

DRAM 4600/6600 (undergrad /grad)

Women and Film

SYLLABUS

Lecture: Tuesday/ Thursday 9:30 am – 10:45 pm, Room 53

Screening: Tuesday, 2:00-4:45 Room 53

Instructor: Antje Ascheid

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Office Hours: Fine Arts Bldg., Room 254, T/R 1-2 pm, W 2-3pm or by appointment

Text Purchases

- Sue Thornham, ed., *Feminist Film Theory. A Reader*, New York: New York UP, 1999. (Also available online at netLibrary accessible through GALILEO)
- All other required readings will also be available on electronic reserve and on reserve at the library. Readings marked with an asterisk are recommended but not required.

It is expected that you will have completed the reading by the first class meeting of each week.

Class Presentations

For class presentations, students will work together in groups. Each group will be assigned one director they will research in depth. Drawing specifically on the readings assigned for class, the group will present the most relevant idea concerning the weeks topics and illustrate them with video clips (DVDs are **not** acceptable as they interfere with a speedy presentation of the clips). Length of presentation including video clips **MAY NOT** exceed 30 minutes. Group should provide a **DETAILED** hand-out for the whole class.

Essays

The final paper (8-10 **typed** pages/2500-3000 words) requires you to write an analysis of one or more films, which relates the films' style and aesthetics to aspects of their formal, thematic and historical specificity. For this assignment paper topics will be handed out well ahead of time, though you may also choose your own topic if you clear it with me first.

Graduate Students

Graduate Students will write a longer final essay (15-20 pages) and must write a mid-term paper (10-12 pages) instead of the exam discussing two feminist film theorists in a comparative analysis.

Assignments and Grade Breakdown

Midterm	20%
Presentations	20%
Final Essay	30%
Final Exam	20%
Attendance and participation	10%

(more than 3 unexcused absences will result in a lower **overall** grade in the class, excessive absence WILL result in a **final grade** of F in the class)

Good writing skills are a must in this course. If you are not confident about your ability to craft a clearly written, articulate, well-organized essay, I will be happy to read drafts if they are submitted to me well ahead of the due date. **Plagiarism is a serious offense which can result in a failing grade for the class and expulsion from**

the university. Acknowledge all reading and research sources with footnotes. Keep a hard copy of your essays and exam book until you have received a final grade for this class.

Please refer to: http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/academic_honesty/culture_honesty.htm

The following course outline is a guide and subject to changes by the professor:

Week 1 (1/10, 1/12):

Introduction: Women Before and Behind the Camera

Screening: *The Making of an American Citizen* (Alice Guy Blaché)
The Girl and her Trust (D.W. Griffith)
Rebecca (Alfred Hitchcock, 1940)

Reading: *Feminist Film Theory*, Introduction, Sharon Smith, "The Image of Women in Film," pp.9-13,
Tania Modleski, "Woman and the Labyrinth: Rebecca," *The Women Who Knew Too Much* (London: Routledge, 1988), on e-reserve.

Week 2 (1/17, 1/19):

A Female Perspective within French Impressionist Cinema.

Nazi Germany's Female Star Director: Aesthetic Innovation, Ideology and Politics.

Screening: *Smiling Mme. Beudet* (Germaine Dulac, 1922)
Clips: *The Seashell and the Clergyman* (1927)
Clips: *The Blue Light* (Leni Riefenstahl, 1932) *Triumph of the Will* (Riefenstahl, 1935)

Reading: Germaine Dulac, From "Visual to Anti-Visual Films,"
"The Essence of the Cinema: The Visual Idea," "The Avant-Garde Cinema," on e-reserve.
Louise Heck-Rabi, "Germaine Dulac: Mother of Surrealism," on e-reserve.
Eric Rentschler, "A Legend for Modern Times: *The Blue Light*," on e-reserve.
Susan Sontag. "Fascinating Fascism," on e-reserve.

Week 3 (1/24, 1/26):

Classical Hollywood Cinema and Female Directors.

Women's Film Practice and the American Avant-garde.

Screening: *Meshes in the Afternoon* (Maya Deren, 1943)
Craig's Wife (Dorothy Arzner, 1936)

Reading: *Five Ages of Film Feminism*, "A Fine Romance, with No Kisses," pp. 15-49.
Feminist Film Theory, Johnston, "Women's Cinema as Counter-Cinema," pp. 31-40
Judith Mayne, "Female Authorship Reconsidered," on e-reserve.
*Karen Kay and Gerald Peary, "Interview with Dorothy Arzner," on e-reserve
Lauren Rabinvitz, "Maya Deren and the American Avant-garde Cinema," on e-reserve.
Maya Deren, "Efficient or Effective," on e-reserve.

