

Spring 2008  
History 318.01  
Prof. V. Brown

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Mears Cottage 303

### **Seminar: The New Woman**

The purpose of this seminar is to explore the attitudes and behaviors that are associated with a particular population of American women in the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The well-known and powerful “maternalists” of the Progressive era were the dominant figures of this era, but they were being challenged by a younger generation of women, as well as by a new “feminist” ideology and new female imagery. This era set the stage for the “flappers” of the Twenties, but the era of the “new woman” is the key transitional era. Debates over women’s role, activities, image, and self-presentation arose from fundamental differences among women as well as between women and men, and generational tensions emerging in this era had real political consequences. Our common readings are intended to introduce us to the causes and results of the gender conflicts that emerged in these years and to inspire your thinking about research topics you wish to pursue. Since historical research on the “new woman” is not extensive, there are plenty of good research questions to ask and plenty of room for creative interpretations. Our collective goal will be to design smart, valid research strategies that produce valuable data and persuasive, coherent, elegant papers on some facet of the story of America’s “new woman.”

### **Required Texts**

Jean V. Matthews, The Rise of the New Woman: The Women’s Movement in America, 1875-1930 (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2003)

Christine Stansell, American Moderns: Bohemian New York and the Creation of a New Century (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2000)

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Herland (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979 reprint of 1915 edition)

Nan Enstad, Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure (New York: Columbia U. Press, 1999)

Nancy F. Cott, The Grounding of Modern Feminism (Yale University Press, 1987)

### **Writing Assignments**

#### **1. Magazine analysis**

At the end of the second week of the semester, you will turn in a 2-3 page analysis of your overview of a sample of magazines published between 1885 and 1915. We will discuss your findings in class on Thursday, January 31. Your final write-up of your findings is due, via e-mail, on Friday, Feb. 1 by 7:00 p.m. (*Note: This is the ONLY written assignment in the semester for which you do have the option to take an extension, if you contact me 24 hours before this short paper is due, I will grant you a 48-hour extension. I am not interested in why*

*you need the extension, nor will I grant one after the 24-hour limit has passed, nor will I grant more than 48 hours. This keeps things simple and straightforward for all of us. But let me add this: you have a lot of reading for the following Tuesday, so taking this extension may cause you more workload problems than it relieves).*

## **2. Grinnell College Yearbook Analysis**

On Tuesday, February 12, you will turn in a 2-3 page analysis of your survey of a sample of Grinnell College yearbooks for the years between 1890 and 1920. That analysis will apply the argument from at least one of the day's secondary readings to the data in the yearbooks. You will receive guidelines for this brief assignment. *No extension option on this. Turn it in at the start of class.*

## **3. Paper proposal**

On Sunday, March 2, by 5:00 p.m. you will e-mail to me a 2-page proposal stating the question you are asking in your research paper, the method you plan to use to answer that question, and how your question relates to larger themes in the historiography on "the new woman." You will attach to your proposal a bibliography of the primary and secondary sources you have identified as accessible and appropriate. *No extension option on this.*

## **4. Research paper**

Beginning in Week 8, (i.e. the week BEFORE Spring Break) until the end of the semester, you will be actively pursuing your research on your topic and you will be writing your 15-20 page paper.

Everyone in the seminar will write this paper twice. The first time, you will write the very best paper you can and turn it in to my office by 4:30 on Friday, May 9. **There can be no extensions** since I must meet with each of you, individually, between Monday, May 12 and Tuesday, May 13 to discuss revisions. Then you will write the paper a second time and make it better. There are no drafts. There are only revisions. You can turn in the revised version any time up to 4:30 on Friday of finals week, May 16.

## **Class Meetings**

1. In the first eight weeks of the semester, the whole seminar will meet twice a week, on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 2:15 to 4:05 p.m.
2. Once you begin your individual research, the seminar will divide into two research groups. One group will meet on Tuesday afternoons, the other group will meet on Thursday afternoons.

## Evaluation

Seminar members' performance will be evaluated on the following basis:

Participation	= 150 pts.
Magazine analysis	= 50 pts.
Yearbook analysis	= 50 pts.
Discussion questions & Leadership	= 150 pts. (75 pts. each time)
Research paper	= <u>300 pts.</u> 700 pts. possible

### Re: Discussion Questions & Leadership

On two occasions this semester, you and a partner will construct 2-3 discussion questions for a day's meeting. You will meet with me on a Monday or Wednesday to revise those questions, will send out those questions via e-mail on Monday or Wednesday evening, and will lead the first hour of discussion on your day. I will make the assignments re: dates and partners, but you can switch with someone if the day is a bad one for you.

