Politeness in Eighteenth-Century Britain and its Colonies

Politeness is arguably one of the most influential and long-lasting inventions of eighteenth-century Britain. A coherent moral and political philosophy as well as a set of rituals, practices, and approaches to consumerism, the culture of politeness was a response to events and trends ranging from the Glorious Revolution of 1689 and perceived aristocratic licentiousness to urbanization and increased contact with non-European cultures. Distinct from, and often opposed to, aristocratic protocols such as courtliness, politeness developed in conjunction with the rise of the middle class, with social contract theories of governance, and with the political discourse of the early American republic. At the same time, it also emerged as a method of social gate-keeping through its construction of vulgarity, savagery, and rudeness. Intertwined with the culture of sensibility, and placed into dialogue with the evangelicalism of the mid-eighteenth century, it also precipitated new valuations of emotional expression, inter-cultural contact, and gender.

This course will examine the cultural origins and literary representations of politeness in Britain and its colonies. We will read widely and diversely, attending to novels, sermons, poems, plays, essays, conduct literature, and travel writings. Central texts will include Shaftesbury’s *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, essays from the *Spectator*, Pope’s moral epistles, Frances Burney’s *Evelina*, and Pratt’s *Emma Corbett*.

**Required readings:**

Frances Burney, *Evelina* (Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1997) 0312097298
Anthony Ashley Cooper, *Shaftesbury: Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, edited by Lawrence Klein (Cambridge, 2000), 0521578922
Charlotte Lennox, *Euphemia*, edited by Susan Kubica Howard (Broadview, 2008) 1551116189
Samuel Jackson Pratt, *Emma Corbett; or, the Miseries of Civil War. Founded on Some Recent
Circumstances which Happened in America (Bath and London, 1780) (coursepack)
David S. Shields, Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America (University of North Carolina, 1997), 0-8078-4656-2
Alan Taylor, American Colonies: The Settling of North America (Penguin, 2002), 0142002100

Requirements and Course Grade:

Weekly Response Papers: By 4:00 p.m. every Monday, please send a response of no more than 250 words to the WebCT page for this class. I will open new discussion threads for each week’s reading. These papers should be informal, in that they may deploy an informal or chatty tone, asking questions or making brief observations. They should, however, contain the polished, proofread writing that I expect in your final papers, with page references (where appropriate) to the reading for the week.

Class Presentation: Each of you will begin one class with a presentation on the week’s reading. This presentation should provide an opening for discussion, summarizing which issues you found most interesting and asking several questions to which your classmates and I can respond. You also will distribute a brief, annotated bibliography of about five titles on scholarship related to the book and the issues you are addressing. Handouts or PowerPoint slides providing background material (timelines, illustrations, etc.) or guidelines to discussion points are welcome.

Book Review: You will write a 750-1200 word review of a recent scholarly publication relating to the course topic. This review should be of publishable quality, summarizing the book’s main argument, explaining how it relates to current scholarship, considering who its audience might be, and pointing out its strong and weak points. You are welcome to select a text that relates to your own specific academic interests, and/or find a book that relates to your final paper topic. I also will give you a list of possible texts.

Papers: You have the choice of writing one (13-15 page) paper or an annotated bibliography oriented to a specific topic (13-15 pages single spaced).

One Long Paper: If you choose to write one long paper, on March 23 you will turn in a prospectus, describing in as much detail as possible the topic and structure of your final paper. This final paper should be 13-15 pages long, it should be double-spaced, it should involve some research of secondary and/or historical sources, and it should set out to argue a particular and precise theory about one or two texts we have studied this term.

Annotated Bibliography: This should begin with a paragraph-introduction with general topics on the state of scholarship on the bibliography’s topic. Entries should be accompanied by 2-3 sentences of summary and broken into categories with smaller separate introductions. Grading will assess the extensiveness and depth of research as well as insightfulness of summary commentary.
Special Needs:

Students with disabilities should contact the Center for Student Academic Support to self-identify their needs in order to facilitate their rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Center is located in 210 Lorton Hall. All students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with and take advantage of services provided by the Center for Student Academic Support such as tutoring, academic counseling, and developing study skills. The Center provides confidential consultations to any student with academic concerns as well as to students with disabilities.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:

I expect all students in this class to adhere to the standards of academic integrity as defined in the University of Tulsa’s Student Handbook. If I find any evidence that a student has cheated on an examination or plagiarized a paper, I will fail the particular assignment immediately. I will then forward the case to my department Chair and college Dean for further disciplinary action. Most likely I will give the student a failing grade for the semester and recommend suspension from the university.

