

**School of English and Theatre Studies
College of Arts
University of Guelph**

ENGL 6421

Winter 2020

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**Imperial Fantasy, Historical Resistance:
Approaching the Circum-Atlantic World**

Brief Course Synopsis:

This course approaches questions of empire and colonialism in the global eighteenth century from two directions. First, students will be reading a series of eighteenth-century texts (plays, poems, prose narratives) that have dominated critical discussion of British imperialism over the last three decades. In order to allow for a certain level of depth, the course focuses on the circum-Atlantic world from the founding of the Royal African Company to the advent of the American Civil War. We will be paying attention to how intercultural relations, violence, and relations of exchange with non-European populations have been crucial for the constitution of Europe itself, of capitalism, and many of the structural developments that have come to define social norms in the wake of the enlightenment. Second, attention will be paid to counter-discourses and forms of resistance as they are articulated not only in these more canonical texts, but also in cultural productions that are in effect writing back to empire both in the eighteenth-century and in our current moment. We will be considering work by Yinka Shonibare, Kara Walker, M. NourbeSe Philip and other contemporary practitioners, who I would argue offer a place in the present from which to imagine the legacy of imperial fantasy otherwise.

Required Texts:

Anonymous, *The Woman of Colour*
Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko* (Norton)
Dion Boucicault, *The Octoroon*
Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*
Daniel Defoe, *Captain Singleton*
Frank Felsenstein, *English Trader, Indian Maid*
Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano,...*
John Gay, *The Beggar's Opera* and Polly
M. NourbeSe Philip, *Zong!*
Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Turkish Embassy Letters*
Zora Neale Hurston, *Barracoon*
+ selected work by Yinka Shonibare, Walid Raad, Kara Walker, and others.

Evaluation Structure:

"Leading the Class": Article Summary	15%
Object Assignment	20%
Visual Culture Assignment	25%
Final Paper	35%

This course will be composed of lectures and in-class discussions. Attendance is crucial to your success in this course. It is also imperative that you keep up with the reading. It is strongly recommended that you start the prose texts immediately. This course is subject to all the rules and regulations articulated on the College of Arts Website. The statement is also posted in the Course Documents section of CourseLink.

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Tentative Syllabus

1. W 1/09 Empire Thinking

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Turkish Embassy Letters*
Alexander Pope, "Windsor Forest"
Laura Brown on WF
Steve Pincus...

I Bare Life, or Primitive Accumulation in the Circum-Atlantic

2. W 1/16 Tortuous Transactions

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*
Ramesh Mallipeddi, "Spectacle, Spectatorship, and Sympathy in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*"
Cynthia Richards, "Interrogating *Oroonoko*: Torture in a New World and a New Fiction of Power"
Kara Walker
A Subtlety, or The Marvellous Sugar Baby
<https://art21.org/artist/kara-walker/>
<http://www.karawalkerstudio.com/2014>

3. W 1/23 Emotional Exchanges

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko* (con't)
Inkle and Yarico dossier (Frank Felsentein, *English Trader, Indian Maid*)
[Robin Coste-Lewis, *The Voyage of the Sable Venus*](#)

4. W 1/30 No Man is an Island

Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*

5. W 2/06 Re-Worlding

J.M. Coetzee, *Foe*
Dominique White, selected works
<https://www.blackdominique.com/CV>

II Piracy, Peril, and Heterocosmic Myth

6. W 2/13 Criminal Capitalism

John Gay, *The Beggar's Opera* and *Polly*

--READING WEEK

7. W 2/27 Violence Unrestrained

Daniel Defoe, *Captain Singleton*

8. W 3/06 The Black Atlantic

Oludah Equiano, *Interesting Narrative of the Life of ...*

M. NourbeSe Philip, *Zong!*,

Selections from Ian Baucaum, *Spectres of the Atlantic*

9. W 3/13 Drexciya

Equiano (con't)

Selina Thompson, *salt* (Available on-line through the Library)

Ellen Gallagher, from the series *Watery Ecstatic*

<https://art21.org/artist/ellen-gallagher/>

Theo Eshetu, *The Slave Ship*

<http://www.tiwani.co.uk/exhibitions/exhibition-the-slave-ship/>

<https://vimeo.com/166643764>

<https://www.shimajournal.org/issues/v10n2/h.-Gaskins-Shima-v10n2.pdf>

10. W 3/2 Class Cancelled

III Home Economics

11. W 3/27 Domestic Entanglements

Anonymous, *The Woman of Colour*

Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince*

Yinka Shonibare, selected sculpture and photographs

Diary of a Victorian Dandy and Hogarth, *A Rake's Progress*

The Swing (after Fragonard) and Fragonard, *The Swing*

The Age of Enlightenment--Adam Smith

The Age of Enlightenment--Jean le Rond d'Alembert

The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters (five) and Goya's *The Sleep of Reason*

Produces Monsters

Gallantry and Criminal Conversation (the Grand Tour)

12. W 4/06 At Home in the World

Maria Edgeworth, *Belinda* or Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*

13. TBA Resistant Performances

Edward Long, from *History of Jamaica*

Obi, or Three-Finger'd Jack

Kathleen Wilson,

Theaster Gates, video "Billy Sings Amazing Grace"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Do1Qa8JsdM>

OR

Salient Legacies

Dion Bouicault, *The Octoroon*

Zora Neale Hurston, *Barracoon*

Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 1-48.

Joseph Roach, from *Cities of the Dead*

