Course title: Performing Gender and Sexuality in the Weimar Republic
Course code: GEND 3101 BRGE
Programs offering course: Global Architecture and Design, Berlin Open Campus Block
Open Campus Track: Language, Literature, and Culture
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 3.00
Contact hours: 45.00
Term: Spring Block II 2021

Course Description

This course explores how some of the myriad constructions and representations of sex and gender that emerged during the Weimar Republic (1919-1933), were performed in private, in public, and in the spaces where the two spheres intersected. Specifically, the course highlights how individuals and artists reacted to and expanded upon societal expectations concerning gender roles, during a period when Berlin became a global center of cultural innovation, artistic exploration, and scientific discovery. The stage and burgeoning film industry offer important documentation and a departure point to explore how German society grappled with the political implications of the First World War. In addition, both offer opportunities to explore how consumerism influenced the ways in which individuals chose to fashion their identities and the spaces around them.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Critique constructions and representations of gender and sexuality in their historical context and in contemporary performance.
- Analyze and interpret issues of genre, form, and performance that are central to theater.
- Compare and contrast essentialist and constructivist conceptions of gender.
- Appraise and categorize specific theatrical productions and films within the broader German cultural and historical context.

Course Prerequisites

It is recommended that students have completed a course in gender studies or theater studies prior to enrollment.

Methods of Instruction

This course is taught through lectures, discussion of the assigned readings, study of scripts and analysis of film scenes. Excursions will offer the opportunity to attend contemporary productions of some of the most iconic plays and musicals from the period. Student responses to readings and theatrical productions will contribute significantly to discussion.

Key figures discussed: Claire Waldoff, Marlene Dietrich, Magnus Hirschfeld, Anita Berber, The Tiller Girls, Karyl Norman, Jean Malin, Francis Renault, Julian Eltinge, Bert Savoy, Ray Bourbon, Lester LaMonte, Francis David, Gita Gilmore, Harvey Lee, Ricky Renee, Christopher Isherwood, Friedrich Hollaender, Mischa Spoliansky, Paul Abraham, Oscar Strauß, Peter Kreuder, Hansi Sturm, and Walter Kollo.

Key performance venues covered: Metropol Theater, Komische Oper, Eldorado, Luna Park, Wintergarten, Marien-Kasino, Silhouette, Kadeko, and Scala.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Short Written Assignments 20%
2. Midterm Exam 20%
3. Presentation 20%
4. Primary Source Essay 20%
Course Requirements

Short Written Assignments

Students are required to submit three short essays offering analysis and interpretation of the assigned readings and performances we attend. These 500–700-word essays are shared with everyone in the class. Your submission can only be on the designated topic and late work will not be given credit. Assignments will be graded according to thoughtfulness of analysis and argument, engagement with the material, as well as grammar, spelling, and style.

Midterm Exam

In-class, written exam. Mix of short-answer and essay responses. The midterm exam will consist of material covered during the first three weeks of class, including the readings assigned for those weeks and the in-class discussions.

Presentation

Students in small groups of three must conduct a 15-minute presentation on a topic to be determined in consultation with the instructor. Each presentation must include a bibliography of readings recommended to fellow students in order to gain a fuller sense of the structure or project in context. This assignment will be graded on thoroughness of research, skill of presentation and responding to student / instructor questioning, and peer evaluation.

Primary Source Essay

Students will submit an essay of 1500-2000 words covering a primary source. Primary sources might include Weimar-era writings on representations of gender and sexuality, relevant song lyrics and theater scripts, course-related theater or musical criticism from the time period, or diary entries from key figures discussed. The essay will be graded according to thoughtfulness of analysis and argument, engagement with the material, as well as grammar, spelling, and style.

Participation

Participation is valued as meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared in advance of each class session and to have regular attendance. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged with the materials as directed, for example, through classroom discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

Attendance

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and all absences will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for Open Campus and Short Term programs, absences that constitute more than 10% of the total course will result in a written warning.

Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.

For CIEE classes, excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students must be marked absent.

Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as to any required field placement. Students may not miss placement/work hours at an internship or service learning site unless approved in advance by the Academic Director and placement supervisor. All students must complete all of the requisite 100 minimum work hours on site at the internship or service learning placement to be eligible for academic credit.

Students who miss class for personal travel, including unforeseen delays that arise as a result of personal travel, will be marked as absent. No make-up or re-sit opportunity will be provided.
Attendance policies also apply to any required class excursion, with the exception that some class excursions cannot accommodate any tardiness, and students risk being marked as absent if they fail to be present at the appointed time.

