

Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe: Literature, Philosophy, and Science

HIST 25304/ 35304, CHSS 31202 PHIL 20610/30610, GRMN 25304/ 35304, HIPS 26701

Instructor: Robert J. Richards

Assistants: Sarah Panzer, Jake Smith

I. The following texts for the course may be found at the Seminary Co-operative Bookstore:

A. Primary Texts:

Goethe, *Sorrows of Young Werther* (Modern Library, trans. Burton Pike)

Goethe, *Italian Journey* (Viking Penguin, trans. Auden, W.H. and Meyer, Elizabeth)

Goethe, *Faust, Part One* (Oxford U.P.–World's Classics; trans. David Luke)

Goethe, *Selected Verse* (Penguin)

B. German editions for those who would like to try their hand; the following are also in the Seminary Co-Operative Bookstore:

Goethe, *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* (Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag)

Goethe, *Italienische Reise* (Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag)

Goethe, *Faust, Erster und zweiter Teil* (Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag)

C. Packets of Photocopies:

Goethe: Primary Readings (for sale in Social Sciences 205)

Goethe: Secondary Readings (for sale in Social Sciences 205)

D. Recommended text: Robert J. Richards, *The Romantic Conception of Life: Science and Philosophy in the Age of Goethe* (University of Chicago Press).

II. Requirements:

A. You will be responsible for preparing texts assigned for discussion, and it is imperative that you do so. You should also take seriously those items under recommended reading.

B. In the first half of the class, the instructor will provide short lectures to introduce

topics drawn from the readings. In the second half of each class, discussion will be initiated from very short papers that all students must have produced for that class. These papers—no longer than one-two pages—should state some problem, question, or central aspect of the reading for that class and then solve the problem or answer the question so stated. These should not be summaries of the reading, but the articulation of an important thesis contained therein and a critical stance in respect of that thesis. Undergraduate students should send the papers to the “drop box” on the Chalk site for the course; graduate students should send the papers to the instructor via email attachment. These papers should be sent by noon of the Monday before class. On these and all papers, you should make sure your name is on them and that you indicate whether you are an undergraduate or graduate student.

B. There will be two eight-ten page papers. The papers should deal with the primary material--i.e., under texts for discussion. The papers should also utilize the considerations, arguments, etc. to be found in the respective recommended readings. The first paper will be due Friday, February 5th, by 4:00 p.m. The final paper will be due Friday, March 12th, by 4:00 p.m. The papers should be typed, stapled, and *handed in on the date due*. Turn them into the secretary in the Fishbein Center (Social Sciences 207). You must also retain a copy of your paper.

The graduate students, instead of two eight-to-ten page papers, you may wish to do one longer paper. This should be a paper of some considerable research significance. If you wish to undertake this, you should discuss your project with the instructor. This paper will be due Monday, March 15th, by 4:00 p.m. These should also be turned in at the Fishbein Center (Social Sciences 207).

III. General Information:

Office: Social Sciences Research 205. Hours: TT: 1:45 p.m.-3:00 p.m. Phone: 702-8348; fax: 743-8949; email: r-richards@uchicago.edu. Webpage: <http://home.uchicago.edu/~rjr6/>.

Sarah Panzer: panzers@uchicago.edu.

I. Introduction:

A. Themes of the course:

1. Goethe a Romantic?
2. The construction of self through science and literature:
 - a) The nature of human nature
 - b) *Bildung* (development)

B. Recommended reading: Henry Hatfield, *Goethe: A Critical Introduction*, chaps. 1 & 2. In *Goethe: Secondary Readings*.

II. Sturm und Drang

A. Text for discussion:

1. Goethe, *Sorrows of Young Werther*
2. Heinrich von Kleist, "The More Recent (and more Fortunate) Werther."

B. Recommended reading: Richards, *Romantic Conception of Life*, pp. 325-54.

III. Goethe's Poetry: the Creation of the Self

A. Texts for discussions: Selections (in both German and English) of Goethe's Poetry (from *Selected Verse* and *Goethe: Primary Readings*): "Inconstancy" (**in Primary Readings**); "Mailed" (p. 7); "Willkommen und Abschied" (**in Primary Readings**) "Heidenroselein" (pp. 10-11); "Ganymed" (pp. 15-16); "Prometheus" (pp. 17-19); "Wanders Nachlied, I and II" (pp. 49-50); "An den Mond" (two versions, pp. 50-54); "Bin so in Lieb..." (P. 75; **also in Primary Readings**); "Erlkönig" (pp. 80-82); "Kennst du das Land . . ." (pp. 85-86; **also in Primary Readings**); "Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt. . ." (p. 87); "Metamorphose der Pflanzen" (pp. 147-51); "Natur und Kunst" (p. 197); "Das Tagebuch" (**in Primary Readings**); and "Gefunden" (p. 218; **also in Primary Readings**).

