This course addresses gender as a piece of identity that is historically contingent and one aspect of a larger bundle of human features. As a result of this perspective we will conduct a survey that keeps historical change in mind, reading literature written by women in Scandinavia during the 19th and 20th centuries. Using these texts as examples, we will then explore gender as a social position, as a concept, and as a construction. The trajectory of our investigation will be informed by historical developments both in feminist thought and in the literary arts. We will begin by looking at how feminism emerged out of the aftermath of the French revolution and the Declaration of the Rights of Man, and then we will trace the evolution of the gender debates through time. This investigation will run parallel to a survey of Scandinavian women writers, who will be read with an eye to their social context and their critical contributions to our understanding of gender relations in Scandinavia. We will also read of variety of mostly short theoretical texts that should inform the questions raised in our primary reading material. Other questions will hopefully be raised by you as I can imagine that we will all become interested in questions of gender identity, the history of rights as they pertain to gender, and the differences between the characteristics we ascribe to “female” and “male.” I hoping that we come out of this course with different questions and different answers than when we came in.