

506:215:01/988:260:01
The Modern Girl
Spring 2018
T/TH 2:50–4:10, Academic Building 1170
DRAFT—SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Instructor: Dr. Melissa Feinberg
Office: Van Dyck 108
Email: mfeinberg@history.rutgers.edu

Office Hours: TBA
Office phone: 848-932-8557

Just after the end of the First World War, a new creature appeared on the streets of cities around the world. Her hair was short, as were her skirts. She smoked, wore lipstick, and went out dancing without a chaperone. No one knew what to make of her. To some, she was dangerous; to others, exciting. She was the flapper, *garçonne*, *neue Frau*, *moga*, *modeng xiaojie*, *kallege ladki*, *la pelona*: all terms for what we will call the “Modern Girl.” This course examines the so-called Modern Girl of the 1920's and 1930's, considering how she reflected—and helped to create—a new “modern” lifestyle. The Modern Girl was both a fictional creation and a flesh-and-blood creature. We will investigate “her” in her many manifestations, from fiction, film, and advertisements, to the sound of her heels clicking on actual city streets. Modern Girls really did exist around the world, and, while this course will concentrate on the West, we will also look at examples from Asia and Africa.

This course meets SAS Core Historical Analysis (HST) requirement. It will teach you to employ historical reasoning to study human endeavors, using appropriate assumptions, methods, evidence, and arguments.

Required Texts. The following books have been ordered at the Rutgers Bookstore.

The Modern Girl Around the World Research Group, eds. *The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption, Modernity and Globalization* (Duke University Press, 2008). ISBN: 9780822343059 (referred to below as *MG*)

Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (Harcourt, 1989). ISBN: 9780156787338

Junichiro Tanizaki, *Naomi: A Novel* (Vintage, 2001). ISBN: 9780375724749

Additional required readings will be posted on the Sakai site for this course (accessed via <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal>). All files are in the “Resources” folder under the last name of the author (i.e. Fitzgerald.pdf.)

Course requirements. All students are expected to complete each reading assignment before class begins, attend all classes, and contribute actively to class discussion.

Graded assignments include 3 in-class exams (each worth 20% of the final grade), two 3–5 page papers (each worth 15%) and participation/ reading responses (10%). The cutoffs for final grades are: A=90% and above, B+ = 87% and above, B=80% and above, C+ 77% and above, C=70% and above, etc.

Attendance: You must sign in for each class. Only those who have signed the attendance sheet will be counted present for that day. All students are allowed 3 absences without penalty. These excused absences are to cover all unfortunate circumstances, including illness, appointments, car trouble, etc. If you miss more than 3 classes, your participation grade will drop one third of a grade for *each* additional absence (so, from B+ to B, then from B to B-, etc). To report an absence, you can use the university absence reporting website (<https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>). However, reporting an absence or having a doctor's note does not excuse you from class or allow you extra absences. If you have a serious illness or commitment that will keep you from attending more than 3 classes, you will need to speak with Prof. Feinberg privately.

Participation/responses grades: Your grade for class participation will be based on 4 things:

1) participation in class 2) written reading responses 3) responses to Sakai assignments 4) attendance.

To receive an A on class participation you must: participate in class on a regular basis, complete all three reading responses on time and receive a grade of √ or better, complete all five Sakai assignments on time, and have no more than three absences from class.

Reading responses: Over the semester, you will submit three 1-page responses to assigned class reading (typed, approx. 350 words). You can do a reading response on any day there is a reading assignment. Responses must be turned in at the beginning of class and be in response to the assignment for that day. One response must be turned no later than February 16. The second must be turned in no later than March 23. The third response must be turned in no later than April 25. No late reading responses will be accepted. Responses can be informal, but should be in complete sentences and properly formed paragraphs. Your response must clearly show that you have read and thought about that day's assignment. Assignments will be graded √, √+, √-

Sakai assignments: There are five of these; each requires only a short response (1–2 sentences). They are due by noon before class. Late postings will not receive credit. Post your responses to the proper topic under the “Forum” tab on the class Sakai site. Topics will open 1 week before responses are due.

Late Policy. All unexcused late papers will be marked down one full letter grade for each calendar day that they are late (so an “A” becomes a “B” if it is one day late). But no matter how late, all submitted papers will receive some credit.

No late reading responses will be accepted; late Sakai postings will not receive any credit.

In class exams can only be taken on the day designated on the syllabus. There will be no make-up exams.

The only exceptions will be for documented cases of serious medical emergency and with notification via email or phone before the exam takes place.

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to abide by Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy (available at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>). The penalty for plagiarism or cheating on an exam is an F in the course. Any students with the slightest doubt about how to use or properly cite sources in their written work are strongly encouraged to meet with either Prof. Feinberg to clarify this.

