The course will look at films by and about women as part of an apparatus that reflects a diversity of practices, ideologies, and historical moments. We will examine both mainstream and alternative cinema through the lens of gender, across multiple cultural differences. The course will follow a rough chronology, from early avant-garde to independent cinema by women in the 90s. Certain genres will be highlighted in the context of their historical moments: classical Hollywood drama in the 30s; film noir and the post-war era; autobiography in the era of the Women’s Liberation Movement; representation of the body in the 90s.

Students will examine a variety of methodologies that have emerged during the thirty-year history of feminist film theory, and will develop a vocabulary of analytical tools.

We will draw from a rich library of feminist cinematic theory: Judith Mayne, Laura Mulvey, Trinh T. Minh-ha, B. Ruby Rich, Andrea Weiss, and others. Visiting local filmmakers will discuss the practice of filmmaking and will present their own work. Some of the questions that will be addressed during the course: How has feminist cinematic theory shifted from a recognition of difference between genders to recognizing difference within gender? How does the gendered reading of films differ within different cultures? How do certain genres contain or subvert female subjectivity?

**Required readings:**

Other readings will be placed on reserve in the library.

**Course requirements and Grading Structure:**
- Class participation: 10%
- Reaction paper: 15%
- Class presentation: 25%
- Term paper: 25%
- Final exam (take-home): 25%

**Prerequisites:**
60 credit hours including WS 101 or WS 102.