### Re: Participation grade.

Your participation will include an evaluation of your contribution to class discussion *throughout* the semester (i.e. when we are discussing readings and when we are discussing yours and classmates' research). In making that evaluation, I will be asking these questions:

- Do you come to class prepared to discuss the text and to refer to the text in making your comments? In other words, do your remarks demonstrate that you've engaged thoughtfully with the day's reading?
- Are your comments relevant to the day's reading and discussion focus?
- Are you willing to ASK as well as ANSWER questions?
- Do you conduct yourself as someone who feels partially responsible for the success of the day's discussion? That means you neither monopolize nor silently observe the discussion; you join in and contribute to our collective thinking.
- Do you pick up on others' points and develop them?
- Are you willing to disagree at times, and do so in a way that invites friendly debate?
- Do you interact with others and me in the classroom or confine yourself to more flat, narrow comments?
- Do you endeavor to elevate and expand the discussion by pointing to themes we've seen in prior readings .... or themes you've seen in other classes?

I do make weekly notes about your participation to inform my evaluation. Ultimately, when I sit down to assign participation scores, I ask this question: "Did it make a difference to the class that you were a member?" Did you add something? Did you contribute a point of view, a set of commentaries, a disciplinary perspective, an interpretive stance that was of value in our deliberations? Did you accept your share of responsibility for the success of this seminar or were you an observer of everyone else's endeavors?

## **My Schedule**

I will be on campus every day this semester. I live in Iowa City, but will stay over in Grinnell on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings. My home phone in Iowa City is: 319-354-8867. If you need to reach me quickly on a Monday evening or over the weekend, I advise using the phone instead of e-mail. I will be working in my campus office on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings and am available by phone there (ext. 3087).

Mondays: 11:00 a.m. to noon; 1:15 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Tuesdays: 4:15- 5:30 p.m.

Wednesdays: 11:00 a.m. to noon; 1:15 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Thursdays: 4:15- 5:30 p.m.

Fridays: 11:00 a.m. to noon; 1:15 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

## **Schedule of Class Activities and Readings**

### **Week One**

January 22: Introduction to the seminar and to “the new woman”

Reading: Jean V. Matthews, The Rise of the New Woman, Chapters 1-3

January 24: Brainstorming research ideas

Reading: Matthews, Chapters 4-7; Handout: “Why I Have No Family” and “The American Woman as Mother”

*We will discuss how to conduct your investigation of the “new woman” in magazines, 1890-1918*

### **Week Two**

January 29: New Women in ‘the Village’

Reading: Stansell, American Moderns, Chapters 1-4; Blackboard: Schwartz, “We Were a Little Band of Willful Women”

Viewing: “Emma Goldman” documentary on Reserve in A-V; 90 minutes

January 31: How Far did ‘the Village’ Extend?

Reading: Stansell, American Moderns, Chapters 7-9 & Reports on magazine research;

*February 1: Analysis of magazine research due (2-3 pages) via e-mail by 7:00 p.m.*

### **Week Three**

February 5: Maternalists Confront New Women

Reading: Google books/online: Addams, A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil, Chapters 1, 3, 5, 6; Handouts: “Sex O’Clock in America,” Emma Goldman, “Traffic in Women,” & Walter Lippman, Preface to Politics excerpts; Blackboard: Catherine Cocks, “Rethinking Sexuality in the Progressive Era”

February 7: Sex in the City

Reading: Blackboard: Peiss, “Charity Girls and City Pleasures;” Meyerowitz, Women Adrift, Intro-Chap. 2; Clement, Love for Sale, Intro & Chapter 1; Chauncey, “From Sexual Inversion to Homosexuality”

### **Week Four**

February 12: Education and Socialization for New Womanhood

Reading: Blackboard: V. Brown, “Fear of Feminization;” Lynn Gordon, “The Gibson Girl Goes to College;” Roberta Wein, “Women’s Colleges and Domesticity, 1875-1918”

Writing Assignment: *Analysis of sample of Grinnell College yearbooks (1-2 pages) using*

