We are increasingly surrounded by pornographic images. Some we can choose to seek out or avoid; others confront us, whether we want to see them or not, on T.V. and even at the grocery store. When video systems are as accessible as T.V., it will become more and more difficult to control what our children will see and in what circumstances. Yet we know very little about how the proliferation of pornography will affect our culture, our beliefs and feelings about ourselves, and our beliefs about and relationships with others. Many of us are afraid that the frequent association of sex with violence and domination in pornography will make our society even more dangerous to women and children than it now is. Our fears seem reasonable, yet we would like to know if they are justified, and even if they are justified, we want to consider carefully how to act on them. Censorship is a clumsy and dangerous tool, and it may be as hopeless to try to censor video porn as it is to prohibit illicit drugs. Yet are there any acceptable alternatives to censorship? Should we rely on the law to deal with pornography, or are there other things we can and should do about it?

In this seminar, we will study four areas of work in relation to pornography: social scientific studies of the effects of pornography on people's attitudes and behaviour; psychological and social theories about the meaning of pornography and the motivations for creating and consuming it; philosophical explorations of pornography, censorship, and their relationship to freedom of expression; and legal attempts to deal with pornography.

The seminar will meet in two sessions for a total of 5 hours per week. The instructor or guests may lecture from time to time. Students will be expected to take some responsibility for class discussions.

READINGS

1. David Copp and Susan Wendell, eds., Pornography and Censorship
2. Robert Stoller, Perversion, the Erotic Form of Hatred
3. Angela Carter, The Sadeian Woman and the Ideology of Pornography
4. Susan Griffin, Pornography and Silence, Culture's Revenge Against Nature

A small reprint package will be available at cost.

There will be an average of 75 to 100 pages reading per week.

ASSIGNMENTS

Students will be asked to write two take-home essay-type assignments (of about 5 pages each) which will each count for 20% of the final mark, and a discussion paper (of about 15 pages) which will count for 40%. Class participation and oral presentations to the class will count for 20%.

PRE-REQUISITE

Completion of lower division Women's Studies requirements or permission of instructor and of Women's Studies Coordinator.

SCHEDULING - Tuesday and Thursday, 1330 - 1550