

L/Hum152a  
Classical French Literature in Translation

Spring 2018

Instructor: Trevor Merrill  
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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 comedies and tragedies by Molière (*Tartuffe* and *The Misanthrope*) and Racine (*Phaedra*) and on novels by Madame de Lafayette (*The Princesse de Clèves*) 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 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. 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**

**Racine, *Phaedra*, translated by Richard Wilbur, Mariner Books, 1987, ISBN: 978-0156757805**

**Madame de Lafayette, *The Princesse de Clèves*, translated by Terence Cave (paperback), ISBN: 978-0199539178**

**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%