I. Course Description (for Students):

Special Victims. Like us, early modern audiences needed a strong dose of dysfunctional families, obsessive-compulsive sexual predators, attractively distressed victims whose claims invite as much suspicion (and erotic thrill) as sympathy, and a voyeuristic, judgmental, and sentimental jury of their peers. Unlike us, these audiences turned not to NBC's "Law and Order: SVU," but to Samuel Richardson's monumental novel, *Clarissa; or, The History of a Young Lady*. We will be reading *Clarissa* over the course of the entire semester, reading that heroine's tragic/triumphant story in light of complementary stories of "special victims" by major women writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (including Elizabeth Cary, Marie-Madeleine de Lafayette, Mary Montagu, Françoise de Graffigny, and Mary Wollstonecraft).

II. Overview:

"Special Victims" is a new course that I developed in Spring 2009. The course is a senior seminar in a public city college. Students come from several different specializations within the English major–literature, creative writing, professional writing, and education. Seniors must take one of four seminars offered each academic year: though topic and professor matter to them, the time-slot and whether or not a first-choice seminar is still open are often determining factors in their enrollment. Finally, though students work hard, often with impressive results, most have limited tolerance for or experience in reading long (or old) novels quickly (or at all).

My difficulty in developing the seminar was that I wanted to teach Samuel Richardson's 1,500-page novel of 1747-1748, *Clarissa: Or, the History of a Young Lady*. This difficulty was also a strength, of course: I have discovered that students untrained in old or long or unfamiliar literary works–e.g., *Clarissa, Metamorphoses, Paradise Lost*, etc.–do well when they have the opportunity to work with a single text for an entire term.

I employed several strategies to make this challenging material accessible to my students:

*Abridged Novel.*

I used George Sherburn's abridged edition of *Clarissa* for seminar reading; next time around, I will use Toni Bowers and John Richetti's forthcoming Broadview edition, *Clarissa Abridged*. At the same time, I had students read Margaret Anne Doody and Florian Stuber's "Clarissa Censored," included unabridged letters in our weekly readings, and insisted that students go online to the
At mid-term, when students were familiar with both abridged and unabridged versions, as well as with Judith Pascoe's wonderful essay, "Before I Read Clarissa I was Nobody," I asked them what I should do in the future—use an abridged edition alongside complementary readings by women writers, as we were doing, or work our way through Richardson's novel on its own, 100 pages a week, as Pascoe advises and as many students were by then yearning to do? "If you had put that 1,500-page book in my hands the first day of class," a strong student who would ultimately read the unabridged novel snapped, "I'd have walked out the door without looking back." Her peers agreed, citing as well their unwillingness to forego the rich dialogue they were by then able to hear between Richardson and his female forebears.

"Law and Order: SVU"—Narrative Tradition and Popular Culture.
I was interested in setting Richardson's novel in the context not just of early eighteenth-century amatory fiction, but of other older traditions of female writing, writing that might illuminate the socio-cultural debates in play before and during Richardson's lifetime. Happily, this academic interest overlapped with the popular-culture angle I used to sell this course, which was to approach the stories we read as if they were several episodes in a season of "Law and Order: SVU" on TV. This strategy worked well, for two main reasons. First, the early modern stories I chose for seminar reading featured a range of "special victims" motifs—e.g., dispossessed women, wives without legal rights, women punished for their sexuality, female pawns of brokered courtships and failed marriages, victims of rape, women compelled to marry their seducers, objects of spousal abuse, prostitutes, women trapped by urban danger and/or poverty, martyrs, women in situations of forced migration, mothers robbed of their children, prisoners, etc. Second, the TV show—and twenty-first-century American society—raised issues relevant to a study of Richardson's great novel—e.g., legal and social regulations and irregularities, male and female sexuality, power (im)balances in interpersonal relationships, the coercive potential of romantic narratives and rhetoric, the politics of chastity, authority and self-authorship, privacy and publication, chosen communities of readers and writers, etc.

Critical Writing and Long-Term Projects.
Basic training. I began the semester by having students do a three-part assignment consisting of a brief critical essay, a focused peer-review, and a rigorous re-write in order to establish core critical skills and common textual ground. There was a boot-camp dimension to this exercise. By bringing basic skills (in reading, analysis, rough drafting, peer-editing for argument and ideas, rewriting/revising, and usage/formatting) to bear on Mary Davys' 1724 story, "The Reformed Coquet," I put students through their critical paces: right from they start, they knew exactly what I wanted from them as readers of and writers about eighteenth-century fiction. This clarity of mission enabled me later on to push them to far more ambitious and sophisticated heights than they might otherwise have imagined for themselves.

Long-term projects. Having previously taught at an institution where students develop semester-long independent projects in every course they take, I brought this independent-project experience to bear on my Clarissa seminar. I asked students to develop individual long-term projects that could take
whatever form or involve whatever Clarissa-related content they wished, so long as they followed a set of progressive steps, keyed to a common calendar, to realize their ambitions. Long-term projects might consist of critical essays on Clarissa alone or in comparison with other seminar texts; creative pieces that used Richardson's novel to develop new fiction, art, music, or film; or a curricular unit consisting of six weeks of lessons for an 11th-grade English class. (They had the option of a Broadview-style critical edition, but no one took it.)

