LITERATURE

Dangerous Liaisons? C18th Literature of Sense, Sensibility and Decadence
Denyse Straker MA PGCHE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6 weeks</th>
<th>3, 10, 17, 24, 31 October; 7 November</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursdays</td>
<td>10.30 – 12.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course code: 19TON372</td>
<td>Course fee: £93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This course explores the cult of sensibility in the C18th: a time of heightened emotions and romantic yearnings. We study work by Richardson, Goethe, Walpole and Laclos’ tale of sexual manipulation in pre-revolutionary France, and will conclude with Austen’s critique of sentimental literature, Sense and Sensibility.

The cult of sensibility may be seen as a transitional phase in literature of the mid to late eighteenth century between the Age of Enlightenment and the beginnings of Romanticism. With the increase in women’s literacy, there developed a market for the literature of ‘feeling’ and the epistolary novel was the popular way to tell a story through the medium of letters. There was also the rise of the Gothic novel, made popular by Horace Walpole’s Castle of Otranto, full of terror, pathos and imaginative ghostly happenings. Many of the novels of the time explore the tension between reason and passion culminating in the era of Romanticism at the turn of the century.

This short course looks at some of the key texts of the second half of the eighteenth century including a study of the scandalous French novel, Dangerous Liaisons by Pierre Choderlos de Laclos which exposes the corruption and boredom of the French aristocracy as it plays games of sex, love and deceit. We conclude the course with Jane Austen’s Sense and Sensibility (written in the eighteenth century in epistolary form but published in the nineteenth) which points out the dangers of excessive emotion and critiques the clichés of the sentimental novel.

Required reading in weekly order

- **Week 1:** Introduction with extracts from Samuel Richardson’s Pamela
- **Week 2:** Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, The Sorrows of Young Werther
- **Week 3:** Horace Walpole, The Castle of Otranto
- **Week 4:** Choderlos de Laclos, Dangerous Liaisons
- **Week 5:** Choderlos de Laclos, Dangerous Liaisons
- **Week 6:** Jane Austen, Sense and Sensibility
**Additional information**

- No prior knowledge is required. The course is suitable for beginners.
- This course allows you to spend time exploring a subject for interest, among like-minded people, without formal assessment.
- There will be discussion activities during the course.

**Intended learning outcomes**

By the end of the course students will be able to have:

- an understanding of the forces that shaped eighteenth century fiction.
- an appreciation of how the novel became an important vehicle for social commentary and reflected ideas on morality, gender and love in the eighteenth century.
- improved skills in critical analysis and the ability to convey ideas in general discussion.
- the ability to compare literary techniques and subject matter and justify comparisons and opinions with well-reasoned arguments.

**About the tutor**

Denyse Straker studied for her BA through the University of Kent’s part-time programme at the Tonbridge Centre. She went on to do a research MA on depictions of child abuse in literature at the Kent’s School of European Culture and Languages in Canterbury. She has many years’ experience of teaching Comparative Literature and English Literature on Kent’s undergraduate programmes, as well as a wide range of topics on the short course programme at Tonbridge. She is particularly interested in American Literature and Women’s Studies as well as specialising in Travel Literature.
Short Course Programme
General information, terms & conditions

How to book a place
These courses are usually very popular so you are advised to apply as soon as possible. Places cannot be held without payment of the course fee.
- **Online Booking is preferred.** Please visit [www.kent.ac.uk/tonbridge](http://www.kent.ac.uk/tonbridge)
- **By post** to us at the address below, using the application form in the programme booklet. Please note that you will not receive an acknowledgment of your paper application; your payment will usually be processed when the course becomes financially viable, otherwise we will notify you of cancellation approximately seven days prior to the course. A paper application affirms acceptance of our terms & conditions.

Course cancellation
As these short courses are self-financing, each course can only proceed if there are sufficient enrolments. Therefore, if a course is cancelled due to insufficient enrolments we aim to notify applicants approximately one week before the course start date; if there is no suitable alternative course, we will refund the appropriate course fee in full. The University of Kent reserves the right to cancel a course for this or any other reason in which case the relevant course fee will be refunded in full. We advise that you do not buy books or other course materials until that particular course is confirmed as taking place: please contact us if you are unsure.

If you find it necessary to cancel your place on a course, please let us know as soon as possible. Refund requests, including the reason, should be made by email or in writing to us at the address below. We reserve the right to retain all or part of the course fee if you request a refund after 14 days of your online booking being made or paper application being received. Discretionary, partial refunds may be made, after the deduction of an administrative handling fee as follows:
- a course fee of up to and including £42 will incur an administrative handling fee of £10.00
- a course fee of £43 and over will incur an administrative handling fee of £12.50.

The University reserves the right to:
- a) exclude any student if the student’s presence is making it difficult for the class to function properly
- b) cancel or amend the length of any course if the circumstances so warrant.

Neither the University of Kent, nor its staff, can be held responsible for any damage, loss or injury, however sustained, suffered by participants attending courses. Insurance is the student’s responsibility.

University Centre Tonbridge
For details of our other courses, news, events and location visit [www.kent.ac.uk/tonbridge](http://www.kent.ac.uk/tonbridge).
- Parking. There is plenty of public pay and display car parking locally, but please note that only selected car parks permit parking in excess of four hours; detailed information is available from [www.tmbc.gov.uk](http://www.tmbc.gov.uk). No parking is available here on site.
- Refreshments are not provided; food and drink can be purchased from any of the nearby café outlets - we are closely situated to the High Street and town centre. A hot drink vending machine is usually available on the ground floor of this building.

Mailing List and data protection
Those attending our courses are automatically added to our database and kept informed about new courses. This information is not released to outside organisations. Please write to us if you do not wish your details to be kept on our database.

Please contact us if you have any queries or would like to register your email address to receive our course information updates. We look forward to welcoming you here soon.

University of Kent Tonbridge Centre
Avebury Avenue
Tonbridge TN9 1TG

01732 352316
[www.kent.ac.uk/tonbridge](http://www.kent.ac.uk/tonbridge) tonbridgeadmin@kent.ac.uk facebook.com/tonbridgecentre