Humans 2A, Fall 2015: Second Essay
Due Dates: Proposal (500 words) 10/6; rough draft (at least 1000 words) 10/29; final draft (1500 words) 11/24. All work must be submitted on Canvas by 9:00 am on the due dates.

Write a short essay (less than 1500 words, or six pages typed and double-spaced) on one of the following topics. These are only suggested topics: you are encouraged to work on a topic of your own devising, providing (1) it deals with the early modern world of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, (2) it is an analytical essay proving a specific point, (3) its focus is primarily on works we have read and historical figures we have studied, and (4) you clear it with me beforehand. Even as suggested topics, the following are probably too general to be covered fully in a short essay. Therefore, focus on a limited aspect of your topic, and construct a developed thesis explaining why that aspect of it is significant; your thesis should contain the specific point to be proved, and your paragraphs should all work toward proving it. To support your readings and to make your analysis clear, you will need to quote short passages from the course texts as well as from outside sources that your research uncovers, integrated into your own prose, which relate to the central claims or themes of your essay; please cite the page number for each quotation or group of quotations parenthetically at the end of the phrase or sentence, and avoid using long, indented quotations. Using shorter quotations makes it easier to establish what your reading of each is, through discussion and analysis, as well as to employ that reading in support of the thesis of your essay. Revise for content and to strengthen your thesis and transitions; proofread thoroughly; and follow MLA or APA format, including a Works Cited or References list at the end. You can find guidelines for MLA and APA style in online at Purdue’s online writing lab, or OWL, at owl.english.purdue.edu (click on either MLA or APA in the right column), or in the online version of the Everyday Writer on Canvas, by going to the course page and then clicking “Writer’s Help” near the end of the left column.

Your essay will be due in stages: a short research report/proposal (no more than 500 words) that will briefly outline your initial idea, including a thesis for the essay, and then describe at least five sources you have found that will help support or clarify that thesis; a rough draft (at least 1000 words), due three weeks later; and a final draft (1500 words, with a Works Cited or References page according to APA or MLA guidelines) due before Thanksgiving. You will receive feedback and suggestions on each of the earlier stages, in order to help you produce your best possible work on the final draft. The nearly four-week gap between the rough draft and the final draft is to give you time to concentrate on your writing:

1. **Women in the Early Modern World.** So far this semester, we have touched upon the lives of women in the early modern world in three specific ways: as characters in literature, as accomplished artists and composers, and as campaigners for women having greater rights, opportunities, and obligations. Choose one figure from each of those three categories, and discuss those women in terms of their success in a chosen field, their contributions to the debate over women’s rights, and their representativeness as to the reality of women’s aspirations and everyday lives.

2. **Can Satire Backfire?** Satire, it has often been said, is a double-edged sword – as likely to wound the wielder as the target. But could satire be more effective, or more popular, in an age of rationalism or reason? Does the skepticism of Descartes, the scientific methods of Newton and Bacon, or the empiricism of Locke and Hume – all fresh ways of looking at the external world (or not looking at it) in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – do those new approaches emphasizing observation make satire more relevant? To answer that, consider two of the eighteenth-century satires we have read (A Modest Proposal plus either Tartuffe or Candide) and argue whether or not you find evidence in the writings of at least one of the scientists and philosophers of that period to suggest that such humor is more or less effective as a result of a heightened awareness of the world in which we live.