

Course number and section: ENGL 434A-101

Course Topic: Special Topics in 18th-Century Literature: Writing (Black) Lives in the Eighteenth Century

Credits: 3

Term: 2

Instructor: Alison Conway

### **Course Description**

In this course, we'll consider how eighteenth-century authors represented personhood and life stories in poetry, fiction, and letters. We'll consider the tropes of romance, the emergent realist novel and the rise of biography and the memoir, as well as the lyric subject of poetry. We will take as our central questions: How were ideas of personhood shaped by the slave trade between Europe, West Africa, and the North American colonies? How were Black authors able to navigate dominant culture and its narratives to tell their stories of enslavement and manumission? How did understandings of gender intersect with those of race in the works of both white and Black writers? What can we learn about our present understandings of Anglo-American selfhood from this historical moment?

### **Reading List**

Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (Oxford World Classics)

Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey* (Oxford World Classics)

*Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho* (Broadview)

Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (Broadview)

Anonymous, *The Woman of Colour* (Broadview)

Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave* (Penguin)

And selected theory readings, posted on Canvas.

