk. VII from *The Prelude* (1850; comp. 1805)

Marcellus Laroon, from *The Criers and Hawkers of London*

William Hogarth, “Southwark Fair” (1734); “The Enraged Musician” (1741); “The Idle ‘Prentice Executed at Tyburn” (1747); “The Industrious ‘Prentice Lord Mayor of London” (1747); “Beer Street” (1751); “Gin Street” (1751)

9/19 **Oratory and the Crowd**

Jonathan Swift, from *A Tale of a Tub* (1710)

[Be sure to read Swift’s notes at the bottom of the text as well]

Joseph Addison, *The Spectator* #147 (“Elocution of the Pulpit”) (1713)

Richard Hogarth, “The Sleepy Congregation” (1736)

9/22 **The Ballad Tradition I**

Anon., “Barbara Allen”

Anon., “Chevy Chase”

[Read and compare the multiple versions of each ballad]

Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, #70, #85 (1713)
Abrams, "Ballad" from *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (2002)

9/26 The Ballad Tradition II

Thomas Percy, "Sir Patrick Spence" (1765)
Thomas Chatterton, "An Excelente Balade of Charitie" (1770) [L, 570]
Richey and Richardson, "The Ballad Revival" (2002)

9/29 Lyrical Ballads I

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere"; "The Nightingale: A Conversational Poem, Written in April 1798" (1798)

10/3 Lyrical Ballads II

William Wordsworth, from *Lyrical Ballads*: "Goody Blake and Harry Gill"; "The Thorn"; "Simon Lee" (1798)
William Wordsworth, "The Solitary Reaper" (1807)

First Paper Due

ORAL TRADITIONS AND NATIONAL VOICES

10/6 England

Thomas Gray, "The Bard" (1757) [L, 361]; "The Fatal Sisters" (1768); "The Triumphs of Owen" (1768); "The Descent of Odin" (1768)
Multiple paintings of *The Bard* (1757-1820)

10/10 Scotland I

Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Macbeth* 4.1 (1623)
William Collins, "Ode to a Friend on his Return &c." (1749)
James Hogg, "A Witch's Chant" (1817)

10/13 Yom Kippur, no class

10/17 Scotland II

James Macpherson, from *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* (1760)

10/20 Scotland III

Samuel Johnson, from *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*
James Boswell, from *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*

10/24 Scotland IV

Samuel Johnson, from *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*
James Boswell, from *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*

10/27 Wales

Psalm 137 from the *King James Bible*
Evan Evans, “A Paraphrase of the 137th Psalm”; “For the Love of his Country” (1773); “A literal translation of a Welsh elegy ...” (n.d.); from *Some Specimens of Antient Poetry* (1764)
Anon., “A Translation of the Cwydd to Morvydd, an Elegiac Ode ...” (1781) (L, 660)

10/31 The “East”

William Collins, from *Persian Eclogues* (1742)
Sir William Jones, “A Hymn to Na’ra’yena”; “A Hymn to Indra”; “A Hymn to Su’rya”
The Yarjurveda
George Gordon, Lord Byron, from *The Giaour* (1813)

EXPERIMENTAL FORMS

11/3 Dialect

Robert Burns, “Dedication” to *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, 2nd edition (1787); “To a Mouse”; “To a Louse”; “Address to the Diel”; “John Anderson, my Jo”; “Tam O’ Shanter”
“Auld Lang Syne” (1786)
Robert Anderson, from *Ballads in the Cumberland Dialect* (1805)

Second Paper Due

11/7 Voices from Above

Christopher Smart, from *Jubilate Agno* (1761) (L, 431)
William Blake, from *Jerusalem* (1804?-1820)
Anne Finch, “To the Nightingale” (1713)
Percy Bysshe Shelley, “To a Skylark” (1824)

11/10 Sound Experiments

Jonathan Swift, *Journal to Stella*, #17, #44 (1710)
Henry Carey, *Namby-Pamby: or a Panegyric on the New Versification* (1727)
Thomas Mozeen, “The Bedlamite” (1762)

11/14 Oratory and Gesture: Performing Gray’s “Elegy”

Thomas Gray, “Elegy Written in a Country Church-yard” (1751) [L, 354]
Joseph Addison, *Spectator* #407 (“Orality and Gesture”) (1713)
Gilbert Austin, from *Chironomia; Or, a Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery* (1806)
Henry Siddons, from *Practical Illustration of Rhetorical and Gesture and Action* (1822)

11/17 Race, Authenticity, and Voice

Phyllis Wheatley, “On Being Brought from Africa to America” (1773) [L, 616]; “To Maecenas”
Anne Yearsley, from “A Poem on the Inhumanity of the Slave Trade” (1788)
William Blake, “The Little Black Boy” from *Songs of Innocence* (1789)
[Be sure to look at Blake’s two different engravings of the poem,]
Mary Prince, from *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave* (1831)

11/21 Gendered Voices

Alexander Pope, “Epistle to a Lady: Of the Characters of Women” (1735) [L, 239]
Anne Finch, “A Ballad to Mrs. Catherine Fleming in London from Malshanger Farm in
Hampshire” (1719)
Sarah Dixon, “The Slattern” (1740)
Anna Laetitia Barbauld, “Washing Day” (1797) [L, 308]

11/24 Thanksgiving, no class

11/28 “Call” and “Response” I

Jonathan Swift, “The Lady’s Dressing Room” (1732)
Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, “The Reasons that Induced Dr. Swift to Compose ‘The Lady’s
Dressing Room’” (1732)

12/1 “Call” and “Response” II

Stephen Duck, “The Thresher’s Labour” (1730)
Mary Collier, “The Woman’s Labour” (1737)

12/3 Crossing Voices I

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, “Epistle from Arthur Gray the Footman”
William Cowper, “The Negro’s Complaint” (1778)

12/8 Crossing Voices II

Samuel Richardson, from *Pamela; Or Virtue Rewarded* (1740)
Henry Fielding, *Shamela* (1741)

12/12

Talking Things

Francis Coventry, from *The History of Pompey the Little* (1751)

Charles Johnstone, *Chrysal: The Adventures of a Guinea* (1760-65)

Anna Laetitia Barbauld, "The Mouse's Petition to Doctor Priestley Found in the Trap where he had been confined all Night" (1773)

Final Paper Due