

MSt Special Subject Preparatory Reading

Early Modern French Drama, Hilary Term 2019

Description

The subject allows students to study the perennially popular dramatists Molière and Racine in the context of developments in dramatic practice in France from the 1550s to about 1700. We shall look closely at both better known and less well known plays. The course will serve as an introduction for those unfamiliar with the topic, but also as a means of deepening knowledge of it in the case of those who have already studied plays of the period. Sessions will include discussion of two or three plays in the light of issues that have preoccupied recent scholars. Issues to be discussed might include some of: dramatic theory, genre, rhetoric, performance, print, adaptation and translation. Students will be free to adopt their own approach for their submission and to explore plays of particular interest to them.

Convenor : Dr Hawcroft (Keble)

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Organisation

There will be weekly seminars in weeks 1-5, for which students will write four essays of 2000-3000 words each. Students then have until Thursday of week 10 to prepare one or two essays (totalling 6000-7000 words) as an examination submission. Students will be encouraged, in addition, to attend a Faculty reading class on French Dramatic Theory 1605-60 in weeks 1-4.

Preliminary Reading

(1) A selection of plays by Corneille, Molière and Racine in any edition, though these are the most scholarly complete editions for reference purposes:

P. Corneille, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. G. Couton, 3 vols, Paris: Gallimard, 1980-87

Molière, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. G. Forestier and others, 2 vols, Paris: Gallimard, 2010

Racine, *Théâtre. Poésie*, ed. G. Forestier, Paris: Gallimard, 1999

(2) An introductory work:

D. Bertrand, *Lire le théâtre classique*, Paris, Dunod, 1999

A. Viala (ed), *Le Théâtre en France*, Paris, PUF, 2009 (part 4 by A. Viala and H. Baby)

Possible Topics and Texts for Seminars

1. Imitation and Adaptation

Euripides, *Hippolytus*; Seneca, *Phaedra*; Garnier, *Hippolyte*; Racine, *Phèdre*

2. Performance

Molière, *L'Impromptu de Versailles*, *Tartuffe*; Corneille, *Le Menteur*

3. Rhetoric

D'Aubignac, *La Pratique du théâtre* (IV, 2), Corneille, *Horace*, *L'illusion comique*; Racine, *Mithridate*

4. Print

Corneille, *Rodogune*; Molière, *Les Précieuses ridicules*; Racine, *Britannicus*

5. Translation and Tradaptation

Racine, *Andromaque*, R.C. Knight, *Andromache in Four Greek Plays* (1982), Craig Raine, '1953 (1990)'; Molière, *Le Misanthrope*, translations by Martin Crimp (1996) and Roger McGough (2013).

Fuller bibliographical guidance will be provided at the beginning of the course.