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The German Discovery of Sex (Spring 2011)

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CLARK UNIVERSITY

The German Discovery of Sex

German 230

Spring 2011

Robert Tobin

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Office Hours: T, W, Th 1-2 or by appointment

In this course, we will use the tools of literary and cultural analysis, studying fictional, political, psychoanalytic and scientific works to investigate the emergence of modern sexual discourses in the German-speaking world. The Greek term “homo” (same) and the Latin “sex” (sex) were first combined to describe someone with a sexual interest in members of their own sex in 1869 in the German-speaking world. Similar observations can be made about terms such as “heterosexual,” “masochist,” and “transvestite.” There was apparently an intense interest in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century German-speaking central Europe in reconfiguring and reconsidering sexuality. Out of this interest emerged sexologists such as Richard von Krafft-Ebing, whose Psychopathia Sexualis introduced a new vocabulary of sexuality to the entire world, homosexual activists such as Karl Ulrichs, who made arguments about sexual rights that are still prevalent in the gay community today, and Sigmund Freud, whose understanding of sexuality arguably structured much of twentieth-century popular culture.

Grading:

In-class participation	25
Final ten-page paper	25
Mid-term paper	15
Class presentation and write-up	10
Cicada forum discussions	10
Symposium	15

In-Class Participation

Even though this class is larger than anticipated, it is still designed as a seminar. Please come prepared to debate and discuss. With a three-hour meeting time, everyone should have the opportunity to make a comment every single week.

Participation in the weekly break-out groups (English and German) will be part of this grade too.

Final ten-page research paper

This will be a classic research paper about a topic of your choice, emerging from class discussions. It should be literary or cultural in its focus and have at least five secondary sources. It should be about ten pages long (double-spaced) and follow MLA style.

Mid-term paper

This will be a five-page paper that brings together sexological and political writings with one of the literary texts that we have studied.

Class presentation and write-up

Every class will feature student presentations on scholarly research on the subject. Please write up your presentation with MLA style documentation, so your fellow students can refer to the articles that you discuss.

Cicada Discussions

By midnight of the Monday before each class, make a comment regarding the assigned reading on the forum on Cicada

Symposium: preparation, write-up, participation

The week before our symposium on the German Discovery of Sex, students will do research on the writings of our incoming speakers and write-up short reviews of their work (MLA style). Students will be introducing and moderating discussion of the symposium, as well as asking questions of the speakers.

German Discovery of Sex: Overview

Introductions: The Germans Discover Sex

Jan 18 Introductions [Cancelled due to weather]

Jan 25 Wedekind Spring's Awakening

Case Study: Homosexuality

Feb. 1 Ulrichs; Kertbeny; Westphal; Kupffer (PDFs)

Feb 8 Krafft-Ebing, excerpts (PDF); Freud, Three Case Studies;

Feb. 15 Lesbians in Germany (PDF)

Feb. 22 Mann, Death in Venice

Mar. 1 Kafka, Metamorphosis

SPRING BREAK

Theory

Mar. 15 Foucault, History of Sexuality

Masochism, Transsexuality and Hysteria

Mar. 22 Sacher-Masoch, Venus in Furs

Mar. 29 N.O. Body, Memoirs of a Man's Maiden Years

Apr. 5 Schnitzler, Fräulein Else

Symposium

Apr. 12 Prep for Symposium

Saturday April 16 Symposium

Apr. 19 Follow Up on Symposium / Sum Up Class

Contemporary Reflections

Apr. 26 Rosa von Praunheim, "The Einstein of Sex" (movie)