**Standard and Stigma: Shaping the German Language (2 lectures)**

In the middle of the eighteenth century, Johann Christoph Gottsched revived the topic of a standard and national linguistic form for German writing. The founding of a national academy along the lines of those established in France and Italy was mooted, and the vigorous intellectual debates which had born little fruit in the *Sprachgesellschaften* of the seventeenth century were reanimated. Gottsched’s work on the subject brought about conflict between Northern and Southern views of how German should be, in the form of the *spätbarocke Sprachenstreit*. Austrian scholars like Antesperg and Popowitsch defended a separatist view, with support from figures like Leopold Mozart, and alongside Swiss scholars like Bodmer and Breitinger made attempts to establish a separate southern form of German. One lecture will explore the context for this debate and consider its failure. In the second, we will look at the work of Gottsched’s most notable successor, Johann Christoph Adelung, author of the grammars and the dictionary which was the reference work of choice of Goethe, Schiller and their circle. Between them, Gottsched and Adelung determined what would be seen as correct, and what would be stigmatised as ‘Bad German’, judgments which have held in many cases ever since. The eighteenth century is a period of linguistic pragmatism, where writing on language is shorn of the mysticism which preceded it and the romantic medievalism which was to follow. Beyond the firming up of descriptive language rules, the application of a rational approach led scholars to try to explain the origins of language without reference to the Biblical narrative, and to look outwards comparatively at languages of the New World alongside the languages of the Old.

*Primary texts:*

* Adelung, J.C. *Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch der hochdeutschen Mundart*.(1774–86)
* Gottsched, J.C. *Grundlegung einer deutschen Sprachkunst* (1748)

Intending participants can gain a useful initial overview of the topic by consulting the relevant chapters of Andreas Gardt, *Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft in Deutschland* (1999) or, by the same author, *Sprachreflexion im Barock und Frühaufklärung* (1994).

**Sample question**: ‘Linguistic thinking in the eighteenth century saw its goal as perfecting rhetoric and the elegant structuring of discourse, rather than the minutiae of linguistic form: yet its success was to influence the language at every level.’ Discuss.