

506:215:01/988:260:01
The Modern Girl
Spring 2016
T/TH 5:00–6:20; Tillet Hall Rm 232

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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, Africa and Latin America.

This course meets SAS Core Historical Analysis goals H and L.

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 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 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 (noted on the syllabus) 4) attendance. Attendance does not increase your grade, but can certainly lower it, as noted above.

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 26. The second must be turned in no later than April 2. The third response must be turned in no later than April 30. 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.

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 will be an F in the course. Any students with the slightest bit of doubt about how to use or properly cite sources in their written work are strongly encouraged to meet with me to clarify this.

Use of Electronic Devices: The use of all electronic devices (phones, laptops, tablets) is prohibited during class time, except for referring to Sakai documents or taking notes (although I prefer it if you take notes with pen and paper). Academic research indicates 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 and the Internet. Without these distractions, you will be more able to listen attentively and participate mindfully.

Daily Reading Assignments and Due Dates

January 19 Introduction: Who is the Modern Girl?

I. Modern Life, Modern Girls

January 21 What is Modernity?
Katharina Rathaus, “Charleston: Every Age Has the Dance It Deserves” (on Sakai)

January 26 Mother of the Modern Girl: The New Woman
Mary Louise Roberts, “Making the Modern Girl French” in *MG* pp.77–95

January 28 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)

February 2 Flappers: The MG in the United States
Bruce Bliven, “Flapper Jane” (on Sakai)

- February 4 Flapper Comrades? The MG in the USSR
Anne Gorsuch, “The Dance Class or the Working Class” in *MG* pp.174–193
- February 9 Modern Girls in China
Madeleine Dong, “Who is Afraid of the Chinese MG?” in *MG* pp. 194–219
- February 11 The Modern Girl in Weimar and Nazi Germany
Uta Poiger, “Fantasies of Universality?” in *MG* pp. 317–344
- February 16 If Modern Girls Are So Rich, Why Are Women So Poor?
Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own*, pp. 3–57
- February 18 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 23 **Exam #1**
- II. The Modern Girl in Literature and Film
- February 25 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?
- March 1 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 3 No class
- March 8 The Moga in Japan
Junichiro Tanikazi, *Naomi*, pp. 3–121
- March 10 The Perils of the Modernity?
Tanizaki, *Naomi* pp. 122–237
Sakai assignment 3: due by noon today
Submit one discussion question on *Naomi*
- March 12–20 Spring Break
- March 22 It Girls: Clara Bow and Louise Brooks
- March 24 Joan Crawford and Greta Garbo
Paper #1 (on film) due

March 29 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 31 **Exam #2**

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

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 7 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 12 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 14 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
Lynn Thomas, “Racial Respectability in South Africa” in *MG* pp. 96–119

April 21 Minorities and Metropolises: MG in Australia and Okinawa
Liz Conor, “Blackfella Missus,” in *MG* pp. 220–239
Ruri Ito, “Colonial Modernity” in *MG* pp.240–262
Paper #2 (on advertisement) due

April 26 Passing as a Modern Girl
Alys Weinbaum, “Racial Masquerade” in *MG* pp. 120–146
Nella Larsen, *Quicksand*, pp. 53–62 (on Sakai)
Last day to submit reading response #3

April 28 The Modern Girls of Today
Sakai assignment 5: Due noon May 4
Who do you think best represents the Modern Girl of today?