

The University of Toronto
Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures

German 321H Fall: Literary Realism in the Industrial Age

Fall 2023, Tuesday 1-3 PM, CR 403

Instructor's Contact Information

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Course Description

The 19th Century brought enormous technological and political changes for German speaking lands. National feelings were strengthened during the Napoleonic wars and a German state emerged from a conglomerate of small duchies. Political revolts challenged absolutistic forms of government and started to replace it with a democratic state of classes. While censorship was always on the horizon, a new sense of the freedom of speech together with technical advances in printing processes led to an explosion of print media. The composition of German society changed dramatically as a result of the industrial revolution which replaced traditional manufacturing with mass production by machines and with private capital. Despite widespread social hardship, the century was shaped by the belief in progress and the optimism that new scientific discoveries would lead to a better life. Railway, photography, and sound recording were among the technologies which became symbols of progress and shaped new inquiries into body and mind.

In this course, we will study how German authors reflected on political and technological developments in literary, economic, and philosophical texts. Our work in class will be shaped by class discussions, group work, and occasional lectures. With a few exceptions, assignments and discussions will be in German.

Course Objectives

The primary objectives of this course are to introduce students to major developments in nineteenth-century Germany as they are reflected in German literary, political and philosophical texts, to enhance students' ability to analyze and interpret texts, and to improve students' written and spoken German.

Evaluation of Course Work (Final Grade)

Attendance and participation:	15%
Discussion forum contributions:	5%
Object presentation:	15%
In-class essay:	25%
Letter from the past:	20%
Oral assessment:	20%