The long-term project was introduced during the fifth week of classes, and included scaffolded assignments due every two weeks. During the first half of their projects, students produced three main documents. They began with a preliminary proposal that indicated their chosen text(s), theme(s), and structure (whether critical, creative, or curricular). They wrote a formal prospectus that described their topic in detail and provided an annotated bibliography of primary and secondary readings, including a list of six major pieces of unabridged primary text (i.e., complete episodes in Clarissa and/or stories by other writers). Finally, they got to work analyzing each of their six primary episodes/stories. This analytical writing was intentionally raw, disconnected, and extensive, often adding up to 20 pages or more. It was also invaluable: projects flourished or faltered in direct relation to how seriously students committed themselves to raw analysis of unabridged primary texts. I responded to students' writing via biweekly emails, tailoring the next assignment to each student's project and progress. I also met with students in individual conference after they handed in their prospectuses during the eighth week of classes. Students discussed their projects in seminar right before Spring Break.

Halfway through their projects, students split into separate critical, creative, and curricular camps. These camps became important loci of support when it came to in-class peer-editing and out-of-class peer-consultation. But students continued to follow a single calendar of deadlines for their final two assignments. During the twelfth week of classes, students delivered a complete rough draft of their project to me and to a peer. This draft became the basis both for formal peer-editing, a major event in the life of the seminar, and for an array of supporting documents, including an introduction, an abstract, an acknowledgments page, and a bibliography. In the penultimate week of classes, students handed in the final version of their long-term projects and presented their work in seminar.

Films.

There were four optional film-viewings during the term. The Fortunes and Misfortunes of Moll Flanders gave a visceral feel to seduction stories and eighteenth-century London: students loved it. Tom Jones was similarly entertaining; in addition, its ability to convey both the comedy of Fielding's characterizations and his narrator's exuberant control over every aspect of the story provided much food for comparative thought. Students had greater tolerance for the film version of Dangerous Liaisons than I had expected: they were interested in Richardson's Continental influence, liked seeing a later French version of the calculating rake and beautiful ingenue, and appreciated how strong and self-authorizing Clarissa was next to the movie's Madame de Tourval. The BBC dramatization of Clarissa was something I had hoped my students would enjoy at term's end, reveling in their expertise, but this was the one movie they refused to watch!
III. Thematic Reading Units:
The fifteen-week semester was divided into four major units. I kept students focused on seminar readings via professor's study-guides posted each week to the seminar's online Blackboard, students' postings to the seminar's Blackboard (during weeks when no project-writing was due), and/or "Welcome Worksheets" that students filled in at the start of each class (during weeks when project-writing was due).

Unit I (four weeks): Early Women.
This unit introduced students to early modern women, society, and writing in fact and fiction. It then explored *Clarissa* from the novel's beginning to the heroine's flight from home.

Week 1. We paired texts by Ben Jonson and Aemilia Lanyer, John Locke and Mary Astell, and the courts and Mary Wollstonecraft in order to explore issues relevant to *Clarissa*. These issues included land, property, marriage, and women; natural rights, civil government, and the hypocrisy of marital tyranny; legal definitions of coverture, elopement, and rape; and the persistent failure to establish women's civil existence. We also read Jon Meacham's recent *Newsweek* essay, "The Story of Power," on public power, domestic power, and the potentially transformative role of the "democratic" internet. These were relevant and interrelated topics inspired by the Obama inauguration that we returned to at the end of the course.

Week 2. We explored issues of chastity, desire, and story in writings from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, including conduct literature by Juan Luis Vives and James Fordyce, Marie-Madeleine de Lafayette's *The Princess of Cleves* (from the start of the novel to the moment of her mother's death), and Eliza Haywood's amatory novella, "The British Recluse."

Weeks 3-4. We read *Clarissa* (up through the retrospective accounts of her flight from home) on its own and in light of previous readings. By the third week, students were equipped to comment knowledgeably on such topics as family authority, male presumption in and out of the family, female alliances and correspondence, woman's vexed access to money and/or property, and the absence of private space. (A brief excerpt from Astell's *A Serious Proposal* underscored this final point, and also sparked a semester-long redefinition of "chastity" from virginity to something closer to autonomy or integrity.) By the fourth week, we were able to home in on rhetorical issues--e.g., seduction narratives, writing-to-the-moment, and testimony or witnessing--and to explore the balances of power and sympathy between Lovelace and Clarissa in the story and in readers' minds. (Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's epistolary record of her courtship, elopement, and early marriage further complicated any notions students may have had of a line between "reality" and writing.)
**Unit II (three weeks): Reader, I married my rapist.**

This unit highlighted the sub-genre of fiction in which women triumphantly marry the men who seduce, deceive, imprison, and/or rape (or try to rape) them. It made for fun if grisly reading—and provided a dramatic backdrop against which we evaluated both Lovelace's characterization and Clarissa's ultimately unshakeable rejection of marriage.

*Week 5.* We focused on Maria de Zayas' "Slave to Her Own Lover," Mary Davys' "The Reformed Coquet," excerpts from Richardson's *Pamela* (namely, the near-rapes and marriage negotiations), and John Hughes' portrait of "Emilia" in *Spectator* 302.

