History of Women Philosophers and Scientists
Welcome

As director of the Center for the History of Women Philosophers and Scientists, I am especially proud to welcome scholars and students to one of the world’s most unique research centers of that field at Paderborn University. Since 2006, many internationally renowned scholars have contributed to the spectrum of classes, conferences, academic events, and dissertation projects provided at our Center.

Explore the history of women philosophers and scientists in Paderborn, the historic, pagan city in the very heart of Germany.

Ruth Hagengruber
founder and director

Mary Ellen Waithe, author of the groundbreaking four-volume HISTORY OF WOMEN PHILOSOPHERS, is the main advisor to the Center. She co-organizes the Libori Summer and Autumn School and develops the ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CONCISE CONCEPTS BY WOMEN PHILOSOPHERS.
The history of women philosophers stretches back as far as the history of philosophy itself. Valuable writings from female philosophers starting in antiquity, and a continuous tradition from the Renaissance until today, are proof of women’s essential contribution to philosophy.

Names such as Aspasia, Hypatia, Elisabeth of Bohemia, Émilie Du Châtelet, Edith Stein, and Gerda Walther are part of women whose philosophical thoughts have influenced the history of philosophy up to the present day. The Center emphasizes this long-lasting and rich tradition of women philosophers to be properly integrated in both the educational system, as well as the academic world.

Émilie Du Châtelet (1706–1749) was a central figure of the European Enlightenment.
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Women Philosophers and Scientists

A Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 1860–1935
B Marie le Jars de Gournay, 1565–1645
C Aspasia, 470 BC–420 BC
D Hypatia, 355–415
E Christine de Pizan, 1364–1429
F Mary Wollstonecraft, 1759–1797
G Elisabeth of Bohemia/Herford, 1618–1680
H Olympe de Gouges, 1748–1793
I Constance Caroline Woodhill Naden, 1858–1889
J Simone Adolphine Weil, 1900–1943
K Hildegard von Bingen, 1098–1179
L Margaret Cavendish, 1623–1673
There may be meta physicians whose knowledge is greater than mine. I haven’t met them yet!

Émilie Du Châtelet 1706–1749
History of the Center

1987

Mary Ellen Waithe ed.
A History of Women Philosophers

1990

Ruth Hagengruber:
classes and publications
on women philosophers
and scientists
start of the teaching and research area History of Women Philosophers and Scientists at Paderborn University

textbook covering 2600 years of Women Philosophers

compulsory curriculum in the philosophy department via texts of women philosophers

Ruth Hagengruber ed. Emilie Du Châtelet between Leibniz and Newton

first lecture cycle on the History of Women Philosophers

first Joint Erasmus+ Masters Program on the History of Philosophy/History of Women Philosophers and Scientists (Paderborn/Istanbul)

Karen Green & Ruth Hagengruber eds. The Monist – The History of Women’s Ideas

launch of the Center for the History of Women Philosophers and Scientists funded by the Ministry of Innovation, Science and Research (NRW)

2016

2017

textbook covering 2600 years of Women Philosophers

first International Libori Summer School

start of the teaching and research area History of Women Philosophers and Scientists at Paderborn University
The Center for the History of Women Philosophers and Scientists (HWPS) offers an international setup with various events and courses.

Visit us for one of our international conferences and academic events or discover the history of women philosophers in a continuously growing spectrum of English seminars within the curriculum. Be invited to take advantage of the semester’s broad program of academic events such as master classes, workshops, summer and autumn schools held by leading experts during Paderborn’s festive season.
If anyone is so dull as to imagine masculinity or femininity in God such a person shows in plain light that he is just as bad a philosopher as he is a theologian.

Marie le Jars de Gournay 1565–1645
Our center consists of and welcomes individuals from different scientific and cultural backgrounds who want to work in a unique atmosphere and strive to collectively create their own lighthouse of scientific excellence. We are establishing an extensive digitalized bibliographical databank which provides a powerful tool facilitating the investigation into up-to-date literature. On top of that, our scientists have first-hand access to digitalized manuscripts.
Research Areas

- Women in the European Enlightenment
- Émilie Du Châtelet
- Women in Early Phenomenology
- Women Philosophers in the Digital Humanities
Women played a pivotal role in spreading the ideas of the European Enlightenment. The French mathematician, physicist, and philosopher Émilie Du Châtelet was its outstanding representative. The project gathers writings by and literature on women philosophers and mathematicians from the 18th century. The Center edits Du Châtelet’s manuscripts held at the Russian National Library, St. Petersburg.

A Émilie Du Châtelet, 1706–1749
B Du Châtelet, Geometrical Figures, Institutions de physique, Paris 1740
C Du Châtelet, Institutions de physique, Paris 1740
D Preface to Du Châtelet’s translation of Mandeville’s Fable of the Bees, Russian National Library, St. Petersburg
E Maria Gaetana Agnesi, 1718–1799

Women phenomenologists like Hedwig Conrad-Martius, Edith Stein, and Gerda Walther were key members of the early phenomenological movement, and played significant roles in each of the Göttingen, Munich, and Freiburg Phenomenological Circles. The project gathers writings by and literature on women phenomenologists and digitizes manuscripts held at the Bavarian State Library, Munich.

F Hedwig Conrad-Martius, 1888–1966
G Edith Stein, 1891–1942
H Gerda Walther, 1897–1977
In this century, as we know, the rule of women dominates. They now receive the benefits they have been deprived of for so long.
Philosophical analysis is no longer confined to texts. In our didactic mediation of philosophical discourses, we put a strong emphasis on film and sound material. Students experience the digital change in the online teaching project Philosophy Goes MOOC. Since 2014, the interdisciplinary project Philosophy in the Media presents women philosophers’ thoughts via student performances.