

Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures

GER 420 – 2009 Age of Goethe

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Course Outline

Germany's most famous poet, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe lived from 1749 to 1832. Arguably, his lifetime spanned the end of the feudal age and the rise of the modern period in Germany. The French Revolution shook the world when he was 40, and the daring experiments of the Romantic poets burst onto the artistic scene in the decade after that. Napoleon brought the Holy Roman Empire to an end as Hegel was completing his *Phenomenologie des Geistes* in 1806. Three years later, Goethe produced what he considered his "best book" *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*. And in the coming years, as the German political landscape was changed by war and reform movements, Heinrich von Kleist and E. T. A. Hoffmann produced remarkable and troubling works of fiction. Our aim in this course is to provide a survey of this innovating period in German literature. We will organize our discussion under the following headings:

World and Nation
Restlessness, Imperialism, Exploration
Nature and Science
Creativity and the Arts
Bildung and the Cultivation of the Self
History and Humanity
The Mind and the Psyche
Love and Sexuality
The Gendered Body

Texts

Students are required to purchase the following books, available at Victoria College Bookstore:

- Goethe, *Die Leiden des jungen Werther*
- Schiller, *Kabale und Liebe*
- Goethe, *Iphigenie auf Tauris*
- Friedrich Schlegel, *Lucinde*
- E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Der goldene Topf*
- Heinrich von Kleist, *Die Verlobung in St Domingo*

Additional texts will be available on the course website.