

Film 272 Women in Film
3:30-6 T/Th, Spring 2001
LaFayette 302

Prof. Hilary Neroni
hneroni@zoo.uvm.edu
Old Mill 311
Phone: 656-1356
Office Hours: T/Th 9:30-11:00, W 2:00-3:45

Course Description and Objectives: The focus of this course will be on women in film. This will encompass the history of women directors, analysis of how women are represented in film, and the theoretical debates that surround these topics (including issues of femininity, masculinity, race, representation, violence, and queer theory). The aim of the course is that students come away with a grasp of the fundamental issues underlying the relationship between women and film.

Required Texts:

Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*
Joan Copjec's *Read My Desire: Lacan Against the Historicists*
bell hooks' *Black Looks*
Christina Lane's *Feminist Hollywood: From Born in Flames to Point Break*
Yvonne Tasker's *Working Girls: Gender and Sexuality in Popular Cinema*
Sue Thornham's *Feminist Film Theory: A Reader*

Grade breakdown:

Participation 10 %
Two Response Essays 20%
One Paper Presentation 20%
Paper 25%
Final Exam 25%

Paper: One paper is required, roughly 15 pages. For the paper, you can either take a specific critical approach and develop it through a reading of the film of your choice, or you can elaborate your own theoretical position, using other theorists as points of reference, comparison, and contrast. This paper requires research and thus outside sources. These requirements will be discussed in detail in class.

Exams: The final exam will cover the material from the entire class. You will be required to demonstrate your ability to articulate the nuances of the various theories, as well as the various histories and issues of representation raised in class.

Responses: You must write a three-page, single-spaced response paper for two different class meetings during the semester. Response papers can either develop an argument of a thinker that we're reading, attack a position of a thinker, explore an undeveloped or tangential aspect of a thinker's thought, or engage a film or filmmaker through the issues raised in class. The response papers have due dates (as noted on the course schedule) but may be turned in any time before or on the due date.

Paper Presentation: One presentation is required. This presentation will be a 15-minute paper preferably given on the topic you intend to do your final paper on. For this assignment, you will integrate your argument, film analysis, and film clips into a coherent presentation.

Summary of the films and/or readings on the exam, response papers, conference paper, or final paper is NOT allowed. We must argue, interpret, and discuss, but not summarize. Papers with paragraphs of summary will be marked down accordingly. How and why to avoid summary will be discussed in class.

Participation and Attendance: Since this class is primarily a discussion class, students should come to class prepared to participate. In order to be a quality participant in discussion, students should be very familiar with the reading by the time they get to class. I would recommend, if not rereading the assignments, then at least a careful, deliberate reading. Without careful reading, you will not be able to be a viable member of the class.

Late Work: Papers turned in late will be lowered one grading step for each day that they are late.

Class Schedule:

Part One: Issues of Representation

Week One:

January 16 Screening: *Gilda* (Charles Vidor, 1946, 110 min)

January 18 Introduction

Week Two:

January 23 Screening: *Vertigo* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1958, 128 min)

January 25 Reading: Thornham: Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,"
Mary Ann Doane's "*Caught and Rebecca: The Inscription of Femininity as
Absence*," Laura Mulvey's "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative
Cinema' Inspired by King Vidor's *Duel in the Sun* (1946)"

Week Three:

January 30 Screening: *Queen Christina* (Rouben Mamoulian, 1933, 100 min)

February 1 Reading: Butler 1-100
***First Response Paper Due**

Part Two: The Documentary

Week Four:

February 6 Screening: Susan Stern's *Barbie Nation*

February 8 Reading: Butler 101-190

Week Five:

February 13 On Reserve: *Paris Is Burning* (Jennie Livingston, 1990, 78 min)
Reading: bell hooks' *Black Looks*

February 15 TBA

Part Three: Alternative Images**Week Six:**

February 20 Screening: *Born in Flames* (Lizzie Borden, 1983, 80 min)

February 22 Reading: Christina Lane's *Feminist Hollywood*

Week Seven:

February 27 Screening: *A Question of Silence* (Marleen Gorris, 1982, 96 min)
(One Student Presentation)

March 1 Reading: Copjec 1-63
(One Student Presentation)

Week Eight:

March 6 Screening: *Daughters of the Dust* (Julie Dash, 1991, 96 min)

March 8 Reading: Copjec 65-161
(One Student Presentation)

Week Nine:

March 13 Screening: *Sweetie* (Jane Campion, 1989, 100 min)
(One Student Presentation)

March 15 Reading: Copjec 163-236
(Two Student Presentations)
***Second Response Paper Due**

Week Ten: Spring Break

March 20 No Class

March 22 No Class

Part Three: Mainstream Images**Week Eleven:**

March 27 Screening: *Strange Days* (Kathryn Bigelow, 1995, 145 min)
On Reserve: *Blue Steel* (Kathryn Bigelow, 1990, 102 min)

March 29 Reading: Tasker 1-113
(Two Student Presentations)

Week Twelve:

- April 3 Screening: *Gas Food Lodging* (Allison Anders, 1991, 101 min)
 On Reserve: *Mi Vida Loca* (Allison Anders, 1993, 95 min)
 (One Student Presentation)
- April 5 Reading: Tasker 117-204
 (Two Student Presentations)

Week Thirteen:

- April 10 Screening: *Mississippi Masala* (Mira Nair, 1991, 118 min)
 On Reserve: (Choose One or More)
 Kama Sutra (Mira Nair, 1996, 114 min)
 The Perez Family (Mira Nair, 1995, 113 min)
 Salaam Bombay! (Mira Nair, 1988, 114 min)
 (One Student Presentation)
- April 12 Reading: Claire Johnston's "Women's Cinema as Counter-Cinema," Michelle
 Citron's "Women and Film: A Discussion of Feminist Aesthetics," Christine
 Gledhill's "Pleasurable Negotiations"
 (Two Student Presentations)

Week Fourteen:

- April 17 Screening: *Clueless* (Amy Heckerling, 1995, 98 min)
 (One Student Presentation)
- April 19 Reading: Thornham: Jane Gaines' "White Privilege and Looking Relations: Race
 and Gender in Feminist Film Theory," Tania Modleski's "Cinema and the Dark
 Continent: Race and Gender in Popular Film"
 (Two Student Presentations)

Week Fifteen:

- April 24 Screening: *Desperately Seeking Susan* (Susan Seidelman, 1985, 103 min)
 (One Student Presentation)
- April 26 *Final Paper Due
 (Three Student Presentations)

Week Sixteen:

- May 1 Group Discussion of Final Papers

Final Exam