*Weeks 6-7.* We returned to *Clarissa* (to the rape and Lovelace's reports thereof). We focused first on the letters prior to the seduction at Mrs. Sinclair's. The combination of earlier readings, Lovelace's putative proposals, and Clarissa's desperation made her fleeting considerations of marriage stand out, and I emphasized these moments via a set of in-class readings (by William Hogarth, Samuel Johnson, Frances Burney, and others) on the dangers of eighteenth-century London to young women, particularly those without money, and especially in the face of predatory men. When we turned to the letters surrounding the rape, our focus again shifted to rhetorical considerations, especially as these involve Lovelace's machinations at Hampstead, his plot against the Howes, and his compulsive *post facto* reporting on the erosion of his own narrative authority.

**Unit III (five weeks): Free Speech?**

This unit sought to bring several different models of women who achieve autonomy or integrity through speech to bear on Clarissa in her final weeks and days.

*Week 8.* We explored a diverse group of texts, each of which features a woman who discovers her identity by speaking (or rhetorically guiding) that identity into being. We read the semi-autobiographical fourth story of Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptameron*, in which the victim of a would-be rapist forgoes the public speech that would condemn her for a private silence that eviscerates him. We examined Zayas' gothic tale, "Innocence Punished," from *The Disenchantments of Love*, in which a Griselde is drugged and raped by a stranger, discovered and punished by her husband and family, but finally frees herself by speaking into the void (which turns out to have a sympathetic female ear). We continued to read from Lafayette's *Princess* (from her mother's to her husband's deaths), in which the heroine gives voice to the passion that she has come to recognize as who she is, though she does so not to the lover who might save her but to the husband who cannot survive her revelation. And we explored Montagu's mid-life letters to Francesco Algarotti, in which she understands herself as a passion that must speak itself into being, though to no one's communicative benefit but her own.

*Week 9.* We focused on Elizabeth Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam*, which tells the tale
of a queen who chooses martyrdom over (ongoing) marriage—and yet we never know what it is that she dies for. Religion, chastity, honor, independence, speaking her mind, having a mind, having a self, agency: she dies a martyr to a principle that she never articulates but that clearly animates her.

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**Weeks 10-12 (spanning Spring Break).** We brought our work on *Clarissa* to a close. We began by exploring the novel from Clarissa's first free letter after her flight from Sinclair's all the way to her death. We then read the novel to its end, using the unabridged posthumous letters and will. The semester's readings highlighted Clarissa's control of the narrative that she uses to define herself to her god and her world: she uses her words as well as others', she aims not at concision but comprehension, she delegates editors to authorize texts now and in the future, and she maintains control over her story from the grave. Students were quick to appreciate that the self that emerges from this story is a speaking, writing, compiling, editing, authorizing, legal, propertied—and intriguingly Richardsonian—self.

**Unit IV (three weeks): Connectivity.**
Our final unit pulled away from *Clarissa*, using Richardson's novel to make sense of related stories from the mid- to late 1700s. As it happened, this led us to a meditation on the topic of “connectivity,” both in the eighteenth-century transatlantic world and online today, a meditation facilitated in part by brief excerpts from John and William McNeill's popular "Spinning the Worldwide Web, 1450-1800."

**Weeks 13-14.** We devoted our time to Françoise de Graffigny's *Letters from a Peruvian Woman*, a novel contemporary to *Clarissa* that features a female victim of male violence who makes (or is able to make) very different choices from Clarissa. It is also a story that at least putatively expands some of Richardson's concerns to the realms of transatlantic conquest and commerce, civil and human rights, and the "dark enlightenment" represented by rational community in an irrational world.

**Week 15.** We were supposed to have focused on Wollstonecraft's *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman*, which features a woman communicating an entirely emergent self and story to a future child whose self and story she may never know—a vivid example of subjectivity as an ongoing process of self-narration. But we were sidelined by William Deresiewicz's 2009 *Chronicle* essay, "The End of Solitude," a lament about the loss of interiority in an age of celebrity and connectivity. My students did a brilliant job of countering Deresiewicz's post-Romantic insistence on the solitary self with Richardson's and his female predecessors' understanding of self as inherently rhetorical, articulated, communicated, and published.
IV. Students' Long-Term Projects:
The student projects I received were impressive—without exception, every student's work exceeded what he or she had thought possible at the semester's start.

Several students produced strong critical essays. One used the rake figure in women's writings as a lens through which to examine Lovelace. Another looked at women, abuse, and empowerment in pre-gothic writings by Zayas and Richardson. A third took Astell's (and Woolf's) idea of a room of one's own and used it to evaluate Clarissa's physical, psychic, and rhetorical spaces.

A few students produced art-work based on Clarissa. One of the strongest projects I received used Hogarth as inspiration to reduce the novel to six major scenes, each of which the student illustrated by means of drawing, paint, and collage, creating gorgeous, three-dimensional, and thought-provoking visual representations of the scenes depicted. Each plate was accompanied by a quote from the text and a commentary by the student about her artistic interpretation of the depicted episode. A critical introduction describing the origins and ambitions of the project prefaced the plates. Another student, a wise-cracking, tough, and talented young man, used a similar structure for his project, though with very different results. His somber pencil-and-paper drawings stopped and silenced the novel, opening key moments to intense, empathic scrutiny. His portrayal of the rape—of Clarissa's inverted and foregounded half-naked body, beautiful and defenseless, of Lovelace's grim or sickened rolling back of his shirt-sleeves, and of a shriveled Sinclair praying or cursing over Clarissa's hand in hers—was stunning.

