

En 130: Writing the Early Modern City

Spring 2008

MW 1:00-2:30

Baxter 128

Richard Squibbs

The urban historian Lewis Mumford wrote that the city is “second only to language itself in the transmission of culture,” and that “by means of new aesthetic structures ... the city defined the new collective personality that had emerged” out of it. In this course we will encounter such acts of cultural transmission and the traces of collective personality in a variety of literary genres: the novel, the essay, the short story, the journal, and satiric poetry. Our main focus will be 18th-C London, though along the way we’ll read works from 17th-C and 19th-C Paris, and late 18th-C Philadelphia. Throughout the term, we will pay special attention to the ways in which urban life is reflected in these works, and to the means by which these authors sought to shape their urban environments with their writings.

Policies & Requirements

This is a seminar-style course, which means that regular and active participation in discussion is crucial. You are allowed one absence without penalty; after that, each absence will proportionately lower your final grade for the course. The grading breakdown is as follows: participation in discussion (1/3 of your final grade); two essays [one 4-6 pages; final essay of 7-10 pages] (2/3 of your final grade).

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Required texts: James Boswell *London Journal* (Yale University Press, ISBN 0300093012)
Charles Brockden Brown *Arthur Mervyn* (Aegypan, ISBN 1603121056)
Frances Burney *Evelina* (Oxford University Press, ISBN 0192840312)
Daniel Defoe *Journal of the Plague Year* (Norton, ISBN 0393961885)
[the remainder of the readings will be circulated as handouts]

Course page: <https://courses.hss.caltech.edu/Spring2008/En130>

Schedule of Readings

M 3/31 Introduction

The Essay Form & the Urban Spectator in Paris and London

- W 4/2 Montaigne “Of Solitude;” “Of Three Types of Association”
Adorno “The Essay as Form”
- M 4/7 Benjamin “The Flâneur”
Poe “The Man of the Crowd”
- W 4/9 Bruyère “Of the Town”
Addison & Steele *Tatler & Spectator* (selections)
- M 4/14 *World & Connoisseur* (selections)
- W 4/16 Ward *London Spy*, letters 1-3
- Ways of Knowing London***
- M 4/21 Picard “London”
Porter “Happiness”
Pepys *Journal* (selections)
- W 4/23 Defoe *Journal of the Plague Year*
- M 4/28 Defoe *Journal of the Plague Year* [Essay 1 due in class]
- W 4/30 Swift “A Description of the Morning;” “Description of a City Shower”
Robinson “London’s Summer Morning”
Johnson “London”
- M 5/5 Haywood “The City Jilt”
- W 5/7 Boswell *London Journal*
- M 5/12 Boswell *London Journal*
- W 5/14 Burney *Evelina*
- M 5/19 Burney *Evelina*
- W 5/21 Burney *Evelina*
- M 5/26 No class – Memorial Day
- Philadelphia in Crisis***
- W 5/28 Brockden Brown *Arthur Mervyn*
- M 6/2 Brockden Brown *Arthur Mervyn*

W 6/4 Brockden Brown *Arthur Mervyn*

FINAL ESSAY DUE M 6/9 in my mailbox in Dabney by 12:00pm