**The Eighteenth-Century Novel: Adventure, Fiction, and Form**

**Course description:**

This course provides students with an overview of the eighteenth-century French novel, engaging with theories about the genre’s origins, its precursors, and its relationship to history and current events. Exploring different iterations of the genre, including the pseudo-memoir, the epistolary novel, and the Orientalist fantasy, we will read the novel against the backdrop of growing discontent with the *société d’états* and an Enlightenment critique of absolutism. Against this historical backdrop, we will also ask to what extent the division between regimes of fact and fiction is essential to the definition of the genre.

**Course objectives:**

* To read texts that offer a variety of perspectives using different genre devices.
* To discuss preconceptions about the novel and theories about its “evolution” in the eighteenth century.
* To explore the novel as a site for social commentary.
* To engage with notions of fiction and representation in an eighteenth century context.

**Primary Readings** (subject to change)

* Montesquieu *Lettres persanes*
* Prévost *Manon Lescaut*
* Graffigny *Lettres d’une Péruvienne*
* Rousseau *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse*
* Diderot *Jacques le fataliste et son maître*
* Cazotte *Le Diable amoureux*