Several students wrote fiction based on Clarissa. One inventive project provided the transcript of a radio talk-show moderated by a host named Clarissa, a woman repeatedly harangued by calls from a Lovelacean playboy and interrupted by an ineffectual caller who was half Anna Howe and half an English professor (!). The transcript was true to life by design: its goal was to dramatize the hyper-social and rhetorically frantic nature of Richardson's novel by conflating it with the mad tempo of a call-in show. Another notable project was a short story entitled "Lalita," which set Richardson's eighteenth-century novel in a contemporary and socially reactionary Calcutta, and had the whole thing reported as a second-hand story by an urbane young American narrator. The introductory essay explained that the student had attempted to combine Richardson, Rabindranath Tagore, and Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay in order to establish a continuity between women's experiences in older Europe and modern India, wherever women were or are denied the self-authorizing possibility of education.

Finally, an aspiring teacher developed an eleventh-grade curriculum consisting of seven weeks of lessons devoted to Richardson's Clarissa. After interviewing a practicing high-school English teacher, she produced a detailed sequence of lesson-plans, complete with unabridged primary texts, discussion questions, group activities, vocabulary lists, quizzes, and paper topics. She prefaced her work with an introductory essay in which she explained the genesis, structure, and ambitions of her curriculum to a prospective principal/employer.

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V. Adaptability:

Topics. "Special Victims" has roots in other courses I have taught, including "The Early Novel," "Chastity, Desire, and Eighteenth-Century Literature," and especially "Early Modern Women Writers, 1500-1800," a year-long seminar on European, English, and eventually American women writers that brought home to me in particular and gendered ways Margaret Anne Doody's argument about the long history of prose fiction. My *Clarissa* seminar could always branch back out again to those courses.

Methodology. "Special Victims" relied on a transferable set of pedagogical strategies designed to help non-specialist students enter into and make sense of complex older texts. These strategies included: (a) spreading a difficult text across an entire semester; (b) weaving in important or accessible texts from related traditions (past and present) to serve as lens-texts, focusing students' attention and enriching their primary reading; (c) combining critical basic training up front with an insistence of high-level achievement by term's end; and (d) providing a clear sequence of interim assignments to ensure steady progress and strong success in long-term projects. Possibly because I got my first training as an instructor in the Peace Corps and as a literacy volunteer, and because I still volunteer as a poetry-teacher at a local elementary school, I favor concrete, multi-sensory, scaffolded techniques that work, even when teaching upper-level or graduate students. In my experience, it is a rare student (or instructor) who does not benefit from such practical grounding.

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VI. Sample Documents (below):

Syllabus

Assignment for the Long-Term Project

Supplementary Reading List

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Special Victims
Like us, early modern audiences needed a strong dose of dysfunctional families, obsessive-compulsive sexual predators, attractively distressed victims whose claims invite as much suspicion (and erotic thrill) as sympathy, and a voyeuristic, judgmental, and sentimental jury of their peers. Unlike us, these audiences turned not to NBC's "Law and Order: SVU," but to Samuel Richardson's monumental novel, Clarissa, or The History of a Young Lady. We will be reading Clarissa over the course of the entire semester, reading that heroine's tragic/triumphant story in light of complementary stories of "special victims" by major women writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (including Elizabeth Cary, Marie-Madeleine de Lafayette, Mary Montagu, Françoise de Graffigny, and Mary Wollstonecraft).

Course Objectives
1. To take on early modern stories that explore power, violence, sexuality, silence, speech, and authority in extreme, riveting, and shattering ways that still have the power to entertain and unsettle and inspire us today.
2. To consolidate the various critical skills that students have developed as English majors—e.g., reading unfamiliar texts in engaged and meaningful ways, developing the crucial powers of textual analysis and persuasive argumentation, using critical sources intelligently (to join an ongoing discussion) and responsibly (to avoid the intellectual dishonesty that is plagiarism), and bringing all the resources of their minds and hearts and imaginations to bear on their own intellectual and creative success.
3. To use these skills, as well as the confidence that these skills brings to a senior student of literature, to develop a semester-long project that allows for ongoing reading and reflection, intellectual and writerly experimentation, and the kind of serious revising that leads to the original and important discoveries characteristic of clear, forceful, mature writing.
4. To build the kind of classroom community that a senior seminar allows, one in which members study texts with enthusiasm, explore ideas with curiosity, lead discussions, share work and assist in peer-reviews, risk creative experimentation, and keep an eye on how their own minds and projects are developing over time.

Course Books
Required texts (at the college bookstore and on reserve at the library):
Samuel Richardson, Clarissa: Or, the History of a Young Lady, ed. George Sherburn (Cengage 1962), to be replaced by Clarissa Abridged, ed. Toni Bowers and John Richetti (Broadview 2010)
Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Selected Letters, ed. Isobel Grundy (Penguin 1997)
Elizabeth Cary, The Tragedy of Mariam, the Fair Queen of Jewry, ed. Stephanie Hodgson-Wright (Broadview 2000)
Françoise De Graffigny, Letters from a Peruvian Woman, tr. David Kornacker (MLA 1993)
Mary Wollstonecraft, Maria, or the Wrongs of Woman, ed. William Godwin (Dover 2005)

Unabridged first-edition facsimile of Clarissa online (through library-database):

Unabridged third edition of Clarissa on reserve at the library:
Samuel Richardson, Clarissa: Or, the History of a Young Lady, ed. Angus Ross (Penguin 1986)

