ENGL 374: Swift, Pope, and the Literature of the Augustan Age

Instructor: Samuel Wong
Email: samuelw@uvic.ca
Phone: 721-6202

Course description:

In literature, politics, science, and philosophy, the road to the modern world goes through the Augustan Age. In the years covered by this course, 1700-1745, the roots of liberal and conservative thought are established; the scientific community begins its rise to power; the secular and bureaucratic state is born; and writers like Pope and Swift create the satiric—even savage—sensibility that dominates so much of modern literature. All these developments come about as the British and French extend their imperial influence creating a new kind of global sphere the consequences of which we feel, and suffer, to this day. We’ll read a variety of works that try to span these remarkable developments, from the early English novel and satiric poetry and prose to the philosophy of John Locke and Isaac Newton and the subversive fantasies of Margaret Cavendish and Aphra Behn.
Proposed assignments:

2 Essays, 1000 and 2000 words, 20% & 35%
Midterm Exam, 20%
Final Exam, 25%

Proposed reading list:

[Please note that readings will be determined, in part, by discussion with the class, with an eye to making the reading list as diverse as possible. The works listed here represent only a possible sampling.]