Week 4 (1/31, 2/2):

Hollywood Genres: The Woman's Film

Screening: *Now Voyager* (Irving Rapper, 1942)

Reading: *Feminist Film Theory*, Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," pp. 9-69; Molly Haskell, "The Woman's Film," pp. 14-20; B. Ruby Rich, "The Crisis of Naming in Feminist Film Criticism," pp. 41-47.
Stanley Cavell, "Ugly Duckling, Funny Butterfly. Bette Davis and *Now, Voyager*," on e-reserve.

Week 5 (2/7, 2/9):

Women and The French Nouveau Vague

Screening: *Cléo from 5 to 7* (Agnes Varda, 1961)

Reading: *Feminist Film Theory*, "Women and Film: A Discussion of Feminist Aesthetics," pp.115-121.

Guy Austin, "Women Filmmakers in France," on e-reserve.

Janice Mouton, "From Feminine Masquerade to Flaneuse: Agnes Varda's *Cléo in the City*," *Cinema Journal* 40, No. 2, Winter 2001, on e-reserve.

Week 6 (2/14, 2/16):

New German Cinema and Herstory.

Screening: *Germany, Pale Mother* (Helma Sanders-Brahms, 1979)

Reading: *Feminist Film Theory*, Mary Anne Doane, "Film and the Masquerade," pp. 131-145.

Angelika Bammer, "Through a Daughter's Eyes: Helma Sanders-Brahms' *Germany, Pale Mother*," *New German Critique*, no. 36, 1985, pp. 91-109, on e-reserve

Gabriele Weinberger, "Beyond the Private Sphere: Political Implications of Motherhood in *Germany, Pale Mother*," on e-reserve

Barbara Hyams, "Is the Apolitical Woman at Peace? A reading of the Fairy Tale in *Germany, Pale Mother*," on e-reserve

Week 7 (2/21, 2/23):

Representing Feminist Theory and Film Narrative

Midterm Exam 2/23 in class

Screening: *A Question of Silence* (Gorris, 1981)

Reading: *Feminist Film Theory*, Annette Kuhn, "Women's Genres," pp. 146-156, Gledhill, "Pleasant Negotiations," pp.166-179.

Linda Williams, "A Jury of their Peers: Marlene Gorris's *A Question of Silence*," on e-reserve.

Week 8 (2/28, 3/2 NO CLASS)

Hollywood and Women's Lib

Screening: *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* (Richard Brooks, 1977)

Reading: TBA

Week 9 (3/7, 3/9):

Feminist Historiography

Screening: *I, the Worst of All* (Bemberg, 1990)

Reading: *Feminist Film Theory*, Carol Clover, "Her Body, Himself," pp. 235-250, Barbara Creed, "Horror and the Monstrous Feminine," pp.251-266.
Denise Miller, "Maria Luisa Bemberg's Interpretation of Octavio Paz's *Sor Juana*," on e-reserve.

Week 10 (3/14, 3/16):

!!!SPRING BREAK !!!!

Week 11 (3/21, 3/23):

Feminist Literary Adaptations

Screening: *Orlando* (Potter, 1992)

Reading: *A Fine Romance*, pp. 155-164, 281-288.
Scott MacDonald, "Interview with Sally Potter," on e-reserve.

Week 12 (3/28, 3/30):

African-American Women's History and Representation

Screening: *Eve's Bayou* (Kasi Lemmons, 1997)

Reading: *Feminist Film Theory*, Jane Gaines, "White Privilege and Looking Relations," pp.291-306, bell hooks, "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators," pp. 307-320.
A Fine Romance, pp. 233-258.

Week13 (4/4, 4/6):

Feminist Genre Revision -- the Western

Screening: *The Ballad of Little Jo* (Maggie Greenwald, 1993)

Reading: Tania Modleski, "A Woman's Gotta Do...What a Man's Gotta Do?," on e-reserve.
Jim Kitses, "An Exemplary Post-modern Western: *The Ballad of Little Jo*," on e-reserve.