Schedule of Readings

Week 1: Patriarchy, Property, Law, Marriage, and Women / Introduction

Ben Jonson's "To Penshurst" and Aemilia Lanyer's "The Description of Cooke-ham" (1611) from John Locke's Two Treatises of Government (1690) and Mary Astell's Some Reflections on Marriage (1700) from The Law's Resolutions of Women's Rights (1632) and Mary Wollstonecraft's A Vindication of the Rights of Women (1792)

Jon Meacham, "The Story of Power" (Newsweek 1/5/09)

Log onto Blackboard within 24 hours of first class
Hand-outs: Essay #1 (on Mary Davys' "The Reformed Coquet"); Engaged Reading

Week 2: "Love taught me a cunning which before I was a stranger to" / Chastity and Desire

Conduct writing on proper femininity from Juan Vives (1523) to James Fordyce (1767)
William Hogarth's Before and After (1736)
Eliza Haywood's "The British Recluse" (1724)
from Marie-Madeleine de Lafayette's The Princesse de Cleves (to the mother's death) (1678)

Critical posting on seminar reading due online by 9 p.m. the night before class
Hand-outs: Raw Writing (Analysis); Critical Paragraphs; Rough Drafting; Usage/Formatting

Week 3: "It was out of my power" / No Room of Her Own

Home alone: from Samuel Richardson's 1747-48 Clarissa (to p.75 + unabridged opening letters and will) from Mary Astell's A Serious Proposal for the Ladies (1694)

Welcome worksheet: Richardson and Astell
Essay #1 due in class
After-class viewing of David Attwood's 1996 "The Fortunes and Misfortunes of Moll Flanders"

Week 4: "They look'd upon me as a little Romantic" / Romantic Plotting and Its Ends

Flight: from Richardson's Clarissa (to p.148)
from Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's Selected Letters (courtship and early marriage)

Welcome worksheet: Richardson and Montagu
Peer-edit of an anonymous student's first essay due for discussion in class
Hand-outs: Essay #1 Re-write; Editing for Argument/Ideas; Re-writing and Revising
Week 5: "My dear, dear–Master . . .!" / Marrying Your Rapist

Maria de Zayas' "Slave to Her Own Lover" (1647)
Mary Davys' "The Reformed Coquet" (1724)
from Samuel Richardson's Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded (1740)
John Hughes' "Emilia," Spectator 302 (1712)

Welcome Worksheet: Zayas, Davys, Richardson, Hughes
Essay #1 Re-write due in class
In-class discussion of Long-Term Project; email professor about LTP within 48 hours
Hand-outs: Long-Term Project; Comparisons

Week 6: "I went. Because I could not help myself, I went." / Special Victims

Drama queens: from Clarissa (to p.251 + unabridged Howe affair)

William Hogarth's "The Harlot's Progress" (1732)
Samuel Johnson's "Misella," Rambler #170-71 (1751)
from Frances Burney's Evelina: Vauxhill and Marylebone Gardens (1778)
from Niccolo Machiavelli's The Prince (1513)
from Book IX of John Milton's Paradise Lost (1668)

Welcome worksheet: Richardson
LTP proposal (chosen form, topic, and texts) due in class

Week 7: "I am the devil" / Design

The end of the affair: from Clarissa (to p.338 + Lovelace's unabridged report on what happened)

Critical or creative posting on seminar reading due online by 9 p.m. the night before class
After-class viewing of Tony Richardson's 1963 "Tom Jones"

Week 8: "I have the strength to keep silent about something that I think I ought not to reveal" / Free Agency

Marguerite de Navarre's "Story 4" from The Heptameron (pub. 1558)
Maria de Zayas' "Innocence Punished" (1647)
from Lafayette's Princesse de Cleves (to the husband's death) (1678)
Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters to Francesco Algarotti (1730s)

Welcome worksheet: Navarre, Zayas, Lafayette, Montagu
LTP prospectus (description, bibliography, and identification of six primary episodes) due in class
Mandatory individual conferences to discuss LTP prospectus and six primary episodes
Week 9: "Unbridled speech is Mariam's worst disgrace, And will endanger her" / Martyrdom

Elizabeth Cary, Lady Falkland's *The Tragedy of Mariam, Fair Queen of Jewry* (1613)
from Anne Askew's *Examinations* (1546)
from John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments (Book of Martyrs)* (1563)

Critical or creative posting on seminar reading due online by 9 p.m. the night before class

Week 10: "God forbid that the man who reads this with dry Eyes should be alone with my Daughter" / Death

Ashes to ashes: from *Clarissa* (to p.474)

Welcome worksheet: Richardson
Raw analysis of six major episodes of unabridged primary text due in class; discussion of LTPs
After-class viewing of Stephen Frears' 1988 "Dangerous Liaisons"

Week 11: Spring Break

Week 12: "I was obliged to stop at the words,'That she was nobody's'" / Last Words

Herstory: from *Clarissa* (to p.517 + unabridged posthumous letters and will)

Welcome worksheet: Richardson
Complete rough draft of LTP due in class
Hand-out: Editing for Paragraphs/Analysis

Week 13: "Oh heavens above, to what class am I to assign myself?" / No Country for Young Women

Letters I-XVII of Françoise de Graffigny's *Letters from a Peruvian Woman* (1747)