Absences for classes will lead to the following penalties:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Total Course Hours Missed</th>
<th>Minimum Penalty</th>
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<tr>
<td>Up to 10%</td>
<td>Participation graded as per class requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 – 20%</td>
<td>Participation graded as per class requirements; 3% grade penalty &amp; written warning</td>
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<tr>
<td>More than 20%</td>
<td>Automatic course failure, and possible expulsion</td>
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N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, or local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.

**Weekly Schedule**

**Week 1**

Class: 1.1 Introduction

Course overview and discussion of how conceptions of the relationship between sex, gender, and sexuality vary across time and cultures.

Recommended Reading:


**Week 2**

Class: 2.1 Contextualizing the Era & Its Engagement with Sex & Gender

Topics: Defining a post-WWI Berlin sensibility, World League for Sexual Reform, Magnus Hirschfeld and “The German Invention of Homosexuality”; selections from Anders als die Anderen [Different from the Others] (feature film, Germany, 1919)

Reading:

Beachy 2014, 3–41, “The German Invention of Homosexuality”

Recommended reading:

Beachy 2014, 85–120, “The First Homosexual Rights Movement and the Struggle to Shape Identity”

Class: 2.2 The New Woman (Die neue Frau)

Topics: Exploring the spheres of domesticity, work, and fashion; selections from Dich hab’ ich geliebt [It’s You I Have Loved] (feature film, Germany, 1929)

Reading:
First written assignment due

Week 3
Class: 3.1 Women on Stage & Screen (Part I)
Topics: The emancipated woman, Marlene Dietrich and Claire Waldoff - Warum soll eine Frau kein Verhältnis haben?; selections from:

Der blaue Angel [The Blue Angel] (feature film, Germany, 1930)

Reading:
Roos 2010, 14-58, “Disciplining Women and Containing 'Pollution': The Rationale of Regulationism”

Class: 3.2 Women on Stage & Screen (Part II)
Topics: Policing of the female body, nudity, and Hosenrollen (Trouser Roles); selections from Kreuzzeug des Weibes [The Woman's Crusade] (feature film, Germany, 1926); primary source analysis:

Holtmont 1925

Reading:
Sutton 2011, 126-151 “The Trouser Role: Female Masculinity as Performance”

Recommended reading:
Toepfer 2003, 144-88

Second written assignment due

Class: 3.3

Attend a theatrical performance such as Ball im Savoy or Eine Frau, die weiss, was sie will or a performance at the Wintergarten.

Week 4
Class: 4.1 The New Man (Part I)
Topics: Homosexuality as identity. Kann denn Liebe Sünde sein? (Can love be a sin?)

Reading:
Lareau 2005, 15-33


Class: 4.2 The New Man (Part II) & Midterm Exam
Reading:
Kupffer, “The Ethical-Political Significance of Lieblingminne (1899),” in Kupffer, Lieblingminne, 1–18.

Midterm Exam

Week 5
Class: 5.1 Men on Stage & Screen
Topics: Drag, sexual ambiguity, and the politics of desire; selections from Cabaret (feature film, USA, 1972)
Reading (selections from):
Weininger 1906
Moreck 1931

Class: 5.2 Fashioning Sexual Identities in Independent Journals & Magazines
Topics: Der Eigene and Die Freundin
Reading:
Lybeck 2014, 151-188, “Emancipation and Desire in Weimar Berlin’s Female Homosexual Public Sphere”

Primary source essay due

Class: 5.3

Attend a Performance by Tim Fischer at Tipi or Bar Jeder Vernunft

Third written assignment due

Week 6
Class: 6.1 Fashionable Sexualities
Topics: Advertisements, fashioning interiors and exteriors (of the home and self)
Preparation:
Find two photos that capture gender expression from ready-to-wear fashion collections, advertisement copy or theatrical documentation from the related time period. Upload the image files to the assignment area on Canvas. Be prepared to discuss why you selected those images and what you see in them. Discuss the source of the photos as well (e.g. book, website, etc.).
Reading:
Ganeva 2008, Chapter 4, “Weimar Film as Fashion Show”
Ward 2001, 74-92, “Fashioning the Female Body”

Class: 6.2 Final Class & Presentations
Recommended Reading:

Due date for submission of Presentation

Course Materials
Readings
Ganeva, Mila. Women in Weimar Fashion: Discourses and Displays in German Culture, 1918-1933. Rochester, NY:
Camden House, 2008.