The handbook of the Modern Language Association defines plagiarism as follows: “Derived from the Latin word plagiarus (“kidnapper”), plagiarism refers to a form of cheating that has been defined as the false assumption of authorship: the wrongful act of taking the product of another person’s mind, and presenting it as one’s own (Alexander Lindey, Plagiarism and Originality [New York: Harper, 1952]2). To use another person’s ideas or expressions in your writing without acknowledging the source is to plagiarize” (Joseph Gibaldi, MLA Handbook, 4th ed., [New York: MLA, 1995]26).

It often is difficult to determine where the line is between being influenced by a text or person, and taking words or ideas from that text or person. Confusion can arise easily when one is doing extensive research or collaborating with other people. If you have any questions about whether or not you should give credit to a source in your work, I suggest that you always cite that source to be safe. Please also see me if you are uncertain about whether or how to cite a course, or consult the Modern Language Association Handbook.

Please note that as part of a general effort to combat plagiarism I will be submitting randomly selected papers from all of my classes to a plagiarism detection service. I also will be using this service to screen any paper that I suspect is plagiarized.

Finally, while not technically a form of plagiarism I do consider it a breach of academic integrity for a student to submit the same paper for credit in more than one class. If you wish to develop some ideas or revise some work you have done in an earlier class, please consult with me first to determine whether such work would fill the requirements for this class. If I discover that a student has submitted work for my class and another class, that student will be likely to fail the class.
Office Hours and Contacting Me:

I will be available to meet with all students from 1:00 to 3:00 on Thursdays. If my office hours conflict with your schedule I will be happy to make an appointment with you at another time.

The best way to contact me outside of office hours is through email, which I try to check daily. My email address is laura-stevens@utulsa.edu. My mailbox is in the main office of the English department, 365 Zink Hall. You may also leave me voice mail or call my office at 631-2859, but if you are calling me over a holiday keep in mind that these messages will be erased automatically after 3 days.

Reading and Assignment Schedule

H=handout

January 12, Introduction
Sign up for Class Presentations

January 19, Contact, Culture, Barbarity, and Civility
Primary:
Aphra Behn, Oroonoko
Thomas Harriot, A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia of the commodities and of the nature and manners of the naturall inhabitants. (1590)
- skim this, paying attention to section "of the nature and manners of the people," (pp. 24-30 and images.)

Secondary:
Perreault, Melanie, ""To Fear and to Love Us': Intercultural Violence in the English Atlantic." Journal of World History, Volume 17, Number 1, March 2006 pp. 71-93. MUSE
Morrill, Stuart Britain

January 26, The Glorious Revolution and the Culture of Reform
This class will end at 7:30
Primary:
Thomas Bray, Apostolick charity, its nature and excellence consider’d in a discourse upon Dan. 12. 3., preached at St. Paul’s, at the ordination of some Protestant missionaries to be sent into the plantations : to which is prefixt, A general view of the English colonies in America, with respect to religion (1700) EEBO
Gilbert Burnet, *Charitable reproof a sermon preached at the Church of St. Mary-le-Bow to the Societies for Reformation of Manners, the 25th of March, 1700 / by the Right Reverend Father in God, Gilbert Lord Bishop of Sarum.* (1700) EEBO

Jeremy Collier, *A short view of the immorality, and profaneness of the English stage together with the sense of antiquity upon this argument* (1698) EEBO, preface and chapter 1

Francis Grant Cullen, *A brief account of the nature, rise, and progress of the societies for reformation of manners &c. in England and Ireland with a preface exhorting to the use of such societies in Scotland* (1700) [skim]


**Secondary:**


**February 2, The Philosophy of Politeness**

**Primary:**

*The Polite gentleman, or, Reflections upon the several kinds of wit viz., in conversation, books, and affairs of the world done out of French.* (1700) EEBO, pp. 1-30

