Seminar: First-Person Narrative

In this seminar, we will deal with first-person narration primarily in its traditional literary modes: retrospective *récit*, diary, and letter. Broadly speaking, the focus will be on the way in which an individual attempts to convey personal experience in a meaningful way. While most of the works to be read are novels, the last two illustrate the blurring of clear-cut generic boundaries that characterizes a good deal of literary writing in France over the last several decades.

Texts to be ordered:

- Prévost, *Manon Lescaut* (Garnier-Flammarion)
- Gide, *L’Immoraliste* (Folio)
- Proust, *Combray* (Petits Classiques Larousse)
- Colette, *La Vagabonde* (Livre de poche)
- Camus, *L’Étranger* (Folio)
- Beauvoir, *La Femme rompue* (Folio)
- Laurens, *L’Amour, roman* (Folio)
- Ernaux, *Les Années* (Folio)

I will also make available some other texts: a short story by Balzac, as an example of classical *third*-person narration; extracts from Rousseau’s *Confessions*; René; Nerval’s *Sylvie*, etc.

The typical class will be devoted to discussion of readings, with students expected to participate actively. In the last part of the semester, each student will have a class period (or half of one, depending on the number of students enrolled) to present work in progress on the seminar paper.

Work required:

- An analysis (2-4 pages) of a passage from one of the works to be read in the course.

- Periodic short “reactions” (a paragraph or page) to texts being read in class.

- A critical / research paper of 20 pages due at the end of the semester.

- A selective bibliography (in proper MLA format) of critical readings and secondary sources relevant to the topic chosen for the seminar paper; due two weeks before the seminar paper.

- An oral presentation of the student’s work in progress on the topic for the seminar paper.

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me: 864-9075; tbooker@ku.edu.