WS 412-5: Women & Film

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Harbour Centre

This 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: the silent era, classical Hollywood drama in the 30s; film noir and the postwar 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, 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 readings of films differ within different cultures? How do certain genres contain or subvert female subjectivity.

Required readings:

Marusya is checking out text books.

Other readings will be on reserve at the Belzberg Library

Course requirements and Grading Structure:

- Participation and attendance: 15%
- Midterm Exam: 25%
- Presentation: 25%
- Final Paper: 35%

Prerequisites:

60 credit hours including two Women's Studies courses one of which must be WS 101 or WS 102.

THE DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN'S STUDIES ENCOURAGES CLARITY OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION AND GOOD WRITING. STUDENTS WILL BE EVALUATED ON THESE SKILLS IN ALL COURSES GIVEN BY THE DEPARTMENT.