In this course we will read Rabelais’s *Pantagruel, Gargantua, Tiers livre*, and *Quart livre*, followed by a significant number of essays from Montaigne’s *Essais*. These two authors, considered the “bookends” of the Renaissance, serve to illustrate the radical differences to be found in the literature of the sixteenth century, from Rabelais’s often optimistic evangelical humanism to Montaigne’s skepticism. The notion of the “Renaissance” is rather problematic, as will become clear in this course. Rabelais’s heterogeneous work contains many elements one might associate with the Middle Ages, while Montaigne’s explorations often fit more comfortably in the fractured context of modernité.

**Required texts:**

François Rabelais (Guy Demerson edition, Editions de Seuil)

*Pantagruel*

*Gargantua*

*Tiers livre*

*Quart livre*

Michel de Montaigne (Alexandra Micha edition, GF-Flammarion)

*Livres I, II et III*

**Required work:**

Midterm and final

Exposé

Either (2) 8-10 page papers or (1) 20-page paper