

# MDIA 8B: WOMEN IN FILM

## Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Summer 2021
Units:	4
Hours:	4 lecture, 1 laboratory per week (60 total per quarter)
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Non-GE
Transferable:	CSU/UC
Grade Type:	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable

## Student Learning Outcomes

- A successful student will identify and apply theories of gender representation and female spectatorship to film and moving image media.
- A successful student will describe and interpret the histories of women's production in the U.S. from pre-studio Hollywood to the present.

## Description

This course examines the remarkable and under-recognized contributions that women have made to world cinema, from the inception of the medium to present time. The course will analyze women both as filmmakers and as actors – behind the camera, and in front. The course will use a framework of feminist film theory, and the lens of intersectionality, to examine some of the cultural impacts that cinema has on society. Films will be analyzed within the historical, national, cultural, institutional and economic contexts in which the filmmaker's work was made and distributed.

## Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Define and apply key theoretical analyses of gender representation and female spectatorship from media studies and feminist film theory
2. Describe the timeline of women's production in U.S. film history from pre-studio Hollywood to the present
3. Interpret the films of significant feminist filmmakers in national film movements
4. Evaluate film genres and their possibilities for re-interpretation, including comedy, melodrama, and horror

## Course Content

1. Key concepts of feminist film theory
  - a. Spectatorship, the male gaze, oppositional gaze
  - b. Psychoanalytic theory's focus on gender difference, a tool for feminist film critique
  - c. Second wave feminism, formalism and exposing bias
  - d. Neo-formalism and the attack on feminist film theory
  - e. Queer theory
2. Women behind the camera

- a. Pre-Hollywood studio era
  - b. Alice Guy Blaché, Lois Weber, and the first women in film
  - c. Masculinization of Hollywood
  - d. The star system
  - e. Germaine Dulac and avant-garde filmmakers
  - f. Documentary directors
  - g. Steps toward equity: Annenberg Inclusion Initiative
3. Analysis of representation and spectatorship in the films of auteur directors, such as:
    - a. Alice Guy Blaché
    - b. Germaine Dulac
    - c. Lois Weber
    - d. Dorothy Arzner
    - e. Agnès Varda
    - f. Chantal Akerman
    - g. Julie Dash
    - h. Lizzie Borden
    - i. Dee Rees
    - j. Deepa Mehta
  4. Analysis of conventional film genres and how they have been reclaimed and critiqued by female filmmakers. Genres may include:
    - a. Horror
    - b. Melodrama
    - c. Teen comedy
    - d. American musical
    - e. Pre-code film (1930-1934)

## Lab Content

1. Media screenings either on campus or via the internet for the completion of written assignments, exams, and analyses
2. Feedback on tests and assignments either in person or online via course management system
3. Preparation and collaborative work on group projects

## Special Facilities and/or Equipment

1. Forum-type screening room with video projection system and amplified sound system. Internet access and laptop computer patch to system. Playback equipment formats required: DVD, Blu-ray, computer.
2. Library for access to research books, articles, and videos, both hard copies and digital. Access to video playback facility.
3. When taught via Foothill Global Access: on-going access to computer with email software and capabilities; email address; JavaScript-enabled internet browsing software and video viewing abilities as stated in B above.

## Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Weekly or bi-weekly short writing assignments that synthesize course material through construction, development, and defense of an argument  
 Weekly or bi-weekly objective exam(s) that reference reading materials and lecture  
 Writing assignments (including research paper, homework, essay exam) that demonstrate mastery of concepts in media analysis and theory

Oral presentations that demonstrate understanding of key concepts

## Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Lectures, presentations, and screenings that present and examine course objectives

Discussion and critique of assigned reading and representative media

Cooperative learning exercises that require students to apply core concepts in media studies

Group project presentation followed by in-class discussion and evaluation

Screenings of media that illustrate and support course content

## Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Smelik, Anneke. "Feminist Film Theory," The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies, 1st ed.. 2016.

Geller, Theresa. "Thinking Sex, Doing Gender, Watching Film," The Anthem Handbook of Screen Theory. 2018.

Hayward, Susan. Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts, 5th ed.. 2017.

hooks, bell. Reel to Real. Race, Sex, and Class at the Movies. 2008.

Williams, Tami. Germaine Dulac: A Cinema of Sensations. 2014.

Dulac, Germaine. Writings on Cinema (1919-1937). 2018.

Flitterman-Lewis, Sandy. To Desire Differently. Feminism and the French Cinema. 1996.

Dash, Julie. Daughters of the Dust: The Making of an African American Woman's Film. 1992.

Corrigan, Timothy. A Short Guide to Writing on Film. 2014.

Annenberg Inclusion Initiative | USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, [annenberg.usc.edu/research/aii](https://annenberg.usc.edu/research/aii)  
Women Film Pioneers Project, [wfpp.columbia.edu/](https://wfpp.columbia.edu/)

## Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

1. Critical analyses in the form of journals or online discussion assignments
2. Research or critical essay that requires the student to select media from viewing list and construct, develop and defend an argument referencing the film and the reading materials
3. Examination that requires students to apply core concepts and issues of course content
4. Quizzes and exams that test understanding of reading material and lecture

## Discipline(s)

Multimedia or Film Studies or Women's Studies