Course Description:
Feminist film theory and practices mirror debates that have engaged the feminist movement as a whole. As critic Laura Mulvey points out, film has been "the crucial terrain" on which feminism's debates over culture, identity and representation have been fought. Questions such as ‘Are positive images enough?’ ‘Is Freudian theory useful?’ ‘Is there a ‘feminine vision,’ ‘feminine pleasures’? What role do other identities such as class, race, ethnicity and sexuality play in women’s cinema? Do we still need to promote a separate women’s filmmaking?’ and “Is sexual display always inimical to feminism?” continue to be addressed by feminist theorists and filmmakers. In class discussions, group presentations, blogs and papers, we will explore these questions and engage in the debates. The particularity of film as a medium to address these questions will form the perspective of our study. Screenings of films by women – both classic and contemporary – will focus the seminar discussions.

Because it coincides with the women in the filmmaking profession conference – “Sex, Money, Media” scheduled for October 14, 15 and 16, this year’s class offers special possibilities to explore these issues and to get involved.

Course Texts and Courseware:


Additional readings will be available online.

Note: Readings will average from 40 to 50 pages per class
Course Evaluation and Assignments:
30% Contributions to the class blog: Weekly contributions to a class discussion forum. At times these contributions will be presented and discussed orally in class.

25% Group Presentation:
A group oral research presentation based on the week's readings and/or topics of discussion. The subject will be chosen in conjunction with the instructor and normally completed by two students per topic (15 min in length + discussion). An outline of the presentation and a bibliography of the works consulted must be submitted to the instructor at the beginning of the class on the day of the presentation.

30% Term Paper:
A critical paper, 8-10 pages in length, relating the work of a woman director viewed in and outside of class and the concepts discussed in the readings. The choice of topic is up to the student, but the topic must be developed in a submission approved by the instructor.

15% Attendance and Seminar Participation:
Includes regular class attendance, doing the required readings and coming to class prepared to join actively in discussions.

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.

Graduate Students: In addition to the above assignments, graduate students will have additional discussion meetings with the instructor, will lead the class in a discussion of one week's readings (date to be chosen in consultation with the instructor), and submit a longer final paper (15-17 pages) on a topic approved by the instructor.