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French 900

Spring 2020

Seminar on the French Short Story

“la breveté est l’âme du conte.”

—Antoine Furetière. *Dictionnaire Universel*. 2 vols. La Haye: Arnoud et Renier Leers, 1702. Page 501.

COURSE OBJECTIVE

An advanced course dealing with major French short stories from the beginning, though concentrating on examples from the 19th and 20th centuries. While the emphasis will be on the meaning(s) which can be elicited from the works through intensive analysis making use of appropriate methodologies, students will be encouraged to develop their own skills and to relate the results of their analyses to the concepts of generic evolution (or change) and to genre proper, as well as to history (culture), literary movements, currents of 19th- and 20th-century thought, and to the impact of such insights, interpretations, and traditions have on a theory of the short story. What elements of a given short story are important to a valid interpretation? What elements are common to all short stories? How do short stories mean? How do they elicit aesthetic appreciation from readers? In what ways are short stories related to each other? and to other genres? Should the short story be considered a minor art form? Such questions of a general nature will guide our discussions of particular examples. Works by Marguerite de Navarre, Mérimée, Flaubert, Maupassant, Zola, Gide, Camus, Robbe-Grillet, Michel Tournier, and others.

REQUIREMENTS

Graduate Standing

One 15 minute oral report, regular seminar participation, and a substantial paper (+/- 20 pages)

TEXTS:

1. “Fabliaux et nouvelles”—Xerox copies (X): “Du villain qui conquiert paradis en plaidant; “Le Pet du villain”; “La Housse [partie] coupée en deux”; “De la bourgeoise d’Orleans” (X 1-19); “La 33^e Nouvelle Nouvelle”; Marguerite de Navarre, “Deuxiesme Nouvelle” (X32), “Treisiesme Nouvelle,” *L’Heptaméron*: (X 41); Robbe-Grillet. “La Plage,” *Instantannées*; Michel Tournier, “Lucie ou la femme sans ombre” (1989), *Le Médianoche amoureux*.
2. Allan H. Pasco, ed. *Nouvelles françaises du dix-neuvième siècle*. 2^e edition. Charlottesville, VA: Rookwood P, 2015. NFDN. At bookstore.
4. Barbey d’Aurevilly. *Les Diaboliques*. Folio, no. 3910 At bookstore.
5. Albert Camus. *L’Exil et le royaume*. Folio, no. 78. At bookstore.

On reserve in Watson:

Charles May, ed. *The New Short Story Theories*. Athens: Ohio UP, 1994.

Guy de Maupassant. “Le Roman.” *Romans*. Ed. Louis Forestier. Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. Paris: Gallimard, 1987. 703-15.