

Seminar: First-Person Narrative

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

Texts to be ordered (with editions and ISBN numbers):

Prévost, Manon Lescaut (Garnier-Flammarion, 2006; ISBN 9782080712981)
Gide, L'Immoraliste (Folio, 1972; ISBN 9782070362295)
Colette, La vagabonde (Livre de poche, 1975; ISBN 9782253011095)
Sartre, La nausée (Folio, 1972; ISBN 9782070368051)
Camus, L'Etranger (Folioplus classiques, 2005; ISBN 9782070306022)
Sarraute, Enfance (Folioplus classiques, 2004; ISBN 9782070316960)
Ernaux, Passion simple (Folio, 1994; ISBN 9782070388400)
Laurens, L'amour, roman (Folio, 2004; ISBN 9782070304257)

I will also make available some other texts (extracts from Rousseau's Confessions, René, 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 part of one, depending on the number of students in the class) during which to present work in progress on the semester paper.

Work required:

One or two short analyses (2-4 pages each) of a limited text from one of the works listed above.

Periodic "reaction papers" of a more informal nature to texts being read in class.

A critical / research seminar 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.

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.