WS 412-5* Women & Films: Films and Theories       Jacqueline Levitin
WS 823-5 Graduate Seminar: Feminist Art            levitin@sfu.ca

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. Such questions 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 women’s filmmaking? Is pornography always inimical to feminism? have been addressed by feminist filmmakers and theorists since the 1970s. In class discussions, journals and papers, students 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. Weekly 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 30 to 40 pages per class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
30% Journal: A weekly academic (i.e. not personal) journal of notes on the readings, and thoughts on the films and videos in this class. Due every Tuesday and comprising 3 pages/class meeting –1½ on the readings, 1½ responses to the films and videos.

50% Papers: Two papers of equal value, one due by midterm, the second a final paper, both 8-10 pages in length. The first will be a research paper on one of the filmmakers or topics discussed in the first 6 meetings, the second a critical paper relating films viewed in class and the concepts discussed in the readings. The choice of topic is up to the student, but the choice must be developed in a submission for approval by the instructor.

20% 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 (13-15 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. *Students may apply to the School for Contemporary Arts to have this course designated as credit toward their film major.