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

Jacqueline Levitin
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. 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 women’s filmmaking?” and “Is pornography always inimical to feminism?” have been addressed by feminist filmmakers and theorists alike since the 1970s. In class discussions, group presentations, 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 – both classic and contemporary – 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 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 viewed in class. Due three times/term and comprising 3 pages/class meeting –1½ on the readings, 1½ responses to the films and videos.

25% Group Presentation:
An 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 completed by two or three students per topic (15 min in length if two presenters, 20 min if three). 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 class and out 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% 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.

---

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.