

E396: Periodical report assignment

PURPOSE: I want to give you a bit of freedom in this assignment, which is designed to expose you to primary documents of the period 1890-1930. This can be more of a **report** than an *essay*—that is, its primary function should be to convey what you’ve discovered about the periodical; it **does not** need to have an **argumentative thesis**. Your overall purpose in this assignment is to characterize the periodical—explain what it was like—to someone who knows less about it than you do.

GETTING TO KNOW THE PERIODICAL: Go into the library and spend some time simply reading in the periodical. Flip through it and look at tables of contents to try to get a general feel for it. Take note of any familiar names that appear in the table of contents. Note whether it publishes mainly political commentary, literary criticism, or actual literature—fiction, poetry, etc.—and how much space the periodical assigns to each of these, if appropriate. Try to figure out what its political and/or aesthetic orientation was. (Liberal? Conservative? Radical? Old-fashioned? What kind of writing does it publish? Which writers do its reviewers favor?) By reading in the periodical, or doing some outside research, find out 1) who the editor or editors were, 2) how it was paid for (Did it support itself from advertisements, from subscription fees? Was it bankrolled by a patron?) 3) how long it ran, 4) what its circulation was (i.e. how many copies were printed and/or sold per issue). Note: you may not be able to answer all these questions, but do your best.

WRITING IT UP: You may approach this any number of ways, but at the very least report what you’ve found in the “Getting to Know” stage. Above all, your paper should provide a good answer to the question, “What’s it like?” Beyond that you may report on one writer’s contributions, or talk about letters-to-the-editor and some of the controversies that come up there, or look at the way its writers treated a contemporary issue in literature or politics—the possibilities are endless. Again, you do not need to take an argumentative position, but the paper **should be well-written and clearly organized**. (You know what that means: solid, unified paragraphs with good topic sentences, lots of support for any general statements you make, etc.)

PERIODICALS TO CHOOSE FROM

<i>The Little Review</i>	<i>The Times Literary Supplement</i>	<i>The New Age</i> (online)
<i>Egoist</i>	<i>Poetry</i>	
<i>Transition</i>	<i>The London Mercury</i>	
<i>New Freewoman</i>	<i>Dial</i> (Microfilm 3300 REELS 187-200)	
<i>Criterion</i> (and <i>Monthly Criterion</i>)	<i>Life and Letters</i>	
<i>English Review</i>	<i>Blast!</i> (archives)	

OTHER RESOURCES THAT WILL HELP YOU. (These are on reserve for you in the library.)

Sullivan, et. al. *British Literary Magazines*. V. 3 *The Victorian Age* and v. 4 *The Modern Age*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983-86. Bracken Call #: PN5124.L6 B74 1983 V.3 & V. 4.

Hoffman, Frederick John. *The Little Magazine*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946. Bracken call #: PN4836 .H6

Marek, Jayne E. *Women Editing Modernism: “Little” magazines and Literary History*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1995. Bracken Call #PS228.M63 M37 1995