
ENGL7473/ 8473: Verbal / Visual Texts

Seeing Eighteenth-Century Satire

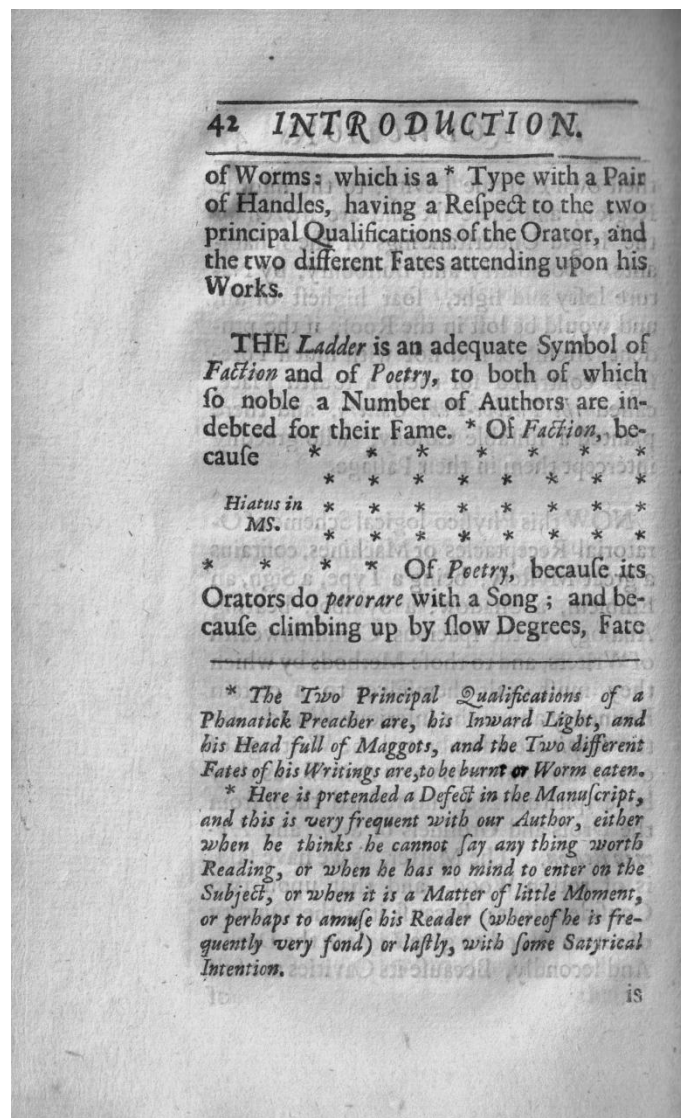
Instructor.	Dr. Darryl P. Domingo	Office Hrs.	Mon. 3:30 – 5:30
Location.	Patterson Hall 319	Phone.	(901) 678-3458
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Office.	Patterson Hall 431	Session.	Jan. 19 – May 5, 2016

Course Description. “Our Sight is the most perfect and most delightful of all our Senses,” writes Joseph Addison in *Spectator* No. 411 (21 June 1711), “It fills the Mind with the largest Variety of Ideas, converses with its Objects at the greatest Distance, and continues the longest in Action without being tired or satiated with its proper Enjoyments.” In this section of ENGL 7473 / 8473, we will apply Addison’s observations regarding sight to some of the most complex satires written and published during the so-called “Age of Satire” in Britain. This seminar will analyze how and why satirists of the eighteenth century appealed to the eyes and communicated their meaning visually, through vivid descriptions of contemporary people, places, and things, through surprising uses of printers’ ornaments, typography, and mise-en-page, and through illustrations and other graphic devices that encouraged audiences *to see* as well as *to read*. When confronted with an overwrought metaphor, a row of printed asterisks, a marbled page, an intrusive footnote, or an engraved squiggle set in the middle of a digressive novel, traditional literary-rhetorical methods of interpretation often fail us. As such, we will work from the assumption that one of the most efficacious ways of dealing with the characteristic difficulty of eighteenth-century satire is to engage sensually with the very features that seem most to defy meaning. These features often represent keys to interpretation, and allow satirists to discriminate between superficial and judicious readers. By immersing students in the print, material, and visual culture of the eighteenth century, this seminar will demonstrate why it is necessary to see satire before we can coherently read it.

Required Reading. *The Age of Authors: An Anthology of Eighteenth-Century Print Culture*, ed. Paul Keen (Broadview, 2014 / 9781554810925); Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of a Tub and Other Works*, eds. Angus Ross and David Wooley (Oxford, 1986 / 9780192835932); Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels*, eds. Claude Rawson and Ian Higgins (Oxford, 2005 / 9780199536849); Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, ed. Cynthia Wall (Bedford, 1998 / 9780312115692); Alexander Pope, *Major Works*, ed. Pat Rogers (Oxford, 2006 / 9780199203611); Henry Fielding, *The Tragedy of Tragedies*, ed. Darryl P. Domingo (Broadview, 2013 / 9781554811632); Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, ed. Melvyn New (Penguin, 2003 / 9780141439778); and Martin Rowson, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (Overlook Press, 1996 / 9780879517687). While these books will be available for purchase from the U of M Bookstore, they are also readily available (for a fraction of the price) through online booksellers such as amazon.com and abebooks.com. Supplementary material will be posted on E-Courseware or reproduced and distributed by the professor.

Learning Outcomes. Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Identify characteristic genres and define terms relevant to British literature of the late seventeenth and eighteenth century.
- Explain the forms and functions of satire as a literary mode.
- Describe the particular contributions of major literary figures of the period.
- Appreciate the vital reciprocal relationship between literary text and cultural context, including material, print, and visual culture.
- Orally discuss critical issues concerning the literature and culture of the late seventeenth and eighteenth century, and write about these issues in a clear and coherent manner.
- Undertake advanced research, drawing upon the arguments and evidence of literary-critical and historical scholarship to illuminate the texts and contexts of the course.



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