FRENGEN 219

THE RENAISSANCE BODY

Fall 2012

Prof. Cécile Alduy
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Office hours: Thursday 5-6pm or by appointment

Class: Thurs. 2:15-5:05.

Location: 260-004

Course website: http://renaissancebodyproject.stanford.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

If the Renaissance is famous for discovering unknown continents and ancient texts, the body too was a new territory of conquest. How did literature respond to the rise of the anatomical gaze in the arts and in medicine, and how did it stage the aesthetic, religious, philosophical and moral issues related to such a promotion, or deconstruction, of the body? Did writers strive to represent the body in a fashion similar to that of the visual artists of the time, or did they use it instead as a ubiquitous signifier for intellectual, emotional, and political ideas? The locus of desire, pleasure and disease, the body also functioned as a reminder of human mortality and was caught in the web of gender issues, religious controversies and new norms of behavior.

This course will explore these issues through close analyses of canonical and lesser known texts from the French Renaissance, while connecting discourses to images thanks to a digital archive of early modern anatomical plates, engravings and portraits.

Texts include prose fiction (Rabelais), poetry (Blasons anatomiques, Scève, Ronsard, Labé), essays (Montaigne) and emblem literature. Optional documents include music scores, tapestries, paintings, drawings, and anatomical plates.

Readings preferably in French; class discussion in English.

TEXTS

Please make sure you have the exact same edition by verifying the ISBN number. All books are available at the campus bookstore.


For editions in English, see Instructor. Additional readings will be provided.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS:

- participation and attendance: 20 %
- weekly questions on blog 20 %
- presentation 20%
- final research project: 40 %

One (and only one) absence per quarter is admitted.
ORGANIZATION

Note: The Renaissance Body Project website (http://renaissancebodyproject.stanford.edu) is at your disposal for additional documents and research purposes. It features documents on French Renaissance authors (Labé, Ronsard, Scève, Montaigne…) and an archive of 16th century images and texts on the human body. This is a creative interface where you can publish online essays or multimedia projects.

Attendance and participation

Readings preferably in French; class discussion in English or French.
Readings: always start with the preface, then the book or the passages and documents assigned, then only the critical text handed out, if applicable. Critical texts are in no way “the’ right interpretation of the texts but examples of possible methodologies, theories and readings.

Weekly questions: collective BLOG (in AGORA)

Every week, at least 24h before class and earlier if possible, post on the collective BLOG of the website at least 2 questions that came up while reading the texts assigned for the week + post by Wednesday at 6 PM 1 comment to someone else’s questions. Email me (alduy@stanford.edu) and Mary Ann Toman-Miller (tomanmil@stanford.edu) your questions too. BRING a copy of your questions to class. You might have many more questions on the texts and documents: please select your best (i.e. least simply answered) ones for the first 2 posted but you can have as many as you want.

Presentation

Everyone will be given the opportunity to present a text from the assigned readings of the week (a poem, a short story, a preface) or a document from the ARCHIVE on the website. The purpose of this short presentation (10 minutes) is to analyze the workings of a specific literary text or visual apparatus and underline its relevance to our understanding of more general topics related to the Renaissance body.

What to do:
- choose a text you would like to discuss
- email it to me at least 48 hours before class
- present it in class. Don’t forget to explain why you chose that text: what major topics and issues (stylistic, cultural, political, etc.) this given text raises; how does it compare to other similar texts we read; how does it challenge critical essays read thus far; how does it work.
- at the end of your conclusion, you might propose a couple of questions to discuss with the class. The purpose is not to provide answers, but real questions and try to analyze why they trigger our interest or perplexity and what we could learn from them.

Final paper

In the course of the quarter, you will be working on a final research paper of your choice addressing topics, images and authors relevant to the seminar. Guidelines will be provided in advance.

Papers shall be original and personal. See the Honor Code regarding plagiarism and students Fundamental Standard (http://www.stanford.edu/dept/vpsa/judicialaffairs/index/html)
SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: Introduction : Les sens et le sens 09/27

WEEK 2: RABELAIS 10/04
  Readings: Pantagruel, Prologue; chapters 1-24.
  Documents: See website/AUTHORS/Rabelais

WEEK 3: RABELAIS : Utopian vs. Literal Body 10/11
  Readings: Pantagruel, ch. 25-34.

  Readings: Blasons anatomiques du corps féminin (in Les Œuvres de Louise Labé, p. 137-169). Translation will be provided.
  Documents: “Blasons anatomiques” in WORKS and “Medical Books” in the ARCHIVE, specifically Vesalius on website.

WEEK 5: NO CLASS DISCUSSION – film screening. 11/01

WEEK 6: SCÈVE – Semiology of a Body in Love 11/08
  Readings: Délie. Look closely at the 50 emblems and the dizain below.
  Poems: vœu, D. 1-27; 41; 49; 56; 59; 66; 76; 80-82; 100 et 161 et 173; 102; 112; 118-119; 121; 125-127; 129; 142; 144; 149; 155; 157; 164; 165; 188; 226-227; 229-230; 233; 243-245; 279-281; 289-291; 297; 300; 310; 313; 344; 347; 349; 364; 372; 378-380; 388; 394; 408; 413; 417-418; 424; 434-435; 445-449. [Read first the poems in bold]
  Documents: “Scève” in AUTHORS; “Délie” in WORKS (website);

WEEK 7: RONSARD 11/15
  Readings: Ronsard, Les Amours de Cassandre, sonnets 1-27; 34-40; 49-51; 58-64; 71-98; 100; 102-105; 110-118; 123-129 133-137; 144-148, 171-176; 179-194; 198; 203-212; 218-221.
  Documents: Portrait of Ronsard and Cassandre + See website/AUTHORS/Ronsard

WEEK 8: LABÉ: The Anatomy Of Gender 11/15
  Readings: Labé, preface, elegies I, II, III, all the sonnets (in particular 2, 7-14, 18, 20-21, 23-24).
  Documents: See website/AUTHORS/Labé

Email a tentative topic for your research paper
WEEK 9: MONTAIGNE – « tout entier et tout nu » 11/29


Documents: exemplaire de Bordeaux annoté; Jean de Léry, Histoire d’un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil (see website/Topics/Montaigne)

WEEK 10: MONTAIGNE – « Des essais en chair et en os » 12/06

Reading: “Sur des vers de Virgile”, III. 5, spécialement p.87-95.

First draft of research paper due by email: introduction and detailed outline

FINAL PAPER DUE by December

TERM PAPER due by email as a Word [for MAC] or PDF file by Dec. 13 at 8 p.m.

Length of final paper for 3 or 4 units: 8-10 pages double-spaced
Length of final for 5 units: 13-14 pages double-spaced

Late papers will not be accepted.