WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAM

FALL 1989
Harbour Centre/Evening (section E1)

W.S. 301-3
WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

Television is the most pervasive mass medium of our modern world: it plays a large role in how we come to define and understand ourselves, others, and our world. Similarly, it has a part to play in how others come to define us. All of this has possible implications for the position of women in our society and for the feminist project. This course will examine the form and content of television from a feminist perspective and will particularly attend to the relationship between women and television.

Television theory has recently undergone a profound revitalization, largely due to the emergence of critical feminist writings on the medium. This course will focus on these writings. We will begin with Jane Root's *Open the Box: About Television*, a general overview of television from a feminist perspective which also concentrates on theories of the audience. The first half of the course will continue this theoretical exploration of the social context of television and its relationship to women.

The second half of the course turns a narrowed eye to television content. Here, we will examine some specific television genres, including daytime soaps, action dramas, music videos, game shows, and the news. Throughout the course we will be posing a series of questions: What does television say about and to us as women? Is there a discernible attitude toward feminism in television content? What are the implications of this? What role do women play in television production and have these women had an effect on television content? What are the various feminist critiques and theoretical positions on television?

REQUIRED READING

Root, Jane, *Open the Box: About Television*. (London: Comedia, 1986)

As well, there will be selected articles from the following books placed on reserve:


(cont'd)
ASSIGNMENTS

20% Mid-term exam (in class, open-book)
20% Short paper (analysis of a television programme or genre, 5-7 pp.)
20% Tutorial participation and presentation
40% Term paper (15-20 pp.)

Prerequisites: 60 credit hours

THIS COURSE MAY BE APPLIED AS 3 UPPER DIVISION CREDITS IN COMMUNICATION.