

BERGEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION  
DIVISION OF ARTS, HUMANITIES, AND WELLNESS

COURSE SYLLABUS

**CIN160 Women in Cinema**

**Basic Information about Course and Instructor**

Semester and year:

Course and Section Number:

Meeting Times and Locations:

Instructor:

Office Location:

Phone:

Office Hours:

Email Address:

**Course Description**

**CIN160 Women in Cinema** is a study of how the images, stories, and formal constructions in film can frame female identities. This course is not only about the representation of women in film history, it is also a study of cinema *by* women (such as Maya Deren, Su Friedrich, and Chantal Akerman). Specific topics addressed over the span of the semester may include the history of the “weepies”; the biographies of certain actors and filmmakers; feminist film theory; the formal aspects of film; the depiction of women across film genres; and the role of filmmaking in the American and international feminist movements.

3 credits. 2 lecture; 2 lab.

Prerequisites: None

Humanities Elective

General Education Course [pending]

Diversity Course [pending]

**Student Learning Objectives:**

As a result of meeting the requirements of this course, a student will be able to

1. identify important gender-related themes in a film (assuming the film has one or more);
2. develop an understanding of how female identity can be constructed through different elements in a film;
3. increase knowledge of the work of some of the major female filmmakers and actors in the history of cinema;
4. detect (both orally and in writing) the point of a view of a given film, or whether a film’s point of view is ambiguous;
5. learn to use methods and vocabulary unique to film analysis in speaking and writing about film;
6. state and support his/her own views (orally and in writing) on the films in this course—and ideally *any* film—with greater coherence, clarity, depth, and insight.

The Student Learning Objectives in this course are intended to be consistent with the college’s Core Competencies and General Education Goals.

## **Assessment of Student Learning Objectives**

Objective 1: assessed through critical writing assignments with an emphasis on gender-related themes in particular films

Objective 2: assessed through critical writing assignments with an emphasis on how film language can construct gender identities

Objective 3: assessed through tests on specific knowledge of course content and films

Objective 4: assessed through in-class discussions and/or critical writing assignments on a film's point of view

Objective 5: assessed through a test on vocabulary unique to film analysis

Objective 6: assessed through critical writing assignments that require knowledge of different theoretical approaches to film and to the notion of gender

Objectives 1, 2, 4, and 6 can also be assessed in directed classroom discussions

Objectives 1, 2, 4, and 6 can also be assessed through in-class writing assignments or journals

Objectives 1 and 4 can also be assessed through in-class writing assignments or short quizzes

Objectives 1, 4, and 6 can also be assessed through short critical writing assignments

Objective 3 can also be assessed through assigned research papers

## **Course Content**

The most basic aspects in this course that must be covered are

1. instruction on how to locate themes pertinent to women in films;
2. instruction on the basic elements of the film medium (lighting, editing, narrative structure, etc.);
3. instruction on how to view films with the proper techniques;
4. instruction on different ways to understand the term "gender";
5. instruction on at least general aspects of history that have been pertinent both to women's lives and to filmmaking;
6. instruction on how to speak and write about film clearly;
7. determination of final grades for this class through a combination of critical writing assignments and fact-based tests (film identifications, dates, directors, eg.).

## **Critical Thinking**

The Instructor of this course teaches critical thinking skills such as how to analyze a film; what interpretation means; how a student can challenge his/her own assumptions; what it means to support a hypothesis; what "point of view" means; how to write in the critical mode. The Instructor will respond in detail (and in a timely fashion) to students' work both in the classroom and during office hours. A minimum of 12 pages of critical writing about the subject matter of the course will be assigned. There must also be evaluation of students' specific knowledge of this subject matter (names of directors, relevant dates, eg.).

## **Textbook(s)**

Instructors assign one or more textbooks and/or a series of at least 12 academic articles.

## **Grading Policy**

Students will be evaluated on the quality of their work.

## **Attendance Policy**

The instructor will follow the guidelines of the BCC attendance policy:

All students are expected to attend punctually every scheduled meeting of each course in which they are registered. Attendance and lateness policies and sanctions are to be determined by the instructor for

each section of each course. These will be established in writing on the individual course outline. Attendance will be kept by the instructor for administrative and counseling purposes.

