

German 320: Literature, Culture and Society, 1750-1870
Fall 2007

Instructor:

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Office hours: M&W, 10-11am

Course Description:

The course is an introduction into the culture of the period between 1750 and 1870, although our focus will be on the years before 1850. This time period is often referred to as the Golden Age of German literature, and – regardless of any labels – it is the time period in which several developments informing German history combined to create a vibrant intellectual and cultural life. There was the formation of a bourgeois consciousness in often silent opposition to political hierarchies; the focus on the human being as an individual, and the attempt to base society in the cooperation of individuals rather than in social hierarchies. The German language took the place of Latin as a language of learning, and developed into an adequate tool making the intellectual contributions of a Kant or Hegel possible in the first place. A national consciousness developed with a vision of “Germanness” as rooted in – actual or imaginary – cultural values. We will also discuss the end of this age, which eventually encountered the limits of its value system in the restructuring of society brought about by far-reaching economic, technological and political transformations typical for the early Industrial Revolution.

However, the basic tensions that the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century attempted to negotiate persist in our time and therefore the course is also an introduction to the conceptual problems of modernity. The legacy of the eighteenth century is still the foundation of our understanding of, for example, democracy, personal integrity, freedom, scientific thought, and education – all of which are currently undergoing transformation or contestation.

Our focus will be on literary and philosophical works, since they were the prime medium for the politically still powerless bourgeoisie of communicating about values and aspirations. However, we will also give some consideration to music, painting, new social conventions (such as gathering at salons), and to the historical context.

Assignments and Quizzes:

You will write **six short essay papers** of two pages each (600 words or more). You will receive a list of possible topics for each paper. The first four of those papers can be rewritten for credit. A **final paper** of four to five pages (1200-1500 words) is due at the end of the term. The instructor will discuss a possible topic with you, and you will hand in a draft version first. You will also give a short in-class **presentation**, which should lead up to a discussion. In your presentation, you can broach an interpretation of a text being discussed, relate contextual materials, draw comparisons with other texts read.

We will write **two quizzes**, one at mid-term and a second one at the end of the semester. The quizzes will focus on factual knowledge.

Grading:

Participation and preparation:	25%
Five two-page papers:	35%
Final paper:	20%
1 class presentation	5%
Mid-term quiz	5%
Final quiz	10%

Attendance policy: You may miss two class sessions unexcused without lowering your grade. Each additional unexcused absence will lower your final grade by 3%. Eight unexcused absences constitute failure of the course, regardless of grades earned in this course.

Required for Purchase:

Reclam editions of
Gotthold Ephraim Lessing: *Miss Sara Sampson*
G. E. Lessing: *Emilia Galotti*
G. E. Lessing: *Nathan der Weise*
Johann Wolfgang Goethe: *Iphigenie auf Tauris*
Joseph von Eichendorff: *Das Marmorbild*
Georg Büchner: *Dantons Tod*

Other texts will be made available by the instructor.

Tentative Schedule

Quiz days and times t.b.a.

August 24

Th Introduction

August 27 – 30

T Louise Adelgunde Victorie Gottsched: *Der Witzling* &
Johann Christoph Gottsched: *Versuch einer Critischen Dichtkunst vor die Deutschen*. (Excerpt)

Th Lessing: *Miß Sara Sampson*
Lessing/Mendelsohn/Nicolai: *Briefwechsel über das Trauerspiel* (Excerpt)

September 3-6

M Labor Day (no class)

T Lessing: *Miß Sara Sampson*

Th Lessing: *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* (Excerpt)

September 10-13

T Lessing: *Emilia Galotti*
Due: 2-page paper I

Th Lessing: *Emilia Galotti*

September 17-20

T Lessing: *Nathan der Weise*

Th Lessing: *Nathan der Weise*

September 24 – 27

T Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz: *Der neue Menoza*

Th Lenz: *Der neue Menoza*

October 1 – 4

T Friedrich Schiller: „Die Schaubühne als moralische Anstalt betrachtet.“
Due: 2-page paper II

Th Johann Wolfgang Goethe: *Iphigenie auf Tauris*

October 8-11

- Screening of *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Die Zauberflöte*. Time/place t.b.a.
- T Discussion of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: *Die Zauberflöte* & slide show on Freemasonry (Freimaurer)
- Th Immanuel Kant: *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (Excerpt on the sublime)

October 15-18

- M *Fall Recess (no class)*
- W *Fall Recess (no class)*

- Th Heinrich von Kleist: „Empfindungen vor Friedrichs Seelandschaft“
Slide show of paintings by Caspar David Friedrich & Otto Runge
Due: 2-page paper III

October 22-25

- T Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg): „Die Christenheit oder Europa“
- Th Bettina von Arnim: *Die Gúnderode* (excerpts) &
Karoline von Gúnderode: selected poems
William Rasch: „Mensch, Bürger, Weib: Gender and the Limitations of Late 18th-Century Neohumanist Discourse. *The German Quarterly*, Vol. 66, No. 1

October 29 – November 1

- T Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (Friedrich Hölderlin/Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling): „Das älteste Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus“
- Th Friedrich Schlegel: „Über den Republikanismus“

November 5-8

- T Friedrich Schiller: selected poems, including: “Ode an die Freude” & Beethoven: Ninth Symphony
Due: 2-page paper IV
- Th Joseph von Eichendorff: *Das Marmorbild*

November 12-15

- T Eichendorff: *Das Marmorbild*
- Th Georg Büchner: *Dantons Tod*

November 19-22

T Georg Büchner: *Dantons Tod*

W *Thanksgiving Recess (no class)*

Th *Thanksgiving (no class)*

November 26-29

T Heinrich Heine: *Reisebilder*
Due: 2-page paper V

Th Heinrich Heine: *Reisebilder*

December 3 – 5

T final session
Due: 4-5 page paper