Shaftesbury

**Secondary:**


**February 9, Periodicals and the Discourse of Politeness**

**Primary:**

Addison and Steele, Section 1: Tatler 1, 144, 164, 271, Spectator 1, 2, 49, 367;


Section 2: Tatler 25, Spectator 3, 11, 21, 55, 69, 155, 218, 336; Contexts: On Shopping

Section 3: All Tatler, Spectator 8, 58, 63, 85, 105, 175, 291, 409, 411; Contexts: Swift, Hints, On Poets (Female Tatler),

Sections 4: Tatler 24, 25, 27, 107, 116; Spectator 15, 41, 81, 119, 154, 156; Contexts: Ward, 547-50

**Secondary:**

Scott Black, “Social and Literary Form in the Spectator,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies,* Volume 33, Number 1, Fall 1999, pp. 21-42. MUSE
Brian William Cowan, “Mr. Spectator and the Coffeehouse Public Sphere,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Volume 37, Number 3, Spring 2004, pp. 345-366. MUSE

Book Review Due

**February 16 Refinement and Vulgarity in the Colonies**

**Primary:**
*Journal of Madame Knight*
Ebenezer Cooke, *The Sot Weed Factor* (1708), available at:
http://theotherpages.org/poems/cook03.html
William Byrd II, diary, excerpts (H)

**Secondary:**

**February 23 Morality, Poetry, Taste**

**Primary:**
Alexander Pope, *Epistle To a Lady*
http://www.ling.upenn.edu/courses/hum100/lady.html
*Rape of the Lock*, Canto 1
http://people.umass.edu/sconstan/
*Essay on Criticism*
http://poetry.eserver.org/essay-on-criticism.html
Lady Mary Wortley Montague, “Verses Addressed to the Imitator of the First Satire of the Second Book of Horace,” excerpt (H)

**Secondary:**
Darryl P. Domingo, ”'The Natural Propensity of Imitation': or, Pantomimic Poetics and the Rhetoric of Augustan Wit.” *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies, Volume 9, Number 2, Fall/Winter 2009*, pp. 51-95. MUSE

**March 2: Gentlemanly Conduct and Consumption**

**Primary:**
Philip Dormer Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield, Letters to his Son (wr. 1746-71)

**Secondary:**
Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*, excerpt (H)
Christophe Heyl, “‘We are not at Home’: Protecting Domestic Privacy in Post-Fire Middle Class London.” *London Journal* 27.2 (2002), 12-33. On WebCT.

John Bender, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, excerpt (H)

March 9 American Colonies & The Locus of Politeness

David S. Shields, *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters*


Troy O. Bickham, ”’A conviction of the reality of things’: Material Culture, North American Indians and Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain.” *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Volume 39, Number 1, Fall 2005, pp. 29-47. MUSE

March 16 Spring Break, no classes

March 23 Gender, Vulgarity, and Class

Primary:
Frances Burney, *Evelina*

Secondary:

John Bender, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, excerpt (H)

Paper or Bibliography Proposal due in class

March 30 Politics and Polite Rhetoric

Primary:
Samuel Seabury, *Letters of a Westchester Farmer*, excerpts
http://anglicanhistory.org/usa/seabury/farmer/

Alexander Hamilton, “The Farmer Refuted,” in *A Full Vindication*. Available at The Liberty Fund:
http://oll.libertyfund.org/?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=1378&chapter=64142&layout=html&Itemid=27

Samuel Johnson, political pamphlets: “Debates in the Senate of Liliput” (17402), *The False Alarm* (1770), *The Patriot* (1774), *Taxation no Tyranny* (1775), excerpts (H)

Secondary:

April 6
Primary:
Samuel Jackson Pratt, *Emma Corbett; or, the Miseries of Civil War. Founded on Some Recent Circumstances which Happened in America* (Bath and London, 1780)

**Secondary:**

**Works Cited List for Paper due in class**

**April 13**
**Primary:**
Lennox, *Euphemia*

**Secondary:**

**April 20 Performance, Politeness, Nation**

**Primary:**
Royal Tyler, *The Contrast*

http://emotionalliteracyeducation.com/classic_books_online/tcntr10.htm

**Secondary:**

**Final Paper or Annotated Bibliography due Friday, April 30, at 4:00 p.m. in my mailbox**