B. Recommended reading:

1. "Poems before 1786, in *Goethe, A Critical Introduction*. In *Goethe: Secondary Readings*.
2. Richards, *Romantic Conception of Life*, pp. 355-65.
3. David Wellbury, chap 1 of *Specular Moment*.

IV. "Brother and Sister" and Charlotte von Stein

A. Texts for discussion:

1. Selected Letters to Frau von Stein (from Selections from Goethe's Letters to Frau von Stein, 1776-1789, ed. and trans. Robert M. Browning [Columbia, S.C.: Camden House, 1990]): numbers 4, 6-7, 72, 145-46, 161-63, 189-91, 206, 252-56, 286, 349, 356, 408, 422, 429, 430-31. In *Goethe: Primary Readings*.
2. "Brother and Sister," in *Goethe: Primary Readings*.

B. Recommended reading:

1. Kurt Eissler, *Goethe, A Psychoanalytic Study*, chap. 4: "Goethe's Sexual Life." In *Goethe, Secondary Readings*.
2. Eissler, chap. 5: "The Siblings." In *Goethe, Secondary Readings*.

V. The Italian Journey

A. Texts for discussion:

1. Goethe, *Italian Journey*, pp. 23-48, 68-79, 90-97, 102-104, 109-113, 116-119, 128-137, 145, 149-151, 153-154, 163-176, 179-195, 200-203, 207-209, 215-220, 258-259, 265-272, 286-290, 301-312, 327-330, 348-349, 353-354, 358-359, 362-364, 366-372, 376-379, 383-385, 401-404, 407-414, 478-483.
2. Goethe, "Römische Elegien." In *Goethe: Primary Readings*.

B. Recommended reading:

1. Sander Gilman, "Goethe's Touch," in *Goethe: Primary Readings*.
2. Richards, *Romantic Conception of Life*, pp. 382-406.

VI. Kant and Goethe: Poetry and Science

A. Text for discussion: Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment* (trans. Werner Pluhar): Part 1, §1-14 (pp. 43-72), §46-47 (pp. 174-78); Part 2, §61 (pp. 235-37), §64-68 (pp. 248-64), §75-81 (pp. 280-311). In *Goethe: Primary Readings*.

B. Recommended reading: Richards, *Romantic Conception of Life*, pp. 62-71.

VII. Aesthetic Theory

A. Texts for discussion:

1. Friedrich Schiller, Letter to Goethe (August 23, 1794). In *Goethe, Primary Readings*.
2. Friedrich Schiller, "Naïve and Sentimental Poetry," selections in *Goethe: Primary Readings*.
3. Goethe, "On the Laocoon Group." In *Goethe: Primary Readings*.
4. Goethe, "Simple Imitation, Manner, Style." In *Goethe: Primary Readings*.

B. Recommended reading:

1. Karl Bohrer, "Covert Confessions: The Tension between Goethe and Schiller, a Prelude to Modernism," *Goethe Revisited*. In *Goethe: Secondary Reading*.
2. Richards, *Romantic Conception of Life*, pp. 407-34

VIII. Goethe and Kant: Science and Philosophy

A. Texts for discussion: Selections from Goethe's Essays on Scientific Method (from *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Scientific Studies*, ed. and trans. Douglas Miller (New York: Suhrkamp Publishers, 1988): "A Study Based on Spinoza," "The Experiment as Mediator between Object and Subject," "Fortunate Encounter," "The Extent to Which the Idea 'Beauty is Perfection in Combination with Freedom' May be Applied to Living Organisms," "Empirical Observation and Science," "Symbolism," "The Influence of Modern Philosophy," "Judgment through Intuitive Perception," "Doubt and Resignation," "The Formative Impulse," "A Friendly Greeting," "Significant Help Given by an Ingenious Turn of Phrase." In *Goethe: Primary Readings*.

B. Recommended reading:

1. Ernst Cassirer, "Goethe and the Kantian Philosophy." In *Goethe: Secondary Readings*.
2. Richards, *Romantic Conception of Life*, pp. 434-440.

IX. Morphology:

A. Texts for discussion: Selections from Goethe's Essays on Morphology (from *Goethe, Scientific Studies*): "An Intermaxillary Bone," "Excerpt from 'outline for a General Introduction to Comparative Anatomy,'" "The Metamorphosis of Plants," "Toward a General Comparative Theory," "Observation on Morphology in General," "The Enterprise Justified," "The Purpose Set Forth," "The Content Prefaced." In *Goethe: Primary Readings*.

B. Recommended reading:

1. Timothy Lenoir, "The Eternal Laws of Form," (*Goethe and the Sciences*). In *Goethe: Secondary Readings*.
2. Richards, *Romantic Conception of Life*, pp. 440-57.

X. *Faust*

- A. Text for discussion: Goethe, *Faust, Part One*.
- B. Recommended reading: David Luke, "Introduction," *Faust* (Oxford University Press Paperback).