



THE NEWBERRY

*Center for Renaissance Studies*

## The Eighteenth-Century Seminar

Saturday, October 13, 2012, 1:00 pm  
Towner Fellows Lounge, The Newberry Library

*Economic and Sentimental Reasons:  
Financial Instruments and Personal Attachments in Fielding's  
Jonathan Wild*

Frances Ferguson

*University of Chicago*



Fielding's early novel *Jonathan Wild* centers on a character, the notorious thief and thief-taker Jonathan Wild, who invented techniques for preserving the value of personal possessions. Troubled by the way that objects precipitously declined in value when they were stolen and fenced, Wild developed a way of protecting their value—namely, by selling them back to their owners, giving the owners the opportunity to redeem them. Parliament, seeing such redemptions as a matter of enlisting victims in crimes against themselves, passed a law forbidding them. Fielding's novel, however, suggests a deeper critique of Wild's characteristic ways of proceeding and focuses on a tension between commitments to things and commitments to persons. A reception will follow the seminar.

This program is free and open to the public, but registration in advance is required. Register online at:

[www.newberry.org/renaissance](http://www.newberry.org/renaissance)

*Sponsored by the University of Chicago, DePaul University, Northwestern University, and the University of Illinois at Chicago; and organized by Timothy Campbell, University of Chicago; Lisa Freeman, University of Illinois at Chicago; John Shanahan, DePaul University; and Helen Thompson, Northwestern University*