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**646 Studies in 18C French Literature**

*Montesquieu*

**Professor: James Swenson**

W 3:50 – 6:30 PM (AB-4190)

Montesquieu is the author of two of the foundational works of the French Enlightenment: the epistolary novel *Les lettres persanes* and the political treatise *De l'esprit des lois*. This combination of literary expression and philosophy is the defining characteristic of the *philosophe*. Montesquieu wrote in a remarkable number of additional genres, from scientific, legal and economic essays to ancient history and exotic tales. His career illustrates the role of the institutions of intellectual sociability that sustained and spread Enlightenment thought. We will read his works, both major and minor, in the context of the social and cultural history of the period. Written work and oral presentations will be designed to develop professional presentation skills.

**Recommended editions:**

*Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence*. Ed. Catherine Volpilhac-Auger et Catherine Larrère. Gallimard Folio Classique, 2008. ISBN 2070400964

*De l'esprit des lois. Anthologie*. Ed. Denis de Casabianca. GF Flammarion, 2013. ISBN 2081470128

*Histoire véritable et autres fictions*. Ed. Catherine Volpilhac-Auger et Philip Stewart. Gallimard Folio Classique, 2011. ISBN 2070395820

*Les lettres persanes*. Ed. Laurent Versini. GF Flammarion, 2019. ISBN 2081386674

**675 Studies In Francophone Literature**  
*Francophone Afrofuturism*  
**Professor: Shanna Jean-Baptiste**  
M 3:50 – 6:30 PM (AB-4190)

Afrofuturism was originally defined as an African American aesthetic practice. Mark Dery affirms in 1993: “speculative fiction that treat African American themes and addresses African Americans concerns in the context of twentieth century technoculture—and more generally, African Americans signification that appropriates images of technology and a prosthetically enhanced future— might, for want of a better word, be called ‘Afrofuturism.’”<sup>1</sup> In recent years, Afrodiasporic writers have contributed to the genre and expanded this initial definition introduced by Dery. Yet, as Afrodiasporic expressions of Black futures are now more and more prominent in Afrofuturism, the Francophone world seems to remain underrepresented.

This graduate course will explore the depictions and expressions of Black futures in the French-speaking world and provide a broad overview of Francophone Afrofuturism as a subfield of science fiction and Afrofuturism. We will trace the genealogy and contours of Francophone Afrofuturism and place it against French colonial history, as well as the larger history of the African diaspora. Our analyses will pay particular attention to the interpretations of Black Francophone futurities that offer counter-narratives of the colonial past or resist contemporary neocolonial practices. Students will be introduced to Francophone Afrofuturist literary and cultural aesthetics through the examination of different speculative works, both literary and artistic, from Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Congo, Djibouti, Senegal, and Haiti. Topics of discussion will include counter-histories, gender, immigrant and refugee experiences, Pan-Africanism, religion, ecology, urbanism, fashion, and music.