**Defining France**

**Seminar 2**

**Reading**:

You should refer to:

Christine de Pizan, *La Cité des Dames*, trans. Thérèse Moreau and Éric Hicks (Paris: Stock/Moyen Age, 1986, repr. 2000)

An overview of the different parts of the text may be found on pp. 25-28 of this edition (the ‘Analyse de l’oeuvre’); you may find this useful as a framework for your reading of individual sections.

Please focus your reading on Book One, particularly on the following chapters of the text:

* 1-9 (pp. 35-56)
* 11-13 (pp. 61-66)
* 27-28 (pp. 91-94)
* 33 (pp. 99-101)
* 43-44 (pp. 114-118)

You might also like to look at the manuscript copy:

[http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6000102v/f1.image.r=manuscrit%20francais%20607%20christine](http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark%3A/12148/btv1b6000102v/f1.image.r%3Dmanuscrit%20francais%20607%20christine)

**Questions to consider:**

How does Christine’s work compare with that of Marie (you might like to consider questions of authorship, authority, narrative, readership etc.)? What are the similarities and differences you notice? How does Christine’s introduction of her work compare with the way Marie presents her writing project?

What is Christine’s role in the text and how does she present herself/come across? What is the purpose of the various female personifications she encounters?

What is the Cité des Dames exactly and why is it built? How is it connected to writing for and about women? What is the text’s position when it comes to this broader textual culture?

What is the argument that Christine is presenting in Book One of the *Cité des Dames*? What are her examples supposed to illustrate? In what sense is the work didactic or moralising?

What kind of reader do you think this work presumes?