Fr4: Rethinking the Human: French Literature, Thought, and Culture, 1500-1700

Reading list

I. Primary texts (in the order of the lectures)
You will need your own copy of these texts. In some cases it is essential to buy the recommended edition, in other cases the edition does not matter so much. It is generally best to buy the book in hard copy. Be careful with e-books; sometimes the editions available are worthless. Where a good edition is available as an e-book, this is indicated. Use the ISBN number to ensure that you are getting the correct edition.

RABELAIS

LABÉ
Labé, Louise, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by François Rigolot (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1986). [This is the best edition to buy. Aim to read the Débat as well as Labé's poetry. This edition is available as an ebook.]

RONSARD

MONTAIGNE

You will also find two internet sites very useful:
*The Montaigne Project* [http://montaignestudies.uchicago.edu](http://montaignestudies.uchicago.edu)
This presents the 1580, 1582 and 1588 editions of the *Essais*, the *exemplaire de Bordeaux*, and a searchable version of the P. Villey edition (with layers). This is the edition to which secondary texts often refer.
This presents various editions of the text, documents written by Montaigne such as his letters and his annotations to the books in his library, as well as a virtual tour of his tower.
MOLIÈRE

RACINE

PASCAL
Pascal, Blaise, *Pensées*, ed. Gérard Ferreyrolles and Philippe Sellier, Le Livre de poche classique (Paris: Libraire Générale Française, 2000). [In this case, it makes a good deal of difference which edition you get, because the fragments have different numbers in different editions. The best editions are based on the original copies of Pascal’s manuscript. The recommended edition uses the numbering introduced by Philippe Sellier. It has excellent notes. An older edition, ed. Louis Lafuma (Paris: Seuil, 1962) has a different numbering, and no notes. However, you will still find references to Lafuma numbers in some works of secondary literature. The Folio edition by Michel Le Guern is good, but has yet another numbering, which has not really caught on among scholars; it is therefore more difficult to use with secondary literature. All these editions are based on the original copies. Avoid using editions with the yet older Brunschvicg numbering (e.g. Garnier-Flammarion): here the arrangement and numbering are the work of the editor himself.] To read in the library: *Pensées* in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Michel Le Guern, 2 vols, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1998-2000). This edition has superb notes, if you can overcome the difficulty of the unfamiliar numbering.

LAFAYETTE
II. General and Introductory Reading


Hammond, Nicholas, Creative Tensions: An Introduction to Seventeenth-Century French Literature (London: Duckworth, 1997) [Excellent.]


Moriarty, Michael and Jeremy Jennings (eds), The Cambridge History of French Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019). [contains chapters on many writers and aspects of the period.]


Technical and rhetorical terms

France, Peter, Rhetoric and truth in France: Descartes to Diderot (Oxford, 1972). [Read chapter 1 for an introduction to rhetoric.]


Sixteenth-century French


History


**Intellectual and cultural history**

**Religious history**


**III. Secondary reading for prescribed texts**

**RABELAIS**


Gray, Floyd, *Gender, Rhetoric and Print Culture in French Renaissance Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). [See chapter 1 on the *Tiers livre*.]


Tournon, André, ‘*En sens agile*: Les Acrobacies de l'esprit selon Rabelais’ (Paris: Champion, 1995). [Enjoyable to read once you're more confident about your own understanding of the text.]

**LABÉ**


Bridental, Renate and Koonz, Claudia, eds., *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977). [See the essay by Joan Kelly-Gadol 'Did women have a Renaissance?' Again, very interesting context/concepts.]


**RONSARD**

**General**


**Ronsard**


**MONTAIGNE**

**General**
Desan, Philippe, *The Oxford Handbook of Montaigne* (Oxford: OUP, 2016). Also available on line via IDiscover. [Excellent, comprehensive, very recent coverage]

**Themes relevant to I.31, III.6 and III.11**
Philosophy, scepticism:

‘Montaigne on Curiosity’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Montaigne*, chapter 36
Ethics

The New World, the Cannibal
Conley, Tom, ‘Montaigne on Alterity’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Montaigne*, chapter 38
Frisch, Andrea, ‘Cannibalizing Experience in the *Essais*’, in Zalloua, *Montaigne After Theory*, 180-201

MOLIÈRE

**General works on seventeenth-century drama**

**Theory of comedy**
Bakhtin, Mikhail, *Rabelais and his World*; see above, under ‘Rabelais’ [important for its general theory of laughter and the comic, very different from Bergson’s].

**General works on Molière**

See also the special edition of *Nottingham French Studies* (1994, ed. by S. Bamforth) on Molière.

**Individual plays**


**RACINE**

**General works on theatre and tragedy**


### General works on Racine


### Individual plays


Harris, Joseph, and Nicholas Hammond (eds), *Racine's ‘Andromaque’: Absences and Displacements* (Leiden: Brill, 2019) [Also available as ebook.]


PASCAL

General

The Pensées
Norman, Buford, *Portraits of Thought: Knowledge, Methods and Styles in Pascal* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1988).
Jansenism

Mme de LAFAYETTE
Campbell, John, *Questions of Interpretation in 'La Princesse de Clèves'* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1986).