WS 823-5: Graduate Seminar: Feminist Cultural Studies

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This course examines the foundational role and continuing centrality of feminist thought to cultural studies. We begin with the research on gender and consumption from the original Birmingham Centre for Cultural Studies and work through the subsequent phases of cultural studies research up to recent work by feminist scholars in international cultural studies. The course will emphasize the understanding methods and intellectual history of cultural studies, with attention to the precursors in both poststructural theory and first wave feminism. Readings will include: Angela McRobbie, Erica Carter, Meaghan Morris, Annette Kuhn, Ian Ang, Simone de Beauvoir, Walter Benjamin, Stuart Hall, Simon Watney, Richard Dyer, Roland Barthes, Raymond Williams, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu.

The course will be conducted in an intensive seminar format. Students will read a core of texts together, but pursue individually defined topics of research. Students will take rotating responsibility for leading discussion on assigned texts (5% of grade) and present their individual research (5% of grade). Substantive short writing assignments, leading up to an integrative paper, will be required, including: three five page exegeses of foundational concepts (10% for each paper); a literature review of a particular feminist cultural theorist’s work (20%); an analysis of an author’s use of foundational material (10%); integrative paper (20%). As a group, students will develop a feminist cultural studies website on which student work will be posted (10%).

Reading material will be described at a later date.