

**DRAFT SYLLABUS**

**ENG 423 // Beggars and Aristocrats: The Class System in  
Eighteenth-Century British Literature**



**Course Description**

Eighteenth-century Britain was a deeply hierarchical society with an almost unfathomably large gap between rich and poor. It was a nation of beggars and aristocrats, haves and have-nots, powerful elites and disempowered multitudes. In this class, we will use literature to investigate Britain's class system. How did eighteenth-century writers understand and represent "class"? Was status inherited or earned? Was the social hierarchy a God-given institution or a man-made system of oppression? How did the laboring poor contest the class system? How did the rich justify it? Topics covered will include crime and the criminalization of poverty, courtship, the French Revolution, and early policing. We will read across a wide variety of forms, including novels, criminal biographies, essays, and drama.

**Reading Schedule**

- Mon 8/22** Introduction  
**Wed 8/24** Oliver Goldsmith, "The Deserted Village" (1770)  
**Fri 8/26** Karl Marx, *Capital*, Part 8: "So-called Primitive Accumulation of Capital," chapters 26-30 [pp. 871-907]
- Mon 8/29** Robert Shoemaker, *The London Mob: Violence and Disorder in Eighteenth-Century England* (2004); *A Narrative of All the Robberies, Escapes, &c. of Jack Sheppard* (1724)  
**Wed 8/31** *A Narrative of All the Robberies, Escapes, &c. of Jack Sheppard*, cont'd  
**Fri 9/2** The Old Bailey Online, "[The Ordinary of Newgate's Accounts](#)"; ONE ISSUE

- Mon 9/5** LABOR DAY – NO CLASS  
**Wed 9/7** Douglas Hay, “Property, Authority, and the Criminal Law” in *Albion’s Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England* (1975), pp.  
**Fri 9/9** Peter Linebaugh, “The Tyburn Riot Against the Surgeons,” in *Albion’s Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England*, pp. 65-118
- Mon 9/12** The Old Bailey Online, [“Crime, Justice, and Punishment”](#); [“About the Proceedings”](#)  
**Wed 9/14** Research workshop  
**Fri 9/16** Research workshop

### PAPER 1 DUE MON 9/19

- Mon 9/19** Frances Burney, *Evelina; Or, the History of a Young Lady’s Entrance into the World* (1778), Volume 1  
**Wed 9/21** Burney, *Evelina*, Volume 1 cont’d  
**Fri 9/23** Hannah Greig, *The Beau Monde: Fashionable Society in Georgian London* (2013), Introduction and Chapter 2
- Mon 9/26** Burney, *Evelina*, Volume 2  
**Wed 9/28** Burney, *Evelina*, Volume 2, cont’d  
**Fri 9/30** Alicia M. Annas, “The Elegant Art of Movement,” in *An Elegant Art: Fashion and Fantasy in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century* (1983)
- Mon 10/3** Burney, *Evelina* Volume 3, cont’d  
**Wed 10/5** Burney, *Evelina* Volume 3, cont’d  
**Fri 10/7** Ashley Cohen, *The Global Indies*, Chapter 1 excerpt
- Mon 10/10** Thomas Holcroft, *The Follies of the Day* (1784)  
**Wed 10/12** Holcroft, *The Follies of the Day*, cont’d

### PAPER 2 DUE Mon 10/17

- Mon 10/17** Richard Price, *A Discourse on the Love of Our Country* (1789)  
**Wed 10/19** Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790)  
**Fri 10/21** Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, cont’d
- Mon 10/24** Tom Paine, *Rights of Man*, PART 1 OR PART 2?  
**Wed 10/26** Paine, *Rights of Man*  
**Fri 10/28** Paine, *Rights of Man*
- Mon 10/31** Maria Edgeworth, *Ennui* (1809)  
**Wed 11/2** Edgeworth, *Ennui* (1809)  
**Fri 11/4** Edgeworth, *Ennui* (1809)
- Mon 11/7** Mary Wollstonecraft, *Maria; or, The Wrongs of Woman Illustrated* (1798)  
**Wed 11/9** Wollstonecraft, *Maria*, cont’d

- Mon 11/14** Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), Volume 1  
**Wed 11/16** Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, Volume 1, cont'd  
**Fri 11/18** Amanda Vickery, *At Home with the Georgians*, Episode 2, "A Woman's Touch"
- Mon 11/21** Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, Volume 2
- Mon 11/28** Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, Volume 3  
**Mon 11/30** Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, Volume 3, cont'd  
**Mon 12/2** Conclusions & Review

PAPER 3 DUE ON EXAM DAY