

# FRENCH GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

## SPRING 2024

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### **French 569: Critical Approaches to Literature and Culture: French and Francophone**

#### **Perspectives**

**Professor Joshua Armstrong**

**Meeting Times: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 11:00-11:50 am**

An introduction to theoretical and critical thinking about literary and visual texts, meant to accompany and supplement interpretative skills. Fundamental notions of rhetoric (principles of versification) and principles of narratology designed to improve the practice of close reading in poetry, drama, prose, and cinema across time periods. Taught in French.

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### **FRE 672: Topics in Literature and Culture**

**Dr. Gwenola Caradec**

**Meeting Times: Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:30-3:45 pm**

Ce cours a pour objectif de vous faire découvrir la richesse et la complexité de la production littéraire des îles caraïbes francophones (Haïti, la Guadeloupe et la Martinique) en tenant compte de leur passé et de leurs rapports à la métropole. Nous commencerons par la période esclavagiste pour terminer sur les défis de notre époque globale actuelle. Au cours de notre parcours, une question centrale portera sur le rôle de la littérature - quel rôle peut-elle jouer pour se réapproprier un passé perdu ou renié (par exemple par l'expérience de la traite de l'esclavage) et faire face aux défis du futur (exil, globalisation) ?

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### **French 948: Identity and Collectivity in 16<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>-century French Literature and Culture**

**Theme: "Le corps, l'esprit, et le moi de Descartes à Laclos" / "Body, Mind, and Self from Descartes to Laclos"**

**Professor Anne Vila**

**Meeting Times: Tuesdays, 4:00-6:00 pm**

This seminar is designed to examine a basic question: what did the human body *mean* and *do* in French literature and intellectual culture in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries? That is, how did this period's literature reflect or respond to evolving philosophical models of the body, the mind-body relation, and the self? How were various literary genres deployed to stage or narrate the body as a feeling, suffering, or desiring/ desired entity? Finally, how did this period's literature reflect or respond to contemporary debates regarding the physical determinism (or indeterminism) of gender, class, race, and alterity?

Our readings and discussions will revolve around three interrelated topics:

- 1--Representations of the body in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>-century French plays, novels, autobiography, and philosophical essays
- 2--The evolution of philosophical models of the body and the mind/body relation, from Cartesian dualism to more holistic concepts of "le physique et le moral"
- 3--The implications of those models for evolving notions of gender, social class, race, morality, health, normativity, and alterity

The seminar will be organized into seven thematic units of varying lengths, each featuring one or two main literary texts, sometimes accompanied by shorter texts (those will be provided in Canvas):

1. The body on stage, I (17th century) : Molière, *Les Femmes savantes* & *Le Malade imaginaire*
2. The monstrous body: Mme d'Aulnoy, "Babiole"; Diderot, *La Lettre sur les aveugles* (excerpts)
3. The body in life-writing (fiction & autobiography): Graffigny, *Les Lettres d'une Péruvienne*; Rousseau, *Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire* (selected promenades)
4. The body in colonial fiction: Saint-Lambert's *Ziméo*
5. Philosophical reflections on *le physique et le moral*: Voltaire, "les Oreilles du comte de Chesterfield" & "Fanatisme"; Diderot, *Le Rêve de d'Alembert*
6. The body on stage, II (18th century): Beaumarchais, *Le Mariage de Figaro*; Diderot, *Entretiens sur le fils naturel* (excerpts) & Beaumarchais, "Essai sur le genre dramatique sérieux"
7. Body and mind in the libertine novel: Laclos, *Les Liaisons dangereuses* (and excerpts from Sade)

To frame our literary readings, I will refer occasionally to relevant contemporary philosophical texts by Descartes, Poullain de la Barre, Pascal, La Mettrie, Condillac, Helvétius, and the *Encyclopédie* (short excerpts from those texts will be provided in Canvas as supplementary readings). We will also examine selected critical approaches to the main literary works in our corpus. I will provide a critical bibliography for each unit, featuring secondary articles/book chapters that focus on themes of the body, mind, selfhood, consciousness, and their interconnections.

Each student in the seminar will be expected to:

1. Participate actively in all seminar discussions and occasional Canvas discussion forums.
2. Do an oral presentation that combines close reading of a selected passage from a literary text in our corpus with a commentary on a critical article or book chapter that interprets that text. This presentation will count as one of the student's three response papers.
3. Write two other response papers (2-3 pp. each).
4. Research and write a final paper (approximately 12 pp., plus bibliography) on a literary work from the 17th or 18th century, chosen in consultation with the professor.<sup>1</sup> Preparation for the final project will include an exercise that simulates the preparation of a field exam document for the French Ph.D. prelims. Students will present an abstract and short example from their final projects at a round table to be held during the final seminar meeting.

Graduate students from outside of the French MA/Ph.D. program are welcome to take this seminar if they have advanced reading knowledge and aural comprehension of French.

### Required books:

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<sup>1</sup> The selected work can either a work we've read for the seminar, explored in greater depth, or a work from outside our main corpus. I will provide a list of recommended supplementary texts for the final project.

<i>Les Femmes savantes</i> 203583418X	Molière	LAROUSSE	2007
<i>Le Malade imaginaire</i> 2035834201	Molière	LAROUSSE	2007
<i>Lettres d'une Péruvienne</i> 9780873527774	Graffigny	MLA TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS	1993
<i>Rêveries du promeneur solitaire</i> 2081275260	Rousseau	FLAMMARION	2011
<i>Le Rêve de d'Alembert</i> 2080711342	Diderot	POCHE	2003
<i>Le Mariage de Figaro</i> 2081487152	Beaumarchais	FLAMMARION	2020
<i>Les Liaisons dangereuses</i> 2070338967	Laclos	FOLIO	2006

Recommended books :

<i>Lettre sur les aveugles à l'usage de ceux qui voient</i> 2070314545	Diderot	FOLIO	200
<i>Entretiens sur Le Fils naturel</i> 2080711784 2005	Diderot	FLAMMARION	

Additional short texts will be provided as pdfs in Canvas.