

Invitation to the Jenny Cheshire Lecture 2017

# Language and the problem of women's authority

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Professor of Language and Communication at Oxford University



**Friday 2 June 2017 at 6.30pm**  
ArtsTwo Auditorium, Mile End Campus

The under-representation of women in public discourse and public life—in politics, in the corporate world, in the academy and in many parts of the media—is a significant real-world problem, which has persisted in spite of the removal of formal barriers to sex-equality in many societies around the world.

While many factors contribute to it, one factor that is widely held to play an important role is language; but there is a division between the mainstream, common sense view that the problem lies in women's own linguistic behaviour (their socialised tendency to speak in a way that 'lacks authority'), and the alternative view (voiced by some, but not all, feminists) that the real problem is the public silencing of women, which results from a combination of overt misogyny and implicit sexist bias. In this lecture, I'll consider what research on language and gender (including my own) has to contribute to this debate. How should we understand the problem, and is there a way to solve it?

Deborah Cameron is currently Professor of Language and Communication at Oxford University, and has previously taught English language and linguistics in London, Glasgow and Virginia, USA. Her research has focused mainly on language and gender and on the study of verbal hygiene practices. She also writes about language and gender for a non-specialist audience: her general interest book *The Myth of Mars and Venus* was published in 2007, and in 2015 she started the blog *Language: a feminist guide*. Her most recent academic book, co-authored with Sylvia Shaw, is *Gender, Power and Political Speech: Women and Language in the 2015 UK General Election* (Palgrave, 2016).

**A reception will follow the lecture**

## Ticket Information

This event is free to attend, but you must book tickets online in advance if you wish to attend. Please click the button on the right and follow the instructions to make a booking.

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## Map and Directions

This event takes place at our Mile End Campus. Please click on the icon below for the map and directions:



Mile End Campus



The nearest tube stations are Stepney Green and Mile End

ArtsTwo Building  
Queen Mary University of London  
Mile End Road  
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## Further Information

If you have any questions regarding this event please contact Shivonne Gates, email: [ling-events@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:ling-events@qmul.ac.uk)