This course is dedicated to the influential work of the Moroccan writer and thinker Abdelkebir Khatibi, with particular emphasis on the question of language. A novelist, poet, philosopher and essayist, Khatibi’s nuanced and often quite challenging thought and writing have enriched the work of scholars in literary studies, philosophy, postcolonial/decolonial theory, poststructuralist theory and political thought well beyond the Maghreb. Yet, very few have attended to the diversity of his corpus. While his exemplary novel, Amour bilingue is perhaps his best-known work, he is the author of a large body of novels, drama and poetry. A trained sociologist, his writing in this field engages with diverse visual, textual and artistic cultural spheres from North Africa, Europe and Asia, offering us a critical vocabulary and much needed methodology in our approach to studying these areas of cultural production.
This seminar considers the intersections of literature and social commentary in Renaissance France and Europe. The 16th century saw the heights of humanism and the progression to what we now call early modernity. Focusing on the works of Rabelais and Montaigne who exemplify these two moments, we will consider the interactions between literature and society, politics and intellectual and religious culture. What literary techniques make up the central engines of social commentary? How do texts construct a self and others as vehicles for critique? How do laughter, skepticism and vituperation enable and/or challenge critical interpretation? Examining the tools with which literature probes the world, we will also read works by Thomas More, Desiderius Erasmus, Etienne de la Boétie, Pico della Mirandola, Niccolò Machiavelli and others. In addition to our early modern texts, this class will also include discussion of issues and best practices in academic research and the profession. * Class discussion will be predominantly in French*