Women's Studies Department

Spring, 1995

W.S. 312-5/823-5
Women and Films: Films and Theories
Jackie Levitin
Tuesday @ Harbour Centre

The evolution of feminist film theory reflects questions that have engaged the feminist movement as a whole. Problems such as the relevance of Freudian theory, the debate over the definition of "feminine vision" versus the problem of essentiality, issues such as the notion of public and private space, pornography, etc. have been incorporated into the theories and practices of feminist film culture. This course will show how these questions were addressed by feminist filmmakers and critics at the same time as it surveys the evolution of feminist film theory and engages in its debates. Films that have been and are currently pivotal to feminist film theory will complement the seminar discussions.

REQUIRED READING:


Copies of additional articles will be available on reserve in the library and/or will be available for purchase at cost.

Note: Readings will average from 40 to 50 pages per week.

RECOMMENDED READING: (On Reserve at the Belzberg Library)

Issues of Women and Film and Camera Obscura.
Brunsdon, Charlotte. Films for Women
Clark, Veve A. The Legend of Maya Deren (Vol. 1, parts 1 & 2).
de Laurets, Teresa. Technologies of Gender.
de Laurets, Teresa. Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema
Doane, Mary Ann. Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis.
Gledhill, Christine, (ed). Home is where the Heart is: Studies in Melodrama and the Women's Film.
Haskell, Molly. From Reverence to Rape.
Kuhn, Annette. Women's Pictures: Feminism and Cinema.
Mayne, Judith. The Woman at the Keypole
Moi, Toril. Sexual/Textual Politics.
Monaco, J. Glossary of Film and Media Forms
Mulvey, Laura. Visual and Other Pleasures.
Penley, Constance (ed). Feminism and Film Theory
Rose, Jacqueline. Sexuality in the Field of Vision.
Silverman, Kaja. The Acoustic Mirror.

ASSIGNMENT AND GRADING:

30% Mid Term Papers:
Three mini papers (5-7 pages maximum in length) to be submitted at four-week intervals relating to the films viewed in class or the directors studied and the readings.

15% Seminar Presentation:
An oral, 15-30 minute presentation of research (length depending on the number of presenters) on topics related to the week's discussions. The precise research topic will be chosen in conjunction with the instructor and completed by one or two students.

20% Midterm
20% Final
In-class written exams testing the student's comprehension of the readings and understanding of the films and issues raised in class.

15% Seminar Participation
Includes regular class attendance, doing the required readings, and the quality of the student's participation in class discussion.

NOTE: All work must be submitted on time; late papers will be penalized.
Three or more unexcused absences could result in failure of the course.

Graduates: In addition to the above assignments, graduates will be asked to lead the class in a discussion of one week's readings (date to be chosen in consultation with the instructor), and to submit a term paper (10-15 pages) on a topic approved by the instructor.

DESIGNATED CREDIT:

Students may apply to the School for Contemporary Arts to have this course designated as credit toward their film major.