

Fall 2019

Midwest American Society for Eighteenth- Century Studies

To join the MWASECS
mailing list, please contact
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MWASECS 2018, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Many thanks to everyone who attended the most recent MWASECS conference, which was held October 11-13, 2018, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Forty-nine scholars from sixteen states gathered to discuss the theme “Eighteenth-Century Frontiers.” Sharing innovative research from disciplines that included history, art, music, literary studies, theatre, religion, and philosophy, participants explored the myriad ways in which the liminal space of the “frontier” was mapped, challenged, and transcended during the long eighteenth century. Numerous presentations served to expand traditional understandings of the field, or “frontier” of eighteenth-century studies, exploring issues related to race, indigeneity, colonialism, and gender.

The conference opened on Thursday evening with a reception at Monk’s House of Ale Repute, a locally owned downtown brew pub. Friday featured eight panels along with the keynote address and banquet. Our keynote speaker was Dr. Sean Moore, Associate Professor of English at the University of New Hampshire and editor of *Eighteenth-Century Studies*. Dr. Moore, whose research focuses on postcolonial, economic, and book history approaches to Restoration and eighteenth-century literature, particularly as they relate to Ireland and the Anglophone Atlantic, presented a talk entitled “They Were Prodigals and Enslavers: Patriarchy and the Reading of *Robinson Crusoe* at the New York Society Library.” Dr. Moore’s presentation drew upon research from his book *Slavery and the Making of the Early American Library* (Oxford UP), which studies how the transatlantic trade in British texts was financed by colonial slave traders and enabled by the consumer habits of slave owners. Saturday featured eight additional panels along with a brunch and business meeting, and we wrapped up the conference at the Washington Pavilion, where the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra delivered a stunning performance that began with principal Oboist Jeffrey Paul’s tone poem *Mni Wiconi* (Lakota for “Water is Life”) and ended with Beethoven’s Symphony No. 3, “Eroica.”

The conference was made possible by support from the South Dakota Humanities Council; the South Dakota State University College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences; the South Dakota State University English Department; and MWASECS members.

If you have any happy news to report (fellowships, publications, etc.), please share them with us! For publication in the Spring newsletter, send any announcements to j-casler@northwestern.edu by May 1, 2020.

CSECS/MWASECS 2020 in Winnipeg

MWASECS is excited to announce that our next biennial conference will be held jointly with the Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in Fall 2020. More detailed information will be coming soon!

Future Conferences: Organizers Wanted

We are seeking hosts for our upcoming conferences in 2022 and 2024! If you are intrigued by the prospect of bringing a MWASECS conference to your beautiful Midwestern town, please contact one or both of the society's co-presidents, Sharon Smith (sharon.smith@sdstate.edu) or Scott Breuninger (scott.breuninger@usd.edu). The individual who organizes and hosts the conference will serve as president of the society during the two years leading up to the conference.

MWASECS at ASECS 2020

MWASECS Special Session: "Flyover" Texts

MWASECS will hold a special session at ASECS 2020 in St. Louis entitled "'Flyover' Texts." This session will explore the significance and value of texts that have been routinely passed over within eighteenth-century studies and/or the eighteenth-century classroom. Why do they merit the attention of scholars and students? What contributions can they make to our conversations about eighteenth-century life, and how can they deepen or complicate our understanding of eighteenth-century culture?

Moderator: Sharon Smith, South Dakota State University

1. Jeanine Casler, Northwestern University, "Truth, Lies, and Metafiction: A Case for *Baron Munchausen*"
2. Andrea Pappas, Santa Clara University, "Botanizing the (Embroidered) Landscape: Women's Knowledge of Nature in British North America"
3. Susan Spencer, University of Central Oklahoma, "Eighteenth-Century Asia in the World Literature Classroom: Some Greatest Hits and Some Really Great Misses"
4. Catherine Ingrassia, Virginia Commonwealth University, "Laetitia Pilkington's *Memoirs* and Eighteenth-Century Literary Culture"

MWASECS Business Meeting

We plan to hold a business meeting during the ASECS conference in St Louis to catch up, share news, discuss current affairs, and plan future conferences. We'll forward the time and location of the business meeting as soon as this information becomes available. We hope to see you there!