### **Other College, Divisional, and/or Departmental Policy Statements**

Plagiarism is cheating and stealing. If you use someone else's ideas, words, phrases, paragraphs, without giving that person credit, you are guilty of plagiarism. If you copy even a small passage from another text and present it as your own, you are guilty of plagiarism. The penalties for plagiarism can be severe, from course failure to expulsion from the college.

### **Student Support Services**

Smarthinking Tutorial Service: [www.bergen.edu/library/learning/tutor/smart/index.asp](http://www.bergen.edu/library/learning/tutor/smart/index.asp)

The Tutoring Center: S118 (201-447-7908)

The Writing Center: C110 (201-447-7136)

The Online Writing Lab (OWL) [www.bergen.edu/owl](http://www.bergen.edu/owl)

The Office of Specialized Services: S153 (201-612-5270)

## SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE

### Sample Required texts:

Fischer, Lucy. *Cinematernity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Collection of articles (on E-Reserve, in the Academic Search Premiere or JSTOR Language and Literature databases, and/or xeroxed)

### Books on General Aspects of Cinema:

Arnheim, Rudolf. *Film As Art*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957.

Bazin, Andre. *What is Cinema?* Trans. Hugh Gray. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967.

Bordwell, David and Kristin Thompson. *Film Art: An Introduction*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.

Eisenstein, Sergei. *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977.

*Film Theory and Criticism*. Sixth Edition. Ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Kracauer, Siegfried. *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960.

MacDonald, Scott. *Avant-Garde Film: Motion Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Mast, Gerald. *A Short History of the Movies*. New York: Bobbs Merrill, 1971.

Metz, Christian. *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema*. Trans. Celia Britton, Annwyl Williams, Ben Brewster and Alfred Guzzetti. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977.

*Movies and Methods*. Ed. Bill Nichols. 2 vols. New York: 1976, 1985.

*The Oxford History of World Cinema*. Ed. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Sharff, Stefan. *The Elements of Cinema: Toward a Theory of Cinesthetic Impact*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

## **On Women in Cinema:**

*A Critical Cinema: Interviews with Independent Filmmakers*. Ed. Scott MacDonald. 4 vols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988, 1992, 1998, 2005.

Basinger, Jeanine. *A Women's View: How Hollywood Spoke to Women: 1930-1960*. New York: Knopf, 1993.

De Lauretis, Teresa. *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Doane, Mary Ann. *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis*. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Fischer, Lucy. *Shot/Countershot: Film Tradition and Women's Cinema*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Haskell, Molly. *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

Kael, Pauline. *Deeper Into Movies*. New York: Warner, 1973.

Kuhn, Annette. *Cinema, Censorship and Sexuality: 1909-1925*. New York: Routledge, 1988.

---. *Women's Pictures: Feminism and Cinema*. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982.

Modleski, Tania. *The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory*. New York: Routledge, 1988.

Red Velvet Seat: *Women's Writing on the First Fifty Years of Cinema*. Ed. Antonia Lant. New York: Verso, 2006.

Rosen, Marjorie. *Popcorn Venus: Women, Movies and the American Dream*. New York: Avon, 1973.

*The Sexual Subject: A Screen Reader in Sexuality*. Ed. John Caughie and Annette Kuhn. New York: Routledge, 1992.

Tims, Hilton. *Emotion Pictures: The 'Women's Picture', 1930-55*. London: Columbus Books, 1987.

*Violence and American Cinema*. Ed. J. David Slocum. New York: Routledge, 2001.

Walsh, Andrea S. *Women's Film and Female Experience: 1940-1950*. New York: Paeger, 1984.

Weiss, Andrea. *Vampires and Violets: Lesbians in Film*. New York: Penguin, 1992.

**Sample Calendar:**

WEEK ONE

DISAPPEARING WOMEN

*The Spiritualist Photographer; The Magic Lantern; The Mermaid* (dir. Georges Melies, 1903)

PRE-CODE WOMEN

*I'm No Angel* (dir. Wesley Ruggles, 1933)

Required Reading:

"Monster May" from Kenneth Anger's, *Hollywood Babylon*. New York: Dell, 1975. 183-90. (xerox)

WEEK TWO

MELODRAMA AND MOTHERHOOD

*Way Down East* (dir. D.W. Griffith, 1920)

Required Reading:

Fischer, "Silent Melodrama: *Way Down East*: Melodrama, Metaphor, and the Maternal Body" in *Cinematernity*. 56-72.