Welcome worksheet: Graffigny
LTP writing due in class: project-introduction; abstract; acknowledgments; bibliography
Edit of peer's LTP due for discussion in class

Week 14: "All that can compensate you for the ravages of love" / A Serious Proposal

Letters XVIII-XLI of Graffigny's *Letters from a Peruvian Woman*

Welcome worksheet: Graffigny
Long-term projects due in class: presentations
After-class viewing of Robert Bierman's 1991 "Clarissa"

Week 15: "When you have everything before you, you, who know me so well, will not think me wrong" / Connectivity

Mary Wollstonecraft, *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman* (1798)
or
William Deresiewicz, "The End of Solitude" (CHE 1/30/09)
Long-Term Project on Clarissa

Your long-term project will take one of four forms: (1) a long critical essay on Richardson's Clarissa that focuses on a single aspect of the entire work or that compares Clarissa and one or more related literary works; or (2) a critical edition of Clarissa that consists of a full introduction, selected episodes, and a well-presented set of related literary, social, and historical texts; or (3) a creative project based on Clarissa that consists of poems, a story or stories, and/or a play, and is prefaced by a fully developed critical introduction; or (4) a high school curriculum that consists of six weeks of lesson plans devoted to Clarissa, and is prefaced by an introduction explaining your curriculum to a prospective principal or school committee. Your project will be the culmination of more than two months of continuous reading, thinking, and writing about your chosen texts and themes. The goal here is to use your own interests and passions, combined with sustained hard work and a patient willingness repeatedly to rethink and revise your ideas and project, to arrive at a final product that reflects the best work you are capable of producing as an English major at this college.

Overview. All projects will be related to Richardson's Clarissa. Regardless of their different structures, moreover, all projects will begin with the same kind of work. You will begin right away by emailing me your ideas so I can help to focus and expand your thinking. Then you will hand in a proposal that identifies your chosen structure, topic, and text(s). After you have had time to read, write, and think, you will hand in a formal prospectus in which you describe your project in detail, provide an annotated bibliography of primary and/or secondary texts, and identify six major episodes of unabridged primary text (from Clarissa alone or including Clarissa and one or more related stories). Just before Spring Break, you will submit extensive analyses of each of your six major episodes: this important "raw writing" is the foundation upon which you will build your final project. During and after Spring Break, students will follow their separate critical, editorial, creative, or curricular paths, though they will do so according to a common timetable. A complete draft of your project is due both to me and to a designated peer right after Spring Break. You will supplement your draft with an introduction, an abstract, an acknowledgments page, and a bibliography; you will also read and edit your peer's draft carefully, reporting in detail on his or her work in class. A final version of your long-term project is due in seminar a week before our final class. You will be expected to present your project to the seminar at that meeting.

To help you decide what you want to do for your long-term project (LTP), here are several categories of thought for your consideration. Feel free to add your own:

Major themes in Clarissa. Though there are many themes to discuss in Clarissa, some familiar ones that we have discussed or will soon in seminar include:

1. Families. Think about members, relationships, roles (e.g., father/figures, mother/figures, siblings, relatives, "friends"), and power. Think also about the options for communal life that exist apart from family—for men, women, elders, young people, "quality," workers? What are the benefits and costs of family life? of life in an alternative family of fellows, friends, readers? How well do families or their alternatives mediate the demands of the body? of the mind and spirit?

2. Material worlds. Pay attention to bodies, clothes, personal space, furniture, "closets," rooms, coffins, houses, lodgings, estates, neighborhoods, cities. In what kinds of physical space do characters exist, and how do these spaces limit or expand their movement, authority, voice, influence?

3. Rakes or libertine figures. What freedoms—of class, money, authority, power—does a libertine have, and what do these freedoms have to do with his sexuality, needs, interests, vulnerabilities? What does he ultimately want? Think about the nature and timing of your responses to Lovelace: how and why and when do you find him attractive or pathetic or criminal (or not)? How does he compare to some of the sexually or narratively inventive women you know from our reading?
4. **Violence.** What kinds of verbal, physical, sexual, emotional, and/or social violence do you find in the various texts you are reading? How do you respond to this violence—are you on the side of the perpetrator or the victim? Do not laugh: "Special Victims SVU" is literally all about violence—if an episode does not satisfy our need for narrative and emotional violence and extremism, do we not devalue it?

5. **Women without men.** In what ways can women exist without men in our stories? Clarissa is a "paragon," unique, exceptional, alone, desolate. So are (in various stories) saints, wives, beauties, mistresses, prostitutes, etc. Some women are left alone, while others resist or refuse male association—with what costs or benefits? Why might Richardson, a male writer in a Protestant country committed to marriage, be interested in an emphatically single woman?

6. **Related genres.** Think of poetry, drama, engraving, painting, opera, music, film, video. How do these genres show up in our stories? How have some of them been used in the past to comment on or interpret Richardson's novel? How might they be deployed now, in the twenty-first century to do the same?

7. **Writing, letters, papers, documents.** Written documents play a major role in *Clarissa*, from the first letter and early prominence of the grandfather's will to the concerted efforts of Clarissa and her friends to collect letters and leave a will that will bring Clarissa's and Richardson's stories to a close. How and why are written forms—e.g., wills, letters that "write to the moment," mad papers, etc.—foregrounded? Think too about how Clarissa pens herself into being via letters to others: what relevance does her epistolary subjectivity have for us in the age of email, Facebook, and Twitter?

