French 810: Criticism and Critical Methods Professor Van Kelly

11:00-12:15 T/Th

The course will serve as an introduction to important critical concepts for the study of French literatures and cultures. Artistic expression (whether literary, filmic, plastic, graphic, or musical) is a very particular mode of individual and cultural thought. To explore that proposition, the course will have three focuses, with special emphasis on literature and film:

-- Literature as literature, film as film, how to deal with narration, the lyric mode and language, the theory of literary genre, performance versus text (particularly important for poetry and drama), how works signify and communicate with the reader, how film differs from text-based literature, how a painting differs from a text, what is an author?

-- Literature and film as palimpsests of culture, of cultural hegemony (patriarchy, decolonization, for instance), of history, of society, as social critiques and as political commitments, as reflections of the times, as archives of competing cultures and of ideologies, as particular and compelling ways of thinking major historical events and major issues of society.

-- Literature and its future in the digital age, how the advent of modern technologies and the consumer society have changed the way in which we perceive the work of art (novel, poem, play, essay, film, painting, graphic works) and how we think about literary or filmic composition.

We will cover key concepts of literary and cultural criticism from Aristotle to present, with an emphasis on mostly French writers and thinkers who have made important contributions to critical perceptions and methods, including Boileau, Baudelaire, Saussure, Benjamin, Valéry, Breton, Freud, Bachelard, Sartre, Beauvoir, Caillios, Bazin, Barthes, Derrida, Foucault, Debord, Irigaray, Cixous, Deleuze and Guattari, Bourdieu, Metz, Morin, Tillion Bonnefoy, Roussso, Saïd, Spivak, Rancière, Varda, Godard, Kofman, and Badiou. There will be an emphasis on French creative writers who have also made major contributions to thought about the work of art (literary, filmic, or otherwise).