

French 5202 Versailles to the Enlightenment: Texts and Contexts

Moralistes and *libertins*: questioning the cultural paradigm in the 17th and 18th centuries

Spring Semester 2013: TR 12:45-2:05 Instructor: K. Račevskis



The 17th century is generally seen in terms of an order and stability ensured by an all-powerful church and a monarchy of divine right. The 18th, on the other hand, is a time when all the established truths and conventions are brought into question. The questioning, however, is already rife in the century of the Sun King, when a number of authors begin to suspect the legitimacy of the prevailing norms and beliefs. The purpose of the course will be to examine the subversive and progressive thought of 17th and 18th-century writers whose influence was to radically change French culture and society and—eventually—contribute to bring down the *Ancien Régime*. Authors will include La Rochefoucauld, Mme de LaFayette, La Fontaine, Pascal, La Bruyère, Bayle, Fontenelle, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, Olympe de Gouges, and Mme de Charrière. In French.

Texts : Mme de LaFayette, *La Princesse de Clèves* (Larousse) ; La Bruyère, *Les Caractères* (GF Flammarion) ; Montesquieu, *Lettres Philosophiques* (Librio) ; Voltaire, *Lettres philosophiques* (GF Flammarion) ; Diderot, *Le neveu de Rameau* (Livres de Poche) ; Isabelle de Charrière, *Lettres de Mistriss Henley* (Modern Language Association).