



Female German Authors in Context

Fall Term 2023: 4 September – 15 December 2023
(break: 23-27 October 2023)

CATEGORY

Art and Literature

COURSE STRUCTURE

3 contact hours à 45 min per week (14 weeks + gap week)

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Time

Day: Thursday, 9:00-11:30 am

Place

t.b.a.

COURSE LANGUAGE

English

Language requirements (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)
English B2

TARGET GROUP

International exchange students of all subjects with a strong interest in the course topic. Humboldt Perspectives Study Abroad courses are designed for undergraduate students. Master students may participate if their home university agrees.

Students should have a broad interest in literature and a special interest in women's history.

CREDITS = 6 ECTS

All courses are accredited according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Women have engaged in the creative process of writing in German since at least the Middle Ages. However, the conditions under which they could write and publish have changed over the centuries, as women's place in society and as imaginations of women have changed. In this course we will look into the reasons why some women writers were well-known in their time and beyond and why others have been forgotten. We will look at the literary canon in German and discuss canonical diversification.

The basis for all work in this course will be analysis and discussions of selected works of prose and poetry by women from different periods, starting with the 19th century, but focussing on the 20th and 21st centuries. Most of the chosen authors and their work are connected to Berlin, so that the course has also a special Berlin Perspective.

Authors include Rahel Varnhagen, Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, Mascha Kaleko, Gabriele Tergit, Ingeborg Bachmann, Judith Schalansky and Emine Sevgi Özdamar.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The objective of this Bachelor-level course is to make students acquainted with some of the most important female writers in German and to enable them to understand and critically reflect questions of canonisation, gender and diversification in the literary field.

At the end of the course students should have an overview of the changing conditions of female writing during the last 200 years. They will have deepened their knowledge concerning literary periods and genres and will have sharpened their skills in analyzing literary texts and in discussing theoretical positions concerning the topic.

READINGS

see course schedule below

ASSIGNMENT INFO

Workload and assignments

In order to be granted 6 ECTS, participants will be asked to

- actively attend all sessions (a minimum of 80% attendance is required for classroom and online sessions)
- prepare and revise the classroom/online sessions
- hand in the following **assignments**:
 - an oral presentation of ten to twenty minutes
 - A written paper of 6 to 8 pages

Failure to fulfil one of the mentioned components results in failure of the class.

Assessment Components

The final grade will be composed of the above-mentioned assignments.

YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Marita Meyer studied Germanic Philology, Philosophy and History of Art in Heidelberg, where she obtained her doctor's degree in 2000 with a book on Peter Weiss and questions of representing the Holocaust. She worked as a lecturer at Yale University in 2000/01 and as a lecturer for the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) at the University of Szczecin (Poland) from 2001 to 2006. Since 2007, she has been teaching German literature and culture at Freie Universität Berlin, where she was head of the Master's program „Deutsch als Fremdsprache: Kulturvermittlung“ from 2013 to 2015. Since 2018 she teaches as Guest Professor at Middlebury College, Vermont, and since Fall 2022 also in the International Program of Humboldt University. Her recent research and publications focus on the discourses of globalisation and ecology in art and literature.

COURSE SCHEDULE

14 weeks + gap week

Week 1: Introduction

Content, Readings, Assignments, Excursion, etc: Text Verdana 10,5

Week 2: Does Gender matter in Literature?

Ruth Klüger: "Women read differently" (article)

Week 3: Chances and Limits, from Enlightenment to Romanticism

- Ute Frevert: "Women in German History: From Bourgeois Emancipation to Sexual Liberation" (Chapter one)
- Petra Wilhelmy Dollinger: "Berlin Salons" (www.jwa.org)
- Rahel Varnhagen: Selected letters

Week 4: Two Classical Poems on Nature

- Johann Wolfgang Goethe: "Mailed"
- Annette von Droste-Hülshoff: "By the Tower"

Week 5: "New Women" at the Beginning of the 20st century

- Berlin Poems by Mascha Kaleko

Week 6: "New Women" (2)

- Gabriele Tergit: "Käsebier takes Berlin" (extracts of the novel)

Week 7: Changing Perspectives in the 1960s

- Ingeborg Bachmann: "Undine quits" (novella)

BREAK: 23 – 27 October 2023

Week 8: Changing Perspectives (2)

- "Undine quits" in dialogue with the romantic fairytale "Undine" by Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué

Week 9: Writing in the 21st century

- Judith Schalansky: "The Giraffe ´s Neck", Between Darwinism and Sozialdarwinism

Week 10: Writing in the 21st century (2)

- Judith Schalansky: "The Giraffe ´s Neck", New Nature Writing?

Week 11: Women Writing Migration

- Emine Sevgi Özdamar: "The Bridge of the Golden Horn", In-between Istanbul and Berlin

Week 12: Women Writing Migration (2)

- "The Bridge of the Golden Horn", Looking for Traditions of Writing

Week 13: Writing as Resistance

Herta Müller: "The foreign view or life is a Fart in a Lantern" (essay)

Week 14: Conclusion

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Registration on Moodle (HU's e-learning platform)

in case of online sessions

- Fully functional device (laptop, tablet, PC)
- Stable internet connection
- Software: Zoom (video/audio)
- *Recommended* hardware: external headset for better sound quality

EXPECTATIONS & POLICIES

Preparation for lively discussions: be on time, have at least the required readings completed, and points in mind for discussion or clarification.

Assignments: complete all assignments according to the specified requirements on the schedule including handing them over to the lecturer.

Commitment: pay particular attention to the lecturer and respect differences of opinions in this international classroom.

Academic guidelines: Comply with academic integrity policies, especially the academic honor code and the student code of conduct. Plagiarism in even a small assignment will result in failing the entire course.

Attendance policy: Students must contact their class teachers to catch up on missed work – to excuse absence please contact the lecturer.

The course and its syllabus are subject to change. Last update: 11th January 2023