SPRING 2016
FRENCH COURSE DESCRIPTIONS
French 4003-01
Senior Seminar
Instructor: Kevin Bongiorni
Email: kbongiorni@lsu.edu

Days: T/TH 9:00-10:20

LE FANTASTIQUE

Epistolary Fictions: Passion, Power, and Resistance

Before there were texts, twitters, and tweets, people actually wrote letters to each other. Given the popularity of letter writing, novelists wrote fictional correspondences, which found an avid readership. In this seminar, we will study some highly popular fictional correspondences, starting in the 17th century, where letter writing is seen as a feminine art: par excellence, but concentrating on works from the 18th century (the heyday of epistolary novels): Montesquieu’s Lettres persanes, Graffigny’s Lettres d’une Péruvienne, and Laclos’s Les Liaisons dangereuses, finishing up with a 20th century letter novel, Mariama Bâ’s Une si longue lettre. Throughout our readings, we will discuss why authors chose the letter novel, rather than another kind. We will also consider how and why the works criticize French society, including gender, class, and race relations.

Students will be expected to participate actively in class discussion, coming to class prepared. In addition to daily work, they will write two papers analyzing one or two of our texts. The first is a short (5-page) paper (12 pt. type, double-spaced, 1-inch margins), the second is the final paper, incorporating at least one secondary source (10-12 pages). Students will give a 10-minute oral presentation of their final paper.

Vermeer, Girl Reading a Letter
Have you thought about improving your French pronunciation? In this class, we will study the theory of phonetics combined with practical applications and foreign accent improvement exercises. The field of phonetics analyzes and explains the articulation of sounds, such as how they are produced and which speech organs are used in their articulation. Many consonants are typically "easy" to produce, with the exception of the French "r". The complex system of French vowels can be challenging for English speakers: the absence of diphthongs and the presence of rounded front vowels (such as in "pur") and glides (such as in "huit") are quite different from the phonetic inventory of English and need time and practice to be mastered. Phonology is studied in combination with phonetics and deals with the system and the interaction of sounds in contact in spoken language. Many sounds are susceptible to their phonetic environment and may "gain" or "lose" some of their features such as voicing. These subtle differences are often difficult to detect for learners of French and are of special interest. The overall goal of this class is to gain a more profound understanding of the French sound system while acquiring a more native-like French pronunciation.

*This class is open to undergraduate and graduate students.
Description

French deconstruction has had a major impact on Humanities in the Anglo-American world. In addition to Derrida’s influence on phenomenology, hermeneutics, existentialism, structuralism, post-structuralism, etc., he has had a transformative effect on literary theory, comparative literature, political theory, historiography, theories of gender and translation, religious and environmental studies. We will explore the work of Jacques Derrida through a study of some of his key texts, from his early works to the later writings. Themes will include: the senses of deconstruction and "differance"; the question of the proper; the human and the critique of humanism; ethics and responsibility; death, the secret, and the other; subjectivity and “touch,” hospitality, law and forgiveness. Readings include: Derrida’s *Margins of Philosophy*, “Differance,” *Positions, Points, Of Hospitality, Force of Law, Aporias, Paper Machine*, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, *On Touching*—Jean-Luc Nancy.
textbooks:

Course description
Il s’agit d’un cours d’introduction aux littératures autour des Indépendances politiques en Afrique au Sud du Sahara et au Maghreb. Il sera subdivisé en trois parties:
- les textes du “*Roman colonial*” et des mouvements “*ethnologiques*”: dégager l’image des pays colonisés, et montrer l’importance des conflits culturels.
- les étapes historiques qui ont contribué à reconstruire les discours à travers les textes de fiction et les expressions littéraires depuis les premiers moments de la “*Négritude*”.
- indiquer les éléments de la rupture dans les discours, et redéfinir les identités des personnages par le biais de la narration ainsi que du texte contemporain. Nous insisterons sur la “*violence du discours fictionnel*” dans les littératures contemporaines.


Les modèles des littératures coloniales et celles survenues après les Indépendances politiques serviront de point d’origine pour une interprétation des romans produits à travers les pays de l’Afrique (sud Sahara et Maghreb) et des Caraïbes. L’inscription diachronique accompagne une initiation à la méthodologie d’analyse et au discours critique.
François Rabelais is widely known as one of the greatest comic writers in the history of world literature. Michel de Montaigne is among the world’s most influential essayists and often embraced as a key precursor in the development of modern notions of self and postmodern skepticism. Both Rabelais and Montaigne were French humanists who used their classical learning to shape new modes of literary expression in French and both were intimately involved in the political life of their times. In this course we will read works by these two authors from various perspectives—the primary of which being the rise of Christian Humanism and Protestantism in 16th-century France and the conflict between Catholics and Protestants that would eventually lead to the guerres de religion in the latter part of the century. We will also consider various intellectual perspectives on religion that were circulated in France during the Renaissance. Although the focus will be works by Rabelais and Montaigne, we will read shorter excerpts from figures such as Luther, Erasmus, Machiavelli, Calvin, Guillaume Budé, Marguerite de Navarre, and Giordano Bruno.