8. **Clarissa's reception.** Richardson famously kept writing and rewriting *Clarissa*, responding to readers before, during, and after the novel's multiple publications. We have his editions, annotations, and abstractions; we have his correspondents' alternative episodes and endings; we have responsive novels by men and women in the second half of the eighteenth century; we have lines of influence (such as *Clarissa*, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, and Michael Cunningham's *The Hours*, to cite one example). What can we learn about the novel, its world, or its legacy—and what are we to make of the tension between Richardson's efforts to seal his novel and others' success in opening it up?

9. **Nation and empire.** What hints does the novel give that the "mighty contest" between Richardson's "lord" and "belle"—to quote Pope's 1714 *The Rape of the Lock*, a tantalizing antecedent to *Clarissa*—has meaning in the greater realms of social relations, commerce, legal institutions, global trade and war, empire? What contemporary arguments does the novel enter into and what grounds if any does it seek to transform?

**Related texts by women writers.** Again, there are innumerable possibilities here, but some important ones that we will discuss in seminar include:

1. Richardson's *Pamela*. What is at stake in marrying or not marrying the novel's rapacious "hero," for starters?
2. Mary Astell (using the excerpts you have from *Some Reflections on Marriage* and *A Serious Proposal*). What kind of "room of one's own" does she imagine, and why? How does her seminary function as a response to existing institutions of marriage and government?
3. Eliza Haywood ("The British Recluse"). Arguably, Haywood's stories are fueled by female desire, while Richardson's are fueled by female virtue. How do these writers define desire and virtue, for women, for men, and what is at stake in their different emphases? Are they so different?
4. Madame de Lafayette's *The Princesse de Cleves*. What is the difference between inner and outer passion? between morality and reputation? How do the worlds of the two novels compare—Lafayette's historically nostalgic and relentlessly public world of court versus Richardson's reduction of the space to a coffin which revolutionizes the worlds around it?
5. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters. Women, in and out of association with men, writing their lives via letters.
6. Maria de Zayas ("Slave to her Own Lover" and "Innocence Punished"). Women with and without men, ending up with women or alone. Pre-gothic terror and survival.
8. Elizabeth Cary (The Tragedy of Mariam). What if a woman defies her own husband? On what grounds might she do so? What if she does so on no grounds but her own authority?
9. Françoise de Graffigny's Letters from a Peruvian Woman. What happens when a culture is "forced" and a female survivor "seduced"? Women, men, romance, life-stories, and a room of one's own in a tale of colonial critique and/or feminist protest. The larger implications of rape and the sexual sub-text of political power.
10. Wollstonecraft's Maria. Escaping from man-made traps (marriage and madhouses) with costs/losses and gains/promises. Also, motherhood: this special victim's life-story is for her daughter.

Project structures:
1. A long critical essay that explores a single topic or set of episodes from Clarissa, or a long critical essay that compares some aspect of Clarissa with one or more related literary works, whether earlier, contemporary, or later. In either case, the goal here is to explore some major episodes and stories fully and in depth, to figure out how they combine to create larger meanings in the text(s) and their worlds, and to develop an original argument (possibly in the context of ongoing critical discussion) that speaks to your interests and abilities as a student of literature. Professional-writing students may want to explore contemporary reviews of Richardson's novels and/or how the novel and its heirs have been reviewed in various places and at various times.
2. A critical edition that focuses on a major episode or set of episodes from Clarissa, providing notes and commentary, complementary texts (whether literary, social, and/or historical), head-notes, and a critical introduction that justifies and explains the present edition and its choice of primary materials.
3. A creative project that could take one of several different forms. All creative projects must eventually be prefaced by a five-page critical introduction that explains the origins, goals, and achievements of the project to an outside audience. All should also be familiar with and report on at least one existing model of a "creative imitation" of Richardson's Clarissa. Possible creative options include:
   a. An original short story or play or volume of poems that derives from or engages in witty, serious, and/or passionate ways with Richardson's novel, on its own or in combination with one or more early text(s). Such creative work should modernize, re-write, re-imagine, or freely alter aspects of the older text, adapting it to respond to your own artistic needs and concerns.
   b. A 60-minute screenplay designed for TV or film or You Tube that is based on some aspect of Richardson's novel, ideally accompanied by a performance or dvd/video. If you wish, this option could consist of an "SVU" episode that brings together Clarissa and contemporary life in NYC.
   c. A 60-minute opera or musical or musical show (like "Glee") based on some aspect of the novel, providing script and sheet-music as appropriate and ideally accompanied by a performance or dvd/video.
   d. A 60-minute PBS-style "Point of View" documentary that uses some aspect of Clarissa to explore twenty-first-century NYC life from a sociological or political point of view. For example, the documentary might focus on young women and social pressures to have sex or not, to have children or not, to marry or not, to pursue an education or career or not, etc. The video should include "(wo)man on the street" interviews, an office-interview with a sociologist or other expert, and the director's own comments on the relevance of Clarissa to life today.
   e. Art work. A complete portfolio of illustrations, drawn or painted or embroidered or whatever, properly matted and presented, portraying at least six major scenes from Clarissa. Alternatively, a single major work--e.g., a full-scale oil painting or similarly ambitious work of art--would also be acceptable.
4. Six weeks of lesson plans for a unit of 11th-grade English instruction of Richardson's novel, with or without one or more related texts. Lesson plans should include overall, weekly, and daily learning goals and strategies, materials (including all unabridged primary texts taught), procedures, adaptations, discussion questions, evaluations, suggested readings, online links, vocabulary, and standards. Each project should be compiled in a large three-ring binder, and eventually include a five-page introduction explaining the enclosed curriculum's origins, goals, and
potential to a principal or school committee.

