

21H.141
Spring 2015

Long Essay Assignment: **English Books and Periodicals in the Seventeenth Century**

A. Requirements

- 1) Write an essay in response to one of the two prompts below. Your paper must be 2500 words (around 8-10 pages) long, using 12-point font and one inch margins. Please submit the paper during Session 18.
- 2) You must submit a prospectus that is at least one paragraph long to me by Session 17. The paragraph should specify which of the prompts below you have selected, the text or periodical you have chosen to analyze, and a one-sentence summary of the thesis you intend to pursue. I will give you feedback on your proposal by the end of the following day.
- 3) Your paper must be computer-processed. Please give your paper a title, and write your name on the back of the last page. Do not write your name elsewhere on the paper. All pages should be numbered. Refer to the editing handout for further editing suggestions. You may also consult with tutors at the [Writing Center](#) or with me about your paper.
- 4) Citations to the primary text you analyze should be made in parentheses in your paper. For example, if you refer to a passage on page 3 of John Reeve, *A General Epistle from the Holy Spirit*, indicate this in the following manner at the end of your sentence, after the period: (Reeve, *Holy Spirit*, 3). Full citations to any work not assigned in class should be made in footnote or endnote form.

B. Topics

- 1) **Study a seventeenth-century printed English book.** Select one of the books in the MIT Rare Books collection that I have listed below. All eleven books are also available via the [Early English Books Online](#) (EEBO) website.

Once you have selected your book, please read it, or a portion of it that we mutually agree upon. Then write an essay in which you explain how this book adds to, modifies, or contradicts the understanding of seventeenth-century English politics, religion or natural philosophy that we have been developing in class. You must clearly state that understanding before you describe your book's relation to it. Along the way, you should address the following issues, not necessarily in this order:

- If the information is available, where and when was the book published, and who were the author and publisher?
- If the information is available, what is the book's format – folio, quarto, octavo, duodecimo, etc.? Why do you think the publisher chose this format?
- Does EEBO indicate that other editions of the book were published in the seventeenth century? If so, briefly browse these editions to determine if any changes were made to the book. If changes were made, offer some suggestions as to why.
- Who did the author and publisher have in mind as the intended reader of the book?
- Are there any annotations in the book that tell you something about how it was read?
- In no more than a page or two, summarize the content of the book.
- Does this book remind you of some of the themes from seventeenth-century books we have read together in class? If so, which ones, and how?

2) Study a seventeenth-century English newspaper, or set of excerpts from the English press of the period. You may choose to read and study one of the chapters in Joad Raymond, ed. *Making the News: An Anthology of the Newsbooks of Revolutionary England, 1641-1660* (The Windrush Press: Gloucestershire, 1993). Or you may select one of the periodicals of the period that is reproduced on the EEBO web site. For a list of these periodicals, consult http://eebo.chadwyck.com/about/ped_list.htm. If you choose an EEBO periodical, there must be at least six issues of the periodical available via EEBO.

Once you have selected your periodical or periodical excerpts from the Raymond volume, read it and then write an essay in which you explain how this material adds to, modifies, or contradicts the understanding of English politics, religion or natural philosophy that we have been developing in class. You must clearly state that understanding before you describe your book's relation to it. Along the way, you should address the following issues, not necessarily in this order:

- Who did the publisher have in mind as the intended reader of the periodical?
- In no more than a page or two, summarize the content of the periodical or the set of periodical excerpts.
- Does this book remind you of some of the themes from seventeenth-century books we have read together in class? If so, which ones, and how?

C. List of Relevant English Books, 1633-1666, in the MIT Rare Books Collection

- 1) Author unknown, *Mathematicall recreations, or, A collection of sundrie problemes extracted out of the ancient and moderne philosophers, as secrets in nature and experiments in arithmeticke, geometrie, cosmographie, horologographie, astronomie, navigation, musicke, opticks, architecture, staticke, machanicke, chimestrie, waterworkes, fireworks, &c. : not vulgarly made manifest untill this time, fit for schollers, students, and gentlemen that desire to know the philosophicall cause of many admirable conclusions : usefull for others to acuate and stirre them up to the search of further knowledge, and serviceable to all for many excellent things, both for pleasure and recreation / most of which were written first in Greeke and Latine, lately compiled in French, by Henry Van Etten, Gent., and now delivered in the English tongue, with the examinations, corrections and augmentations.* (1633)
- 2) Samuel Ward, *The wonders of the load-stone, or, The load-stone newly reduc't into a divine and morall use.* 1640.
- 3) John Wilkins, *Mathematicall magick, or, The wonders that may be performed by mechanicall geometry : in two books, concerning mechanicall powers, motions : being one of the most easie, pleasant, usefull, and yet most neglected part of mathematicks : not before treated of in this language.* 1648.
- 4) Jean Baptiste van Helmont, *Deliramenta catarrhi, or, The incongruities, impossibilities, and absurdities couched under the vulgar opinion of defluxions / the author, that great philosopher, by fire, Joh. Bapt. Van Helmont, &c. ; the translator and paraphrast Dr. Charleton, physician to the late king.* 1650.
- 5) Jean Baptiste van Helmont, *A ternary of paradoxes : the magnetick cure of wounds : nativity of tartar in wine : image of God in man / written originally by Joh. Bapt. Van Helmont, and translated, illustrated, and amplified by Walter Charleton, doctor in physick, and physician to the late King.* 1650.
- 6) Nicolas Hunt, *New recreations, or, A rare and exquisite invention, for the exercising of acute wits, and industrious dispositions : replenished with mysteries, secrets, and rarities, both arithmeticall and mathematicall : whereby any one of mean capacitie, may readily and infallibly finde out the Christian names of men and women, their titles of honour, ages, offices, trades or callings of life, places of birth, houses of residence appertaining to scholars, either in the universities of Oxford or Cambriage [sic], or the inns of court and chauncerie : with many other things both pleasant and profitable, newly added / by Nich. Hunt, Mr of Arts.* 1651.

- 7) Johann Rudolf Glauber, *A description of new philosophical furnaces, or, A new art of distilling : divided into five parts : whereunto is added a description of the tincture of gold, or the true aurum potabile : also, the first part of the mineral work : set forth and published for the sakes of them that are studious of the truth / by John Rudolph Glauber ; set forth in English by J.F. D.M.* 1651.
- 8) Thomas Fuller, *The Holy State.* 1652.
- 9) Meric Casaubon, *A treatise concerning enthusiasme : as it is an effect of nature, but is mistaken by many for either divine inspiration or diabolical possession / by Meric Casaubon, D. D.* 1654.
- 10) Inigo Jones, *The most notable antiquity of Great Britain, vulgarly called Stone-Heng, on Salisbury plain restored / by Inigo Jones, Esquire ...* 1655.
- 11) Joseph Wilson, *The vanity of humane inventions : held forth in a brief exercitation upon the controverted ceremonies, managed in certain queries : first drawn up for the satisfaction of some private friends, and now made publick for the good of others.* 1666.

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