*Speed. O jest unseen,
inscrutable, invisible,
As a nose on a man's face,
or a weathercock on a
steeple!*

—Two Gentlemen of Verona

Call for Papers: SCSECS 2020

The preliminary list of panels and call for papers for the 2020 SCSECS Conference has now been posted on the SCSECS web site. This conference, being situated in historic as well as fun St. Augustine Beach, will surely achieve what the neoclassicists sought, a perfect reconciliation of pleasure and instruction! Scholars of all stripes—professional; amateur; institutionally-affiliated; freewheeling; ingenious; inventive—are invited to view the possibilities at http://scsecs.net/scsecs/2020/2020_panels.html and to propose a paper to any of the seminar chairs. Or if, perchance, your genius exceeds even this list and no panel proves suitable for your studies, feel free to send your paper directly to SCSECS President and conference organizer Kevin L. Cope (encope@lsu.edu), who will dock your contribution in the appropriate harbor. Or you may propose your own panel.

SCSECS 2020 has an enlivening theme: “The Speedy Enlightenment: Moving, Racing, Quickening, and Otherwise Accelerating the Long Eighteenth Century.” Papers and panels addressing any aspect, interpretation, or extension of the idea of velocity are especially germane, but all papers are welcome. If speed is not to your taste—if you wish that Collins and Gray had composed an ode to the deliberate snail!—then please do offer up papers that value a slower tempo.

St. Augustine and St. Augustine Beach are surely among the top ten “double cities” worldwide. The oldest continuously inhabited settlement in North America, modern St. Augustine offers both an array of historic sites and a phantasmagoria of dining, entertainment, shopping, and high-living options. Even better, their brand-new conference hotel nestles in a sheltered nook of expansive St. Augustine Beach where salt, spray, sand, and scintillation aspire to stimulate scholarship.

More announcements will come—but now is the time to propose!

ASECS Innovative Course Design Competition

To encourage excellence in undergraduate teaching of the eighteenth century, the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies invites proposals for the ASECS Innovative Course Design Competition, from members in any of its constituent disciplines. Proposals should be for a new course or for a new unit within an existing course; the course should never have been taught or have been taught very recently for the first time.

Applicants should submit a 750-1,500 word description of the course or unit and a draft of the syllabus. A major criterion for judging proposals is how specifically they address the course’s design, readings and other texts, pedagogy, educational technology, assessments, and/or activities. If the course has been taught, the essay should offer an assessment of its success.

Please submit proposals via email with the header “ASECS Innovative Course Design Competition” to the ASECS Business Office by 1 October, 2019. Only proposals from current ASECS members are eligible.

The Committee will select the top three proposals and the winners will be notified by 15 November. The winners will be asked to develop 20-minute presentations for delivery in the Innovative Course Design seminar at the Annual Meeting and to submit a 10-12 page account of the unit or course, with a syllabus or other supplementary materials, for publication on the ASECS website. The competition awards \$500 to each winner.

Member News

Susan Spencer, Professor of English at the University of Central Oklahoma and former MWASECS President (2016), spent a week in Philadelphia in June attending an interdisciplinary workshop on “Japan’s Cultural Pivots,” sponsored by two national organizations: the Japan Studies Association and the Asian Studies Development Program. If you are interested in finding out about either of these organizations, please contact Susan: sspencer@uco.edu. Participants were drawn from colleges across the U.S. to discuss ideas for teaching Japanese literature and culture from the Medieval period, the rise of the Tokugawa shogunate in the long eighteenth century, and the years leading up to and after World War II. Susan has had a longtime interest in the Tokugawa (Edo) period. She presented a paper on “Buddhist Nuns and the Ten Worlds Mandala in Tokugawa Japan” at our 2018 meeting in Sioux Falls, and her chapter on “Ihara Saikaku and the Cash Nexus in Edo-Era Osaka” will be published in a forthcoming festschrift in honor of AMS Press’s Gabriel Hornstein, whose patronage of eighteenth-century scholars contributed so much to our field of study.

Denys Van Renen, Associate Professor of English at the University of Nebraska, Kearney, has an article appearing in *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 32, no. 1 (Fall 2019) titled “The Scottish Picaresque, Surveying, and Socio-environmental Nexuses in Mungo Park’s *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa*.”

Alison DeSimone, Assistant Professor of Musicology at the Conservatory of Music and Dance, University of Missouri-Kansas City, published an article entitled “‘Lov’d at home and fear’d abroad’: The War of the Spanish Succession in English Song and on the Stage” in the most recent issue of the *Händel-Jahrbuch*.

Sharon Smith, Associate Professor of English at South Dakota State University, loves to teach and write about gender and sexuality in the Western when she’s not focusing on eighteenth-century women’s verse satire. Her essay “Of Partners and Posses: Masculine Camaraderie in the Contemporary Western/Action Film,” co-authored with Jason McEntee, will appear in *New Riders of the Cinematic Stage: The Twenty-First-Century Western*, edited by Douglas Brode and Shea T. Brode and forthcoming from Lexington Books.