MODULE TITLE: Looking Awry: Exploring the Unorthodox in Early Modern France

LECTURER(S): Dr Hugh Roberts

CREDIT VALUE: 15

ECTS VALUE: 7.5

PRE-REQUISITES: MLF2001 or equivalent or native-speaker competence

CO-REQUISITES: None

DURATION OF MODULE: One term

TOTAL STUDENT STUDY TIME: 150 hours

AIMS

To introduce students to the role of the unorthodox in early modern French culture

To examine the ways in which early modern writers and artists challenge conventional worldviews, and/or respond to such challenges

To evaluate the exploration of unorthodox ideas and of other worlds in a selection of texts by Rabelais, Montaigne, Bruscambille, Cyrano de Bergerac and Molière

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (ILO’s)

On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

Module Specific Skills:

1. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of a selection of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century French texts and their exploration of unorthodox material
2. Make comparisons between texts from different periods in their treatment of related themes
3. Show understanding of sixteenth-century French language and of some early modern philosophical terminology
4. Demonstrate awareness of the significance of unorthodox thinking in the cultural and social history of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France

Discipline Specific Skills:

5. After initial input from the course tutor, apply and evaluate critical approaches to the material under analysis independently.
6. Argue at length and in detail about an aspect of the topic, supporting the argument with evidence from the text and with opinions from secondary literature.
7. Use a range of literary-critical terminology, applying it to independently researched material as well as to material introduced by the course tutor.
8. Access and use critically printed and, where appropriate, electronic learning resources identified as useful by the course tutor; find independently and evaluate critically other relevant resources.
9. Analyse texts in the TL, showing awareness of their relation to the social, historical and generic context in which they were written, and present the results orally / in writing

Personal and Key Skills:

10. Undertake independent researches on the basis of a taught course.
11. Adopt a critical approach to the selection and organisation of a large body of material in order to produce, to a deadline, a written or oral argument of some complexity.
12. Present a cogent and sustained argument orally / in writing, in English / in the TL, on an aspect of the subject of the student’s own choosing, and selecting appropriate methods of exposition
13. Using bibliographical material provided, select, plan and carry out a programme of study leading to an essay / presentation on a chosen topic, to a specified length and deadline

LEARNING/TEACHING METHODS

Details of Learning and Teaching Methods:

5 hour-long lectures and 10 hour-long seminars, the latter normally involving guided close reading of
extracts. Students receive verbal feedback on any seminar presentations. Coursework essay (if term 1) or exam (if term 2) and formative assessment are returned to students with written comments, including a standardized feedback form. Use of library and web resources.

ASSIGNMENTS & ASSESSMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formative or % Contribution:</th>
<th>Form of Assessment:</th>
<th>Size of the assessment e.g. duration/length</th>
<th>ILO’s assessed by this assessment:</th>
<th>Feedback method:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formative</td>
<td>Mini essay</td>
<td>750 words</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Written and/or verbal comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Essay (if term 1)</td>
<td>3000 words</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Written comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Exam (if term2)</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>Written comments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SYLLABUS PLAN

The following represents a probable model. The actual plan may vary slightly depending on staff availability.

1 lecture to introduce the module and each of the four main texts studied. 10 seminars, one introductory, up to 2 on each of the main texts, and 1 further seminar for feedback/exam preparation (if applicable).

This module focuses on how early modern writers explore the unorthodox, in terms of strange ideas, unconventional behaviour and new worlds of geography and of the imagination. Standard ways of imagining man and his place in the world were fundamentally shaken during the early modern period in France. The discovery of the New World, the Reformation and the rediscovery of transgressive ideas from ancient philosophy all contributed to a literal and metaphorical exploration of the unorthodox. This module examines how early modern writers investigate these strange new worlds in works which combine humour, paradox, satire and fantasy to delve into a wide range of fields from sex and philosophy to the self and popular culture. Rabelais's *Quart Livre* tells of a voyage to consult the oracle of the Holy Grail during which Pantagruel and his companions encounter a series of strange foreign lands and monsters. Montaigne's *Essais* challenge standard ways of thinking in their exploration of the self, scepticism and the New World. The speeches of the early-seventeenth-century comedian Bruscambille explore a host of paradoxical topics which show precisely what early French public theatre audiences found funny, in both senses of the word. Cyrano de Bergerac's *Les États et Empires de la Lune* turn the world upside down as the people of the Moon force the narrator to question his most basic assumptions in a work which still arouses controversy. Molière's *Dom Juan* portrays an incorrigible seducer and free-thinker who transgresses taboos with glee.

INDICATIVE LEARNING RESOURCES

**Indicative basic reading list:**

Rabelais, *Le Quart Livre* (Gallimard [Folio])

Montaigne, *Essais* [selected chapters to be provided via ELE]

Bruscambille, *Œuvres* [selection to be provided via ELE]

Cyrano de Bergerac, *Les États et Empires de la Lune* in *L'Autre Monde* (Gallimard [Folio])

Molière, *Dom Juan* (Gallimard [Folio])

2. Secondary Texts:


Other secondary texts will be recommended during the course of the module.

*Indicative web based resources:*

ELE

| DATE OF LAST REVISION | 14 September 2011 |