

Gender and the German Drama: 18th-19th Century Plays, Playwrights and Protagonists

Peter Schweppe

Upper Level German (or can be taught in translation and cross-listed with Gender Studies)

Leading up to the turn of the nineteenth century, German drama not only came to life with tales of intrigue, it instrumentally modeled ideas about gender. From Sarah Sampson to Mary Stuart, female figures played protagonist roles that have characterized important artistic periods in the German literary tradition. Yet, the historical reception of German drama has largely focused on plays written by males, which underscores a one-dimensional perspective on popular female protagonists. This course seeks to reexamine the roles that females played in German drama by comparing the protagonists in three plays, two of which were written by female playwrights. Through an examination of form and content in these plays as well as the surrounding discussion of gender, this course seeks to introduce students to German drama, situate it into the backdrop of contemporary gender discourses, and hone analytical methods of interpretation of gender and drama.

This course is designed for upper-level or graduate-level German. Students will be asked to prepare for each class by reading the assigned texts and watching a screening of *Emilia Galotti* (1957). In addition, each student will participate in a reenactment of a scene from one play, which can be recorded or performed live in class; individuals will be asked to hand in a one-page critical reflection of their group's reenactment. Throughout the semester, students will write one mid-term test, a two-page close analysis of a scene, and a 10 page final paper.

Primary works:

Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim. *Emilia Galotti* (1772)

Bürger, Elise. *Adelheit, Gräfin von Teck* (1799)

Mereau-Brentano, Sophie. *Die Flucht nach der Hauptstadt* (1806)

Grading:

15% Class Participation and Course Preparation

15% Visual Presentation + Individual Write-up (1 page)

15% Scene Analysis (2 pages)

25% Midterm Quiz

30% Term Paper (8-10 pages)

Week 1: Einführung in die deutsche Dramatik

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Auszüge aus *Hamburgischen Dramaturgie* (1767-1769)

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Emilia Galotti* (1772)

Week 2: Bürgerliches Trauerspiel I

Friedrich Schiller, "Über das gegenwärtige teutsche Theater" (1783)

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing: *Emilia Galotti* (1772)

*2-page Scene Analysis (Due Week 4)

Week 3: Bürgerliches Trauerspiel II

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing: *Emilia Galotti* (1772)

Week 4: Aufklärung I

Elisa Bürger, *Adelheit, Gräfin von Teck* (1799)
Alexander von Humboldt, "Über die männliche und weibliche Form" (1795)
Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel, "Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Weiber" (1792)

Week 5: Aufklärung II

Elisa Bürger, *Adelheit, Gräfin von Teck* (1799)
Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Schiller, "Über epische und dramatische Dichtung" (1797)
Friedrich Schiller, "Die Würde der Frauen" (1795)

Week 6: Aufklärung III

Elisa Bürger: *Adelheit, Gräfin von Teck* (1799)
Immanuel Kant: "Was ist Aufklärung?" (1790)

Week 7: Romantik I

Sophie Mereau-Brentano: *Die Flucht nach der Hauptstadt* (1806)
A.C.: "Über Bildung der Frauen für Wissenschaften und Künste" (1806)
Novalis: "Astralis" (1800)

Week 8: Romantik II

Sophie Mereau-Brentano: *Die Flucht nach der Hauptstadt* (1806)
*In-class Midterm

Week 9: Romantik III

Sophie Mereau-Brentano: *Die Flucht nach der Hauptstadt* (1806)
Friedrich Schlegel: "Über die Philosophie: An Dorothea"

Week 10: Romantik IV

Sophie Mereau-Brentano: *Die Flucht nach der Hauptstadt* (1806)
Barbara Becker-Cantarino: "(Sozial)Geschichte der Frau in Deutschland" (1985)
Screening: *Emilia Galotti* (1957)

Final paper due 2 weeks after the last class.

Other Recommended Readings

Asmuth, Bernhard. *Einführung in die Dramenanalyse* (1984)
Blackwell, Jeannine and Susanne Zantop. "Trivial pursuits?" (2000)
Cocalis, Susan L, and Ferrel V. Rose. *Thalia's Daughters* (1996)
Dupree, Mary Helen. *The Mask and the Quill* (2011)
Fronius, Helen. *Women and Literature in the Goethe era (1770-1820)* (2007)
Heilmann, Lena. "Performance, Fear, and the Female Body" (2013)
Helfer, Martha. "Gender Studies and Romanticism" (2003)