

Spring 2012

FREN661/CMPL454



The Anglo-French Renaissance: Montaigne, Shakespeare, and Renaissance Political Thought

Prof. Hassan Melehy

Tu 3:30-6
New East 301

Open to both undergraduate and graduate students

Montaigne's *Essais* and Shakespeare's plays both reflect a strong interest in the political upheavals of the sixteenth century. These authors often engage with the proliferation of the political writings of their era that treat sovereignty, state legitimacy, the role and rights of the citizen, the ideal society, and other questions. Furthermore, as a reader of Montaigne, Shakespeare sometimes continued his French predecessor's meditations on many subjects, notably the latter's reactions to political thought, often presenting variations on and implicit criticisms of them.

In this course, we will read major political thinkers of the sixteenth century—Erasmus, Machiavelli, Thomas More, Justus Lipsius, Etienne de La Boétie, among others—and consider how Montaigne and Shakespeare responded to them. Our objective will be to consider the extension and nuancing of political thought in these two major literary authors, as well as how their treatment affects our understanding of European Renaissance politics.

The course is taught in English. Readings by all authors will be available in English; those by French authors will be available in French.

Undergraduates are welcome in this course; French credit is available for majors and minors who do the reading and writing in French.

For further information, please contact Prof. Melehy: hmelehy@unc.edu