

L152a  
Classical French Literature in Translation

Spring 2016

Instructor: Trevor Merrill  
Office: Dabney 113  
Office phone: x4070  
Class meetings/location: TBD

Course Description: This course offers an introduction to masterpieces of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century French literature. We will focus on major plays by Molière (*The Misanthrope* and *Tartuffe*) and Marivaux (*The Game of Love and Chance*), and on novels by Crébillon fils (excerpts from *The Wayward Head and Heart*), Vivant Denon (*No Tomorrow*), and Choderlos de Laclos (*Dangerous Liaisons*). We'll be reflecting on the function of comic theater as a satirical tool for policing behavior in seventeenth-century France, on the emergence of the novel as a new, flexible means of psychological exploration and character development, and on the way all of these works portray the tensions between the social "rules of the game" and the desires and freedom of the modern individual. Throughout we will also be thinking about how relevant these works remain to our twenty-first century lives, especially in their depiction of the anxieties and maneuvers attending love and courtship. All readings are in English but students may read the texts in French if they would like.

Texts:

**Molière, *The Misanthrope and Tartuffe*, trans. Richard Wilbur, Mariner Books, 1965 (reprint edition, paperback), ISBN: 978-0156605175**

**Marivaux, *The Game of Love and Chance*, trans. Robert Bethune, Freshwater Seas, 2009, ISBN: 978-1933311425**

**Vivant Denon, *No Tomorrow*, trans. Lydia Davis, NYRB Classics, ISBN-10: 1590173260**

**Choderlos de Laclos, *Les Liaisons dangereuses*, trans. Helen Constantine, Penguin Classics, ISBN-13: 978-0140449570**

Assignments and Grading:

Weekly reading assignments and short written responses, a mid-term exam (take-home), and a final paper of 8-10 pages.

Attendance is a basic course requirement.

Attendance/participation/reading responses: 40 %

Mid-term exam: 20%

Final paper: 40%