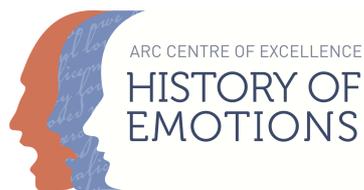
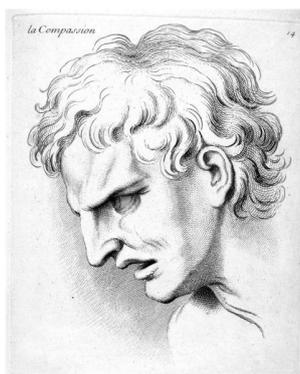


ENGLISH AND THEATRE STUDIES RESEARCH SEMINAR
Joint event with the Centre for the History of Emotions



Thursday 8 August, 5.30pm, OLD ARTS, THEATRE C



Katherine Ibbett, French, University College London,
"Pitiful Violence: The Marital Misunderstanding Plot in Seventeenth-Century French Fiction."

Abstract: When the French novel got underway as a genre in the late 17thc, it repeatedly represented the crisis of the religious wars between Catholics and Protestants in the late 16thc. Equally repeatedly, the seventeenth-century novel was drawn to scenes of compassionate misunderstanding between men and women in aristocratic marriages. In this paper I'll consider the ways in which the early novel puts those two problems in relation to one another. What were the relations between compassion and religious toleration, and why were they so significant for the beginnings of a new genre?

Bio: Katherine Ibbett is Reader in Early Modern Studies in the Department of French, University College London; in 2012-13, she was a Fellow of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University. Her BA is from Oxford University and her MA and PhD from the University of California, Berkeley, and she was an assistant professor at the University of Michigan before moving to London.

Her publications include *The Style of the State in French Theater, 1630-1660* (Ashgate, 2009) and in December 2013 a volume co-edited with Hall Bjornstad, *Walter Benjamin's Hypothetical French Trauerspiel*, will appear with Yale French Studies.

Ibbett is currently working on a book about compassion in early modern France. The book draws on a range of genres—novels, tragedies, religious treatises—to pursue the political inflections of the language of fellow-feeling that flourished in the century or so after France's wars of religion. This is not an optimistic book: Ibbett suggests that far from demonstrating kindness toward the other, the language of compassion has historically pointed to a fracture in the social bond.

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