

Fall 2019 Course Descriptions

Instructor: Margaret Ezell

Course: ENGL 481

Title: Aphra Behn and the Rise of the Professional Woman Writer

Description: This writing intensive senior seminar will study the life and works of Aphra Behn (1640?-1689), one of the first English women to make her living by being a professional writer. Behn led an exciting and varied life, from visiting the colonial “new world,” acting as a spy, and being a successful London commercial dramatist, poet, and fiction writer during the time of King Charles II.

Exploring her plays, poems, and fictions, the course will deal with issues such as: how did she fashion and present herself as a professional female writer? What do her commercially successful dramas and fictions suggest were the topics which entertained her contemporary audiences but scandalized later ones? What can we make of the history of shifting critical attitudes towards Behn and her writings from her time to our own?

Proposed Readings:

Required texts:

Oroonoko, and Other Writings

Oxford World's Classics

978-0199538768

The Rover and Other Plays

Oxford World's Classics

978-0199540204

The Cambridge Companion to Aphra Behn (Cambridge Companions to Literature)

Cambridge University Press (January 10, 2005)

978-0521527200