*arguments in articles. Guidelines will be provided. Due in class. No extensions.*

February 14: Psychology and the New Woman

Reading: Handout: G.S. Hall, Adolescence (excerpts); Blackboard: Lunbeck, "A New Generation of Women: Progressive Psychiatrists and the Hypersexual Female," and Steven Schlossman & Stephanie Wallach, "The Crime of Precocious Sexuality"

*Start reading Herland.*

### **Week Five**

February 19: The Fiction of White Civilization

Reading: C.P. Gilman, Herland; Handout: American National Biography entry on Gilman; and Fannie B. Williams, "The Colored Girl;" Blackboard: Newman, "Eliminating Sex Distinctions" and Ammons, "The New Woman as Cultural Symbol and Social Reality"

February 21: The New Woman Worker and Popular Culture

Reading: Nan Enstad, Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure, pp. 1-118

***\*\*\*\*During this week and next, each member of the seminar will meet with me to discuss ideas for the research paper. Proposal due Sunday, March 12, 5:00 p.m.. \*\*\*\****

### **Week Six**

February 26: The New Woman Worker and Popular Culture continued

Reading: Nan Enstad, Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure, pp. 119-208

February 28: The Grounding of Modern Feminism

Reading: Cott, The Grounding of Modern Feminism, Introduction & Chapters 1-3; Blackboard: Nicolosi, "The Most Beautiful Suffragette"

### **Week Seven**

March 4: The Grounding of Modern Feminism continued

Reading: Cott, The Grounding of Modern Feminism, Chapters 4-5; Handout: Davis, "Why They Failed to Marry;" Blackboard: Simmons, "Modern Sexuality and the Myth of Victorian Repression"

March 6: The Grounding of Modern Feminism concluded

Reading: Cott, The Grounding of Modern Feminism, Chapters 6-8; Handout: Eastman, "Now We Can Begin"

**Sunday, March 9: Proposal for research paper due over e-mail by 5:00 p.m.** Proposal should include 1-2 pages of text in which you define the question you are asking or the historical "problem" you are addressing, the methodology you plan to pursue to deal with this

question, and where your research fits into the historiography on this topic. To this text, you will attach a bibliography identifying both secondary sources and primary sources along with an indication of whether your sources are at Burling Library or must be acquisitioned through Inter-Library Loan. No extension option. Absolutely due.

### **Week Eight**

March 11: Class discussion of paper topics, sources, methods

Reading: You should be half-way into a key secondary source for your paper. Get going.

March 13: Class discussion of paper topics, sources, methods

Reading: Make completion of one major book your research goal for this week

**Spring Break.** Take a rest, yes, but also spend a part of these two weeks reading another major secondary source or two for your topic. You need to land running when you get back. I speak with the Voice of Experience.

### **Week Nine/ April 1 & 3:**

First meeting of research group: Each of you should be prepared to state what you read over break, how that reading has helped you refine your topic and what primary sources you are starting to read this week.

### **Week Ten/April 8 & 10:**

Each of you should report on how your primary source material is shaping the direction of the paper, and what you are finding that supports or challenges other historians' views.

### **Week Eleven/April 15 & 17**

Each of you should report on the additional secondary reading you have now completed and how it relates to your findings in primary source material. All should come with a preliminary thesis/argument.

### **Week Twelve/April 22 & 24:**

Individual meetings with Prof. Brown re: progress and direction of paper. Meeting will be optimally productive if you bring a one-page outline of your paper with you. *Note: this assumes I will be in Iowa. If I am not, we will communicate via e-mail and I will encourage you to meet with your groups.*

### **Week Thirteen/April 29 & May 1**

Each of you should be prepared to set forth his/her thesis and discuss the organization of the paper. Each of you should bring the first page of your paper to share with the rest of us. **Everyone should have started writing by now.**

### **Week Fourteen/May 5 -9**

Stay home and write. I'll be in my office during regular office hours and during seminar meeting times for individual consultation.

**Friday, May 9: First, BEST version of paper absolutely due at 4:30 in my office. Don't mess with me on this, folks. I face a tough weekend and won't be charitable!**

**Finals Week**

May 12 & 13: Individual meetings to discuss revision strategies.

**May 16: Revised paper absolutely, positively due at 4:30 in my office, Mears 303.**