

The University of Toronto
Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures

German 421/Spring 2010: Gender and Identity

Time and Place: Thursday 10-12 am, place TBA
Instructor: Christine Lehleiter

Course Description

“Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” was the motto and promise of the French Revolution. As soon as it was formulated, women were starting to ask how the ideals of the Enlightenment, which formed the basis of the political struggle of the French Revolution, would apply to female identity. Some of the most pressing questions were -- and in many ways remain until today: Are women included in the Enlightenment understanding of selfhood and citizenship? Do they want to be included? How do the answers to these questions affect women’s lives?

This course is organized around key concepts which were first formulated during the Enlightenment and still inform our discussion of gender and identity today. We will examine topics like nature and culture, contract theory and marriage, and the public and the private sphere. Our readings will range from the eighteenth to the twentieth century. Among the authors that we will discuss are Sophie von La Roche, Clara Zetkin, and Ingeborg Bachmann.

Our work in class will be shaped by class discussions, group work, and occasional lectures. The majority of reading assignments and all homework and discussions will be in German.

Instructor’s Contact Information

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Texte (Änderungen vorbehalten)

Sophie von La Roche, *Die Geschichte des Fräulein von Sternheims*

Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel, *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Weiber*

Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Über den Geschlechtsunterschied*

Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Frauenrollen auf dem römischen Theater von Männern gespielt*

Friedrich Schiller, *Würde der Frauen*

Rahel Varnhagen, *Briefe*

Bettina von Arnim, *Die Gündertode*

Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*

Clara Zetkin, *Proletarische Frauen, seid bereit!*

Ingeborg Bachmann, *Undine geht*