

COMM 4856/6856: Women and Film

I.

Course Texts: Collected readings (on sale at U.S. Copies, 3566 Walker Ave.)

Course Schedule (asterisks [*] indicate days when attendance will be taken):

Aug. 31 Introduction to the course

Sept. 5 Labor Day-Holiday

Sept. 7 No class

Sept. 12* Mythic Roots and Controversial Archetypes: Nature vs. Culture

Class film: Sunrise (Murnau, 1927)

Readings: Genesis

Lerner, "The Patriarchs" and "Symbols"

Lloyd, "Introduction" and "Reason, Science, and the Domination of Matter"

**Note: The store assembled these pages backwards. You must skip forward in your book to page viii and go backwards.

Jung, "The Concept of the Collective Unconscious"

Recommended outside viewing: Fatal Attraction or Basic Instinct

Sept. 14* Class lecture, discussion of film and readings

If you choose to write a response papers on one of the films and the readings, it is due today

Sept. 19 The Fragmented Woman

Class film: The Three Faces of Eve (Johnson, 1957)

Reading: Freud, "Woman as Castrated Man"

Showalter, "Managing Women's Minds"

Sept. 21* Discussion of film and readings

Response paper due (if you are choosing to write this week)

- Sept. 26* **Gaze Theory: The Seer and the Seen**
 Reading: Berger, ch. 3 from Ways of Seeing
 Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"
- Sept. 28 **Class film: Vertigo (Hitchcock, 1958)**
 Reading: Modleski, "Femininity by Design" (book 1)

- Oct. 3* **Discussion of film and reading**
- Oct. 5* **Film Noir: Obsession and Possession**
 Class film: Scarlet Street (Lang, 1945)
 Reading: Place, "Women and Film Noir" (book 1)

- Oct. 10 **Contemporary Noir**
 Class film: The Crying Game (Jordan, 1992)
 Reading: Chumo, "The Crying Game and Vertigo: The Quest for Identity" (book 2)
 Payne, "Crossed Lines: The Crying Game" (book 2)
 Kotsopoulos and Mills, "Gender, Genre, and Post-Feminism: The Crying Game" (book 2)
- Oct. 12* **Discussion of films and readings**

- Oct. 17 **Romance and the Construction of Desirability**
 Class film: Now, Voyager (1942, Rapper)
 Reading: LaPlace, "Producing and Consuming the Woman's Film: Discursive Struggle in Now, Voyager" (book 1)
 Recommended Viewing: Ghost (1990)
 CAMPUS LECTURE ON GENDER AND SCIENCE TONIGHT
- Oct. 19* **Discussion of film and reading**

- Oct. 24 **The Construction of Gender**
 Class film: Orlando (Potter, 1993)
 Reading: Donohue, "Against Crawling Realism: Sally Potter on Orlando" (book 2)
 Williams, "Everything in Question: Women and Film in Prospect" (book 2)
 Garber, "Dress Codes" (book 2)
 Solomon, "It's Never Too Late to Switch" (book 2)

- Oct. 26* Discussion of film and readings (possible guest: Dr. Lesley Ferris)
- Oct. 31* **Constructing Race and Sexuality**
 Class films: Slaying the Dragon and Rock Hudson's Home Movies
 Reading: Dyer, "Rock: The Last Guy You'd Have Figured?"
 (book 2)
 Marchetti, "Introduction" to Romance and the Yellow Peril (book 2)
- Nov. 2 **Race and Sexuality: Post-War Anxieties**
 Class film: Sayonara (Logan, 1957)
 Reading: Marchetti, "Tragic and Transcendental Love: Sayonara and The Crimson Kimono" (book 2)
 Recommended Viewing: Mississippi Masala (Nair, 1991)
 Reading for Mississippi Masala: Stuart, "Mira Nair: A New Hybrid Cinema" (book 2)
- Nov. 7 **Race and Sexuality: Contemporary Anxieties**
 Class film: Jungle Fever (Lee, 1991)
 Reading: Guerrero, "Spike Lee: The Fever in the Racial Jungle" (book 2)
 hooks, "The Oppositional Gaze" (book 1)
 hooks, "Reconstructing Black Masculinity" (book 1)
 West, "Black Sexuality" (book 2)
- Nov. 9* Discussion of films and readings
- Nov. 10 CAMPUS LECTURE ON GENDER AND SCIENCE TONIGHT
- Nov. 14 **Race and Sexuality: Subtexts in Mainstream