Use of Electronic Devices: The use of all electronic devices (phones, laptops, tablets) is prohibited during class time. You should take notes by hand. Academic research indicates that notes taken by hand lead to greater retention. Studies also suggest that so-called multitasking does not lead to greater efficiency. Instead, it creates distractions and impedes our concentration. In this class, we will practice concentrating without the distractions of electronic devices. Without these distractions, you will be more able to listen attentively and participate mindfully.

Daily Reading Assignments and Due Dates

January 16 Introduction: Who is the Modern Girl?

I. Modern Life, Modern Girls

January 18 What is Modernity?
Katharina Rathaus, “Charleston: Every Age Has the Dance It Deserves” (on Sakai)

January 23 Mother of the Modern Girl: The New Woman
Mary Louise Roberts, “Making the Modern Girl French” in *MG* pp.77–95

- January 25 World War I and the Birth of the MG
Vera Brittain, “War Diary” (on Sakai)
Naomi Loughnan, “Genteel Women in The Factories” (on Sakai)
Magda Trott, “Opposition to Female Employment” (on Sakai)
- January 30 Flappers: The MG in the United States
Bruce Bliven, “Flapper Jane” (on Sakai)
- February 1 Flapper Comrades? The MG in the USSR
Anne Gorsuch, “The Dance Class or the Working Class” in *MG* pp.174–193
- February 6 Modern Girls in China
Madeleine Dong, “Who is Afraid of the Chinese MG?” in *MG* pp. 194–219
- February 8 The Modern Girl in Weimar and Nazi Germany
Uta Poiger, “Fantasies of Universality?” in *MG* pp. 317–344
- February 13 If Modern Girls Are So Rich, Why Are Women So Poor?
Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own*, pp. 3–57
- February 15 A Literature for Modern Girls?
Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own*, pp. 58–114
Sakai assignment 1: due by noon today
Submit one discussion question on *A Room of One’s Own*
Last day to submit reading response #1
- February 20 **Exam #1**
- II. The Modern Girl in Literature and Film
- February 22 Flappers and Philosophers: American Modern Girls in Fiction
F. Scott Fitzgerald, “Bernice Bobs Her Hair” (on Sakai)
Dorothy Parker, “Mr. Durant” (On Sakai)
Sakai assignment 2: due by noon today
Answer the following question: Which character is more sympathetic, Bernice or Marjorie, and why?
- February 27 The Scandalous Garçonne
Victor Margueritte, *La Garçonne (The Bachelor Girl)*, p. 108–163
(on Sakai— in two parts; make sure to read both files!)
- March 1 Gentlemen Prefer Modern Girls?
Irmgard Keun, *The Artificial Silk Girl*, selections
- March 6 The Moga in Japan
Junichiro Tanikazi, *Naomi*, pp. 3–121
- March 8 The Perils of the Modernity?
Tanizaki, *Naomi* pp. 122–237
Sakai assignment 3: due by noon today
Submit one discussion question on *Naomi*

- March 10–18 Spring Break
- March 20 It Girls: Clara Bow and Louise Brooks
- March 22 Joan Crawford and Greta Garbo
Paper #1 (on film) due
- March 27 Film outside Hollywood: Marlene Dietrich and the Indian sitara
Prithi Ramamurthy, “All Consuming Nationalism” in *MG* 147–173
Last day to submit reading response #2
- March 29 **Exam #2**

III. Material Girls: Consumption, the Beauty Business, and Race

- April 3 Style Moderne: Art Deco as International Style
Lucy Fischer, *Cinema, Art Deco and the Female Form*, pp. 11–35 (on Sakai)
- April 5 Slim and Streamlined: Modern Girl Fashion
Dorothy Parker, “The Standard of Living” (on Sakai)
Valerie Steele, *Paris Fashion: A Cultural History* p. 241–260 (on Sakai)
- April 10 Lipstick, Powder and a Tan: Cosmetics and the Modern Look
Kathy Peiss, *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America’s Beauty Culture*, pp. 167–202 (on Sakai)
- April 12 We All Have to be Skinny Like Coco (Chanel)
Margaret A. Lowe, “From Robust Appetites to Calorie Counting: The Emergence of Dieting Among Smith College Students in the 1920’s” (on Sakai)
- April 17 Ponds, Pepsodent and Palmolive Around the World
MG Research Group, “Cosmetics Advertising” in *MG* pp. 25–54
Sakai assignment 4: due by noon today
Give at least one example of a “technology of the self”
- April 19 Race and Standards of Beauty in South Africa
Lynn Thomas, “Racial Respectability in South Africa” in *MG* pp. 96–119
Paper #2 (on advertisement) due
- April 24 Whiteness, Blackness and the Modern Girl
Liz Conor, “Blackfella Missus,” in *MG* pp. 220–239
Alys Weinbaum, “Racial Masquerade” in *MG* pp. 120–146
Last day to submit reading response #3
- April 26 The Modern Girls of Today
Sakai assignment 5: Due by noon today
Who do you think best represents the Modern Girl of today?

FINAL EXAM according to final exam schedule