WEEK THREE

THE 'WOMAN'S FILM'

*Stella Dallas* (dir. King Vidor, 1937)

Required Reading:

Haskell, Molly. "The Woman's Film" in her *From Reverence to Rape*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987. 153-188. (E-Reserve).

WEEK FOUR

MARRIAGE

*Rebecca* (dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 1940)

Required Reading:

Modleski, Tania. "Woman and the Labyrinth: *Rebecca*," in her *The Women Who Knew Too Much*. New York: Routledge, 1988. 43-55. (E-Reserve).

WEEK FIVE

WOMEN IN FILM NOIR

*Mildred Pierce* (dir. Michael Curtiz, 1945)

Required Reading:

Jurca, Catherine. "*Mildred Pierce*, Warner Bros., and the Corporate Family" in *Representations* (Winter 2002): 30-51. (JSTOR – Language and Literature).

WEEK SIX

THE 'WOMAN'S FILM' (con't)

*Brief Encounter* (dir. David Lean, 1946)

Required Reading:

Haskell, Molly. "The Woman's Film" in her *From Reverence to Rape*. 153-188. (E-Reserve).

WEEK SEVEN

PAPER 1 DUE/TEST 1

SOAP OPERAS

*Imitation of Life* (dir. Douglas Sirk, 1954)

Required Reading:

“Ways of Seeing Her” in Jeanine Basinger’s *A Woman’s View: How Hollywood Spoke to Women 1930-1960*. New York: Knopf, 1993. 188-212. (E-Reserve).

WEEK EIGHT

HORRORS OF MOTHERHOOD

*Rosemary’s Baby* (dir. Roman Polanski 1968)

Required Reading:

Fischer, “Birth Traumas: Parturition and Horror in *Rosemary’s Baby*” in *Cinematernity*. 73-91.

WEEK NINE

RADICAL EXPERIMENTS IN FILM FORM

*Menses* (1974), *Doll House* (1984), *No No Nooky TV* (1987), *Stone Circles* (1983), *Parisian Blinds* (1984), *Tourist* (1984-85) (all by Barbara Hammer).

*Daughter Rite* (dir. Michelle Citron, 1979)

Required Reading:

Alexandra Juhasz, “Barbara Hammer” in *Women of Vision: Histories in Feminist Film and Video*, Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2001. 77-92. (E-Reserve)

WEEK TEN

DOCUMENTARY BY AND ABOUT WOMEN

*Grey Gardens* (dir. David and Albert Maysles, 1974)

Required Reading

Fischer, “The Reproduction of Mothering: Documenting the Mother-Daughter Bond” in *Cinematernity* 179-213.

WEEK ELEVEN

PERSONAL CINEMA

*Sink or Swim* (1990); *The Ties that Bind* (1985) (dir Su Friedrich)

Required Reading:

Fischer, “The Reproduction of Mothering: Documenting the Mother-Daughter Bond in *Cinematernity*, 179-213.

WEEK TWELVE

FEMALE FRIENDSHIP

*Passion Fish* (dir. John Sayles, 1992)

Required Reading:

Karen Hollinger, “The Female Friendship Film and Women of Color” in *In the Company of Women: Contemporary Female Friendship Films* Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1998. (E-Reserve).

WEEK THIRTEEN

FAMILY DRAMA

*Eve's Bayou* (dir. Kasi Lemmons, 1997)

Required Reading:

Haskell, "1974-1987: The Age of Ambivalence" in her *From Reverence to Rape* 372-402. (E-Reserve)

WEEK FOURTEEN

DYSTOPIA

*A Handmaid's Tale* (dir. Volker Schlöndorff, 2001)

Required Reading:

Stephanie Barbe Hammer (1990) "The World as It will Be? Female Satire and the Technology of Power in *The Handmaid's Tale*" in *Modern Language Studies*. 20.2 (Spring 1990) 39-49. (JSTOR)

WEEK FIFTEEN

PAPER DUE/TEST 2

Animation selections

Suzan Pitt and Maryellen Bute and others

**GRADING:**

TEST 1 (25%)

TEST 2 (25%)

PAPER 1 (25%)

PAPER 2 (25%)