Week 14 (4/11, 4/13):

The Historical Romance. Feminism, Revisionism and the Heritage Debate

Screening: Clip: *The Piano* (Jane Campion, 1993)

The Governess (Sandra Goldbacher, 2002)

Reading: TBA

Week 15 (4/18, 4/20):

Third Wave Feminism and Non-Western Identities

Screening: *Chaos* (Coline Serreau, 2001)
Reading: TBA

Week 16 (4/25, 4/27):

Post-Romance? Post-Feminism? The Romantic Comedy, the Action Heroine, and the Erotic Thriller

Papers Due!

Screening: Clip: *Bridget Jones' Diary* (Sharon Maguire, 2001)
In the Cut (Jane Campion, 2003)
Reading: TBA

Presentation Guidelines

For class presentations, students will work together in groups. Each group will be assigned one historical period or national cinema they will research in depth. Drawing specifically on the readings assigned for class, the group will present the most relevant ideas concerning the week's topic and illustrate them with video clips (DVDs are **not** acceptable as they interfere with a speedy presentation of the clips. I can assist you in transferring clips from DVDs to VHS, given several days notice). Length of presentation should aim to be about **20 minutes** including video clips **MAY NOT** exceed 30 minutes. Group should provide a **DETAILED** hand-out for the whole class.

As presentations take up a significant amount of class time, each group must make sure that their presentation is organized in a way that is clear, interesting and informative for the rest of the class. It is not productive to divide the presentation into two or three separate parts, which each of the students in the group works on alone. The presentation is a group effort and should be structured as a whole.

Remember that the relevant historical or theoretical information on your topic will be covered in lecture on Tuesdays. It is your responsibility as presenters to pick up from the lecture and the reading and illustrate and elaborate on the material by giving detailed examples. For example, a presentation on "the woman's film" should briefly restate the major trends of this cinema and then illustrate these ideas by showing clips from additional films by this director or other directors relevant to the subject. The presenters should discuss why and how the clips are potent examples, pointing out specific aesthetic and thematic details.

Film Analysis Guide

Basic Questions:

1. What is the movie “really” saying beyond its narrative surface? What is the main tension/ conflict/ opposition? What triggers the conflict/ crisis? How is the conflict resolved – by elimination (murder/ suicide) or integration (marriage)? Is it open-ended?
2. What were the social/ cultural questions to which the film responded when it was released? Does it deal with problematics that are still relevant at our present time?
3. How do the film’s formal features underscore (or complicate or even undermine) the story? How do camera and editing COMMENT on the story? What are the main stylistic features? Check cinematography, framing lighting, composition, choreography, editing, music. How is the story translated into a film?

Sociological Concerns:

1. What central social or cultural issues does the film raise? If the film seems to emphasize psychological over social themes, does it also attempt to place the psychological issue within a broader social or cultural context?
2. Is social class a factor in the movie, either as part of the story of the movie or as part of the overall tone of the movie?
3. Are gender roles a factor in the movie, either as part of the story of the movie or as part of the overall tone of the movie?

Historical Concerns:

1. What does the film suggest about the cultural mood of the time in which the story was set?
2. Are the issues raised by the film similarly relevant within American culture today?
3. Are the central themes in this movie similar to – or different than – the themes of any of the other films from this era?
4. Which stylistic and formal elements can be found in this film that speak to its historical production context?
5. How was the film received and what impact has it had on contemporary culture?
6. What are the political/ economic/ social/ cultural questions to which the film responds?

Political Concerns:

1. Does the film contain any apparent ideological or utopian themes?
2. Does the film contain any apparent political biases?
3. Can you identify more subtle ways in which the film might operate ideologically?

Rhetoric and Narration:

1. How is the narrative constructed?
2. Whose perspective(s) does the narration privilege?
3. How does the story unfold (WHAT are we told and HOW are we told it)?
4. Does the ending of the movie make sense or does it seem contrived? Why does the ending operate this way?

Authorship:

1. Is the director influenced by other filmmakers?
2. Is the film reflexive? Does it make reference to other films (intertextuality)?
3. Does this film share narrative or stylistic characteristics with other films by the same filmmaker?

Formal and Stylistic Concerns:

1. How are any of the concerns raised above visually and aurally expressed?
2. How does the filmmaker employ mise-en-scene (production design, costume, performance)?
3. What about the use of editing and cinematography (lighting, framing, color, camera movement)?
4. How is sound used (diegetic sound, effects, music)?