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## ENGL7264 / 8264: Eighteenth-Century British Literature “Leisure and Literature in the Long Eighteenth Century”

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<b>Instructor.</b>	Dr. Darryl P. Domingo	<b>Office Hrs.</b>	Tuesday 4:30-5:30 pm
<b>Location.</b>	Patterson Hall T.B.D.	<b>Phone.</b>	(901) 678-3458
<b>Time.</b>	Tuesday 5:30-8:30 pm	<b>E-Mail.</b>	dphnrhnd@memphis.edu
<b>Office.</b>	Patterson Hall 407	<b>Session.</b>	Aug. 24 – Dec. 10, 2026

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The present Age seems pretty well agreed in an Opinion, that the utmost Scope and End of Reading is Amusement only; and such, indeed, are now the fashionable Books, that a Reader can propose no more than mere Entertainment, and it is sometimes very well for him if he finds even this in his Studies.

—Henry Fielding, *The Covent-Garden Journal* No. 10 (4 February 1752)

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**Course Description.** This course will examine the ways in which leisure is represented in the literature of the “long” eighteenth century (1660-1800), paying close attention to the complex effects of secularization, urbanization, and commodification both on mass entertainment and on pervasive trends in publishing. It will survey conceptions of entertainment during a particularly dynamic period of English cultural history, a period in which leisure *and* literature were being produced in entirely new ways and consumed on a thoroughly commercial basis. While showmen and impresarios actively catered to the eclectic and often eccentric desires of England’s pleasure seekers, professional authors looked for innovative ways to gratify a reading audience increasingly avid for entertainment. This course will ask how, on the one hand, the reading of literature came to be seen during this period as an important leisure activity and why, on the other hand, commercialized leisure emerged as a popular subject in commercial literature that alternately celebrated and satirized the notion of literature *as* leisure.

☛ This course satisfies the pre-1800 requirement for M.A. students in Literature and either the Medieval and Early Modern or the Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century requirement for Ph.D. students in Literary and Cultural Studies.

**Tentative Texts.** *The Commerce of Everyday Life: Selections from The Tatler and The Spectator*, ed. Erin Mackie (Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1998 / 978-0312163716); *The Age of Authors: An Anthology of Eighteenth-Century Print Culture*, ed. Paul Keen (Broadview, 2014 / 9781554810925); Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels*, eds. Claude Rawson and Ian Higgins (Oxford, 2005 / 9780199536849); Alexander Pope, *Major Works*, ed. Pat Rogers (Oxford, 2006 / 9780199203611); Henry Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling*, eds. Thomas Keymer and Alice Wakely (Penguin, 2005 / 9780140436228); Frances Burney, *Evelina, or, A Young Lady’s Entrance into the World*, ed. Susan Kubica Howard (Broadview, 2000 / 9781551112374).

**Major Works.**

Addison and Steele, *The Tatler* (1709-11) and *The Spectator* (1711-14)

Pope, *The Rape of the Lock* (1712-17)

Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726)

Pope, *The Dunciad* (1728-43)

Fielding, *The Author's Farce* (1730)

Fielding, *Tom Jones* (1749)

Burney, *Evelina: or, A Young Lady's Entrance into the World* (1778)



William Hogarth, *Southwark Fair* (1733). Cincinnati Art Museum.