FREN-2040E Voies et chemins: errance à travers la littérature médiévale/ Irit Kleiman

This seminar unpacks notions of displacement, migration, transformation, and alterity as they appear to us through the literature of medieval France and its global context. From the omnipresent Song of Roland to the poetic lamentations of exiled princes, much of this material might be described as the “literature of war.” Texts by more willing voyagers recall the minutiae of travel and the dazzling marvels beheld in faraway lands. Legacies of conquest and civil war pierce the carefully polished surface of diverse fictions. Our sources bear witness to the after-effects of trans-cultural encounter on songs, images, forms, and ideas. Taught in French.

FREN-2170K High Culture: Intoxicants in 19th-Century Literature Gretchen Schultz

This seminar explores the cultural significance of intoxicants in 19th-century France. Between the wine of transcendence and creation and the opiates of degeneration and disease, alcohol and narcotics played a role in antithetical discourses of fulfillment and depletion. Their idealization commonly found witnesses among poets, while the social sciences roundly condemned their deleterious effects on the material and social body. Advances in medicine contributed new intoxicants available for abuse (ether, morphine), even while feeding discourses condemning alcoholism and drug use as social scourges. Primary readings include literature (Gautier, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Zola, Lorrain), medical treatises, social policy. Taught in English.
FREN-2190D Literary Theory of Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida/David Wills

These two thinkers, one from a literary and rhetorical perspective, the other speaking out of philosophy, posed in a persistent and explicit manner during the period 1965-1980 the question of literature. We will study a series of their texts that continue to provide important models for a critical approach to literary writing. Taught in English.

Spring 2019

FREN-2630B Penser l’Afrique-Monde/Justin Izzo

This seminar will examine francophone African and diasporic literature, criticism, and philosophy as a thought of and for the world. Recently, theorists have begun thinking about planetary politics from the standpoint of Africa, and our course will study what Africa’s constitutive worldliness has to tell us about our current political moment. It will also study how African and diasporic cultural production might provoke us to reimagine democratic futures. What does it mean to re-historicize the global present from Africa? Readings from Fanon, Mbembe, Vergès, Mabanckou, and others. Taught in French.

FREN-2130G Queering the Grand Siècle/Lewis Seifert

This seminar will approach canonical and non-canonical 17th-century literature through the lens of queer theory. Using strategies of queer critique while being attentive to literary/historical context, we will explore a selection of poetic, prose, and theatrical texts from perspectives that trouble the heteronormative and patriarchal norms of knowledge and power. Particular focus on the reception of the "Grand Siècle" in contemporary French cultural identity and poststructuralist thought. Theoretical readings by Butler, Édelman, Freccero, Foucault, Halberstam, Sedgwick; literary texts by François de Sales, Théophile de Viau, Benserade, Cyrano de Bergerac, Madeleine de Scudéry, Corneille, Molière, Racine, Bussy-Rabutin, Lafayette, d’Aulnoy, Choisy, among others. Taught in French.