

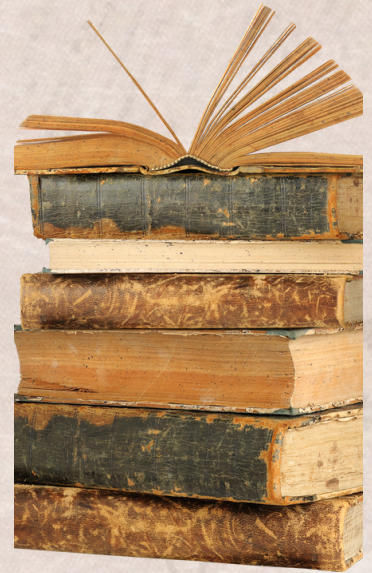
NEWS, NOVELTY, & THE EARLY ENGLISH NOVEL



18TH CENTURY BRITISH LIT

ENGL 7/8264 will analyze why the early novel was so controversial, how early novelists attempted to legitimize prose fiction by theorizing it, and what caused this theory to be at frequent odds with the actual practice of writing and reading. Our particular focus will be on the surprising intersections of early novels and newspapers, both of which draw attention to the minutiae of daily life and cater to the public desire for contemporaneity—for the latest thing. How does journalism influence the form and content of novels? Why were so many influential novelists also professional journalists? How is “truth” constituted and what does the problem of “fake news” suggest about fictionality? What was new about the novel and how did writers like Behn, Defoe, Swift, Haywood, Fielding, and Johnson exploit the genre’s novelty to divert and instruct readers who were invariably also newsmongers?

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