**ENEC 4500/8500: *Samuel Johnson: From Print to Digital Media***

Spring 2015

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This is a course in the career of Samuel Johnson, the most important literary figure in eighteenth-century English writing. Johnson (1709-1784) was a poet, critic, journalist, editor, playwright, novelist, lexicographer, media celebrity, and much more. We will read a good-sized part of Johnson’s prodigious output in poetry, essay-writing, fiction, literary criticism, and lexicography. But an important fact that shaped Johnson’s writing career—as he knew very well—was the print media of his era and the evolution of its institutions: the printers, editors, booksellers, publishers, and even the lawyers who were helping create the new concept of authorial copyright. We are in a particularly good position to examine Johnson and the media culture that he lived in, because we are living in a time when media is transforming from print to digital formats. We will not only read Johnson and writings *about* his culture with that in view, we will get our hands dirty, contributing to the process of bringing this part of our cultural heritage into the digital future by editing works by Johnson that will be available on the web for other students and readers. My main target is the fiction now known as *Rasselas*, which has become Johnson's most-frequently-read work in our era. We may also do something else, such as mapping the itinerary of Johnson and Boswell's tour of the Hebrides using Neatline. Much will depend on your interests and ideas--I want to think about what is useful for you, and what you think will be useful for others.

**Requirements:**

Reading and active, fervent class participation (20%)

For undergraduates: three essays (one 3-5 pp; two others 5-7 pp) (30 %)

For graduates: two essays (one 3-5 pp; one 12-15 pages)

Participation in group digital project (30%)

Final examination (20%)

**Textbooks** (please purchase these editions, which are now [or soon will be] available at the University Bookstore):

Samuel Johnson*: The Major Works*, ed. Donald Greene

Samuel Johnson:  *A Dictionary of the English Language: An Anthology*, ed. David Crystal

Samuel Johnson and James Boswell: *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* and *A Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*

Samuel Johnson: *The Lives of the Poets: A Selection*, ed. John Mullan and Roger Lonsdale

**Schedule of Class meetings and Readings (subject to change)**

**I: *Johnson the Hack: Grub Street and the Eighteenth-Century Writer***

January 12—Introduction to the course

14: early poetry: Johnson, " Translation of Horace, *Odes,* ii.20,” Greene, 1; WordPress blog page; sample of *Irene* (Greene, 21-23)

 --John Dryden, “Preface” to “Ovid’s Epistles, Translated by Several

Hands” (Collab)

--Wikipedia article on Samuel Johnson

19--no class meeting; MLK holiday

21--early journalism: Johnson, “The State of Affairs in Lilliput,” (Greene, 44-50); “Debates in the Senate of Lilliput,” (Greene, 103-112); Letter to Edward Cave (Green, 781), “The Life of Dr Herman Boerhave” (Greene, 54-70); On Gay’s Epitaph” (Green, 51-53)

 --Dustin Griffin, “Authorship,” (Collab)

 --O. M. Brack, "Publication" (Collab)

26--Johnson, *London: A Poem in Imitation of the Third Satire of Juvenal* in Greene and/or WordPress site

 Matt Kirschenbaum: "What is Digital Humanities and What is it Doing

 in English Departments?"

28-- Special Collections session: meet at Byrd-Morrison room, Harrison Institute

 **First short essay due for all**

February 2--*The Vanity of Human Wishes* (first half)

4--*The Vanity of Human Wishes* (conclude)

 read "Creating and Documenting Electronic Texts: A Guide to Good Practice"

 http://ota.ahds.ac.uk/documents/creating/cdet/

 read Mark Sample, "The Digital Humanities in not about building, it's

 about sharing" http://www.samplereality.com/2011/05/25/the-digital-humanities- is-not-about-building-its-about-sharing/

9--WordPress tutorial with Jeremy Boggs, Scholars Lab; meet in Alderman Library

11--*An Account of the Life of Richard Savage, Son of the Earl Rivers* (Mullan and Lonsdale)

***II. Dictionary* Johnson and The *Rambler***

14--*Plan of an English Dictionary* (Chrystal 3-12; read his introduction as well)

18--*Preface to the English Dictionary* (Chrystal 21-42)

23--*The Rambler* (issues to come)

25--*Rambler* (issues to come)

4--*The Prince of Abissinia* (a/k/a *Rasselas*)

6--*Prince,* continued

9--*Spring*

11--*Break*

16--*Rasselas* project (readings, work tba--possible in a lab space)

18--*Rasselas* project

 **Undergraduates: second essay due**



**III. *Proto-Anthropology; Proto-Biography: Johnson and Boswell go on the road***

23--Johnson: *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*

25--*Journey*, continued

 secondary readings tba

30--Boswell: *A Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*

1--Boswell continued

**III *“Little Lives, and Little Prefaces”: Johnson, Copyright, and the Canon of English Poetry***

6-- Johnson, "Advertisement," Life of Cowley

 Mullan, Lonsdale, "Introduction"

 Mark Rose on copyright (Collab)

8-- Johnson, Life of Grey (Mullan and Lonsdale)

 Grey, “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” (Collab)

13-- John Milton,"Lycidas" (Collab)

15-- Johnson, Life of Milton (Mullan and Lonsdale)

20- Pope, "The Rape of the Lock" (Collab)

22-- Johnson, Life of Pope (Mullan and Lonsdale)

27-- final class meeting: Johnson, "On the Death of Dr Robert Levet"

 **all: final essay due**

**take home final examination**