

EN 4/6643
The 18th-Century British Novel
Fall 2009, MWF 9:00-9:50
Professor: Peter DeGabriele



The 18th century novel was, for contemporaries, a far from savoury affair. It rotted young women's minds, ate away at the fabric of a healthy society and encouraged chambermaids to think that by seducing their masters they could marry into the nobility. Despite these concerns, or maybe because of them, the novel became the most popular literary genre of the century. In this class, we will read a selection of novels spanning the century, and focus both on the development of the novel as a literary genre and on critical views (from the eighteenth and the twentieth century) of the novel's impact upon pressing social and political concerns. Reading authors such as Eliza Heywood, Daniel Defoe, Jonathan Swift, Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, and Jane Austen, we will look at how the novel influenced and transformed thinking about gender, class and the very ties that bind society together.

During the semester, you will write bi-weekly reading responses, compose two essays and sit for two exams: one midterm and one final.