WS 823-5  Graduate Seminar in Feminist Art
WS 412-5*  Women & Films: Films and Theories

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Thurs: 10:00-14:50 Harbour Centre

The history of feminist film theory and practices reflects 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. Issues such as the relevance of Freudian theory, or notions of "feminine vision" and sexual identity in relation to identities derived from class, race, culture, and other differences; responses to pornography and debates on varying practices and their relative impact have been crucial within feminist film culture. This course will explore the questions addressed by feminist filmmakers and theorists since the 1970s and engage in the debates. The particularity of film as a visual and aural medium for the expression of these debates will form the core of our study. Screenings of films by women that have been or are currently of interest to feminist criticism will complement the seminar discussions.

Required readings:

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.

Course requirements and Grading Structure:
60% Papers: Two Short papers (4-5 pages maximum in length, each worth 15%) and a final paper (8-10 pages in length, worth 30%) are to be submitted at four-week intervals. The topics may be selected by the student, with the instructor’s approval, and should relate to the films viewed in class (or the directors studied), as well as respond to the concepts discussed in class and in the readings. The final paper may be extension of the seminar presentation.

25% Seminar Presentation: An oral, research presentation will be required based on the week's readings and/or topics of discussion. The subject will be chosen in conjunction with the instructor and completed by one or two students per topic (15min in length if one presenter, 30 min if two). 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.

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.

Graduate Students: In addition to the above assignments, graduates will have additional meetings with the instructor, 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 longer final paper (12-15 pages) on a topic approved by the instructor.

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.