**Deadlines (subject to revision):**

*Week 5:* Within 48 hours of seminar, students send me an **email** explaining what they want to do for their long-term projects. Feel free to think aloud, ask questions, speculate on texts, themes, structure. I will respond to emails as I receive them.

*Week 6:* Students hand in a preliminary LTP **proposal** that clearly identifies their chosen structure, topic, and text(s).

*Week 8:* (a) Before seminar, students email me a formal LTP **prospectus** (as an ms-word attachment). The prospectus should include one or two paragraphs of detailed project-description, an annotated bibliography describing primary and secondary texts, and a list of six major episodes of unabridged primary text (from *Clarissa* alone or including *Clarissa* and one or more related stories). Identify all episodes by edition and page-numbers, and briefly summarize each. (b) After seminar, students meet with me in **individual conference** to discuss Essay #1, the LTP prospectus, and the six primary episodes that will form the basis of the LTP.

*Week 10:* Students hand in the many pages of **analytical writing** that they accumulated over two weeks of intensive engaged reading and raw writing. This analytical writing is pivotal: detailed analysis of primary texts is the single most important step in developing a first-class LTP. Do not try to link your six separate pieces of raw writing, but when you are done do write a single introductory paragraph in which you put the pieces in logical order and explain what it is you are sending me.

*Week 12:* Before seminar, students email me a **complete draft** of the LTP (as an ms-word attachment). Drafts are distributed to peer-editors in class.

*Week 13:* Before seminar, students email me and a peer-editor the following items: an **acknowledgments page**, an **abstract**, a **five-page introduction** to the LTP, and a complete and correct "Works Cited" page. For seminar, students use the hand-out on **peer-editing** to comment in detail on an assigned peer-draft.

*Week 14:* In seminar, students hand in the **final version** of the LTP and orally present their work to their peers.

**Notes:**

1. Consider reading ahead of the class schedule (on the syllabus), so that you finish *Clarissa* (and whatever other text(s) you may be reading) by the start of Spring Break.

2. There is no need to consult secondary sources (online or off) for this project. You can do a superb job working only with primary texts—and no amount of secondary reading will make up for poor primary work. That said, if you wish to bring critical sources to bear on your project, as anyone considering a writing contest or graduate school might do, see the attached "Supplementary Reading List" and/or talk to me. I can point you in particular directions and help you incorporate critical or theoretical reading into your work.

3. Your long-term projects will be **long**—roughly 20+ pages on average for literary essays and stories. (Curriculums will be longer.) *Do not get fixated on or freaked out by page-numbers!* I will walk you through your projects step by step. You will produce more pages at each step than you can possibly use in your final project, which is fine. Aim to include everything you want to say, plus the kitchen sink (to use an expression), in your Week 12 rough draft: you will have a lot of material by then, which will make trimming down to a strong and tight final paper relatively easy and rewarding.
Supplementary Reading List

From time to time, we will supplement our seminar readings with an essay, chapter, or (most often) brief excerpt from the critical works listed below. Secondary reading is not required for your projects, but if you wish to situate your project in relation to contemporary criticism, you may. This highly selective list is keyed to seminar weeks:

Week 1 (women and institutions–Jonson, Lanyer, Locke, Astell, Wollstonecraft):

Week 2 (chastity and desire–Haywood and Lafayette):

Week 3 (domestic space–Richardson and Astell):
Judith Moore. "Is Clarissa a Woman's Narrative?" Approaches to Teaching the Novels of Samuel Richardson. Ed. Lisa Zunshine and Jocelyn Harris. MLA, 2006. 129-33.

Week 4 (flight–Richardson and Montagu):

Week 5 (marrying your rapist–Zayas, Davys, Richardson, and Hughes):

Week 6 (libertines and drama queens–Richardson):
Week 7 (rape–Richardson):

Week 8 (women, agency, and speech/silence–Navarre, Zayas, Lafayette, Montagu):

Week 9 (chastity and martyrdom–Cary):

Week 10 (holy dying–Richardson):

Week 12 (self-authorization–Richardson):
James How. "*Clarissa's* Cyberspace: Imaginations of Epistolary Space in Richardson's *Clarissa.*" *Epistolary Spaces: English Letter-Writing from the Foundation of the Post Office to Richardson's Clarissa.* Ashgate, 2003. 166-95.

Week 13 (world-wide web–Graffigny):

Week 14 (friendship, feminism, and film–Graffigny):
**Week 15 (legacies):**


Jocelyn Harris. "Clarissa Lives! Reading Richardson through Rewritings." Zunshine and Harris. 140-46.

**General resources:**

*OED Online.* [http://www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com)

*The Encyclopedia of Diderot and d'Alembert: Collaborative Translation Project.* [http://quod.lib.umich.edu/d/did/](http://quod.lib.umich.edu/d/did/)


**Major critical collections on Richardson and/or Clarissa not listed above:**


**Contemporary resources not on syllabus:**


**Related traditions and legacies not on syllabus:**