

Instructor: Tracy RUTLER  
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Time: Wed. 6:00-9:00  
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## FR 597A: "The Abnormal Early Modern"

What does it mean to be normal? How does the concept of normalcy become solidified in Enlightenment discourse? What, then, is at stake for those who are ab-normal? In this seminar, we will examine how philosophical and literary works from the early modern period in France construct the idea of a heterogeneous subject, while simultaneously reading works that attempt to disrupt this normative discourse. The period of the Enlightenment in particular is one in which the classification of knowledge becomes valorized to previously unseen extents. Figures that remain unclassifiable are thus often excluded from the production of knowledge, or worse, they become instruments in the battle to maintain and reproduce social, religious, and cultural norms. Throughout the semester, we will read novels, letters, and plays that center on characters that defy early modern formulations of normativity, reflecting upon the ways in which these texts produce different kinds of knowledge. We will also read and discuss influential figures whose theoretical work can shape our discussion of norms and abnormality.

***\*This course will be conducted in French***



Image de *Description des principales monstruosités dans l'homme et dans les animaux précédée d'un discours sur la physiologie et la classification des monstres*, Jacques-Louis Moreau de la Sarthe, 1808

### ***Required Texts:***

- Corneille, Pierre. *Théâtre II*. Paris: Flammarion, 2006. ISBN: 2080712829; ISBN 13: 978-2080712820.
- Diderot, Denis. *Lettre sur les aveugles, Suivi de Lettre sur les sourds et muets*. Ed. Marion Hobson and Simon Harvey. Paris: Flammarion, 2000. ISBN: 2080710818; ISBN 13: 978-2080710819.
- Freccero, Carla. *Queer Early Modern*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006. ISBN: 0822336901; ISBN 13: 978-0822336907.
- Perrault, Charles. *Histoire de la Marquise-Marquis de Banneville*. Ed. Joan deJean. New York: Modern Language Association, 2004. ISBN: 0873529316; ISBN 13: 978-0873529310
- Rabelais, François. *Gargantua*. Ed. Marie-Madeleine Fragonard. Paris: Pocket, 2009. ISBN: 226619982X; ISBN 13: 978-2266199827.
- **Additional readings will be provided on Angel.**

**Objectives:**

This course will offer students the opportunity to:

- encounter and analyze both canonical and obscure texts from the early modern period
- engage with current critical theory on questions of cultural, political, and sexual normativity
- become familiar with alternative forms of subjectivation in early modern France
- consider how early modern notions of normativity shape our current social and political landscape

**Requirements:**

Each student will be required to produce an original piece of criticism suitable for delivery at a scholarly conference and eventually for publication in a professional journal.

Assignments for this course are:

- regular participation in class including informed discussion of all texts (this includes questions for critical reflection to be posted on ANGEL no later than 24 hours prior to the start of class)
- an annotated bibliography of current scholarship on the text/critical problem to be analyzed in the final project
- a 500-word proposal
- an outline of the final paper
- an in-class presentation
- a final paper in correct MLA format (15-20 pages)

Students are required to meet with me twice during the semester. Our first meeting will occur mid-way through the semester (precise dates TBA) to discuss potential final project ideas. The second meeting will occur after the student has submitted the bibliography, proposal, and outline. In this meeting we will discuss the shape, scope, and feasibility of the final project.

In addition, I will be available throughout the semester to discuss questions or concerns regarding the course and the texts.

**Grading:**

Final grades will be determined by performance in the following areas:

Active participation / ANGEL questions	20%
Bibliography, proposal, and outline	25%
In-class presentation	20%
Final paper	35%

### Attendance and Participation

Each week you will post a critical question regarding at least one of the texts on the syllabus for that week. These questions will guide our discussions, and must be posted on the ANGEL page in the appropriate discussion forum.

### Annotated Bibliography

The bibliography should include at least five articles and two books written relatively recently (i.e. since about 1995). This project is designed to help you begin thinking about the critical work pertaining to your final paper. The annotation should identify the major points of the article, and should address the contribution it makes to the body of scholarship. For instance, is the article proposing a new way of reading an old text? Or is it critiquing other readings of the text? What is its relation to other work you have read on the subject?

### Proposal

The purpose of the proposal is both to help me get an idea of the direction you would like to take with the final project, and also to help you as you begin the process. It should be about a page in length (500 words), and should provide a brief background for the project, a concise statement of the claim you would like to make, followed by an example that supports that claim.

### Presentation of Final Project

These presentations should be 10-12 minutes in length, and should present a coherent picture of your project to your classmates. Treat this as you would a conference presentation, meaning that you should have a clear introduction, touch on one or two points, provide close readings to support your claims, and offer a (tentative) conclusion. Each presentation will be followed by 5-7 minutes of Q&A from the class. The aim of the presentation is to receive some feedback before you will turn in the final project.

### Final Paper

Your final paper should be 15-20 pages in length and should demonstrate your own critical engagement with a problem. More than simply reviewing the existing literature, you should make a clear argument that is supported by the text. You will work with me throughout the semester to choose a topic that is relevant and that you are excited about. **You may write the paper in French or in English.** The choice of language should be based on the venue in which you might eventually present / publish the work.

### Academic Integrity

Penn State defines academic integrity as the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. All students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts (Faculty Senate Policy 49-20).

**Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course.** Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, submitting work of another person (including information from the Internet) or work previously used without informing the instructor, having unauthorized possession of examinations,

facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Students who are found to be dishonest will receive academic sanctions and will be reported to the University's Judicial Affairs office for possible further disciplinary sanction.

### Disability Policy

Note to students with disabilities: Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, contact the Office for Disability Services. For further information regarding policies, rights and responsibilities please visit the Office for Disability Services (ODS) Web site at: [www.equity.psu.edu/ods/](http://www.equity.psu.edu/ods/). Instructors should be notified as early in the semester as possible regarding the need for reasonable accommodations.

## **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

### **Week 1 (8/26): La Société des normes et l'anormal**

Introduction au séminaire

Michel Foucault, *Les Mots et les choses*, "Classer"

Pierre Macherey, *Le Sujet des normes*, "La Raison et les normes"

### **Week 2 (9/2): L'Anormalité sociale, le monstre**

Jean de Racine, *Phèdre*

Foucault, *Les Anormaux* (pp. 37-54)

Hélène Huet, *Monstrous Imagination*, "The Mother's Fancy"

Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park, *Wonders of Nature*, "Monsters: A Case Study"

### **Week 3 (9/9): La monstruosité maternelle**

Pierre de Corneille, *Médée*

Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim*

Julia Kristeva, *Les Pouvoirs de l'horreur*

### **Week 4 (9/16): Le monstre moral**

François Rabelais, *Gargantua*

Foucault, *Les Anormaux* (pp. 55-74)

Macherey, *De Canguilhem à Foucault, la force des normes*, "Pour une histoire naturelle des normes"

### **Week 5 (9/23): Le monstre moral (suite)**

Rabelais, *Gargantua*

Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, "The Grotesque Image of the Body and its Sources"

### **Week 6 (9/30): L'anormalité sexuelle, la lesbienne**

Isaac de Benserade, *Iphis et Iante*

Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*, "Time Binds, or, Erotohistoriography"

Carla Freccero, *Queer / Early / Modern* (pp. 1-50)

**Week 7 (10/7): Le monstre colonisé**

Denis Diderot, *Le Supplément au voyage de Bougainville*

Andrew Curran, *Sublime Disorder: Physical Monstrosity in Diderot's Universe*, "Introduction"

**Week 8 (10/14): Visite de Mary McAlpin, Professor and Associate Department Head, Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

[Lectures à déterminer]

**Week 9 (10/21): Le transsexuel**

Charles Perrault, *Histoire de la Marquise-Marquis de Banneville*

Robert McRuer, *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability*,

"Introduction: Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence"

Freccero, *Queer / Early / Modern* (pp. 51-104)

**Week 10 (10/28): L'Anormalité physique, l'handicap**

Michel de Montaigne, *Essais*, "Des Boyteux" and "De la Phisionomie"

Lennard Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body*, "Constructing Normalcy"

**Week 11 (11/4): L'handicap exceptionnel**

Diderot, *Lettre sur les aveugles*

Katherine Tunstall, *Blindness and Enlightenment: An Essay*, "Point of View and Point de Vue"

David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder, "Narrative Prosthesis" (*The Disability Studies Reader*)

**Week 12 (11/11): L'handicap exceptionnel (suite)**

Diderot, *Lettre sur les sourds et muets*

**Week 13 (11/18): Présentations**

**Week 14 (11/25): Congé**

**Week 15 (12/2): Présentations**

**Week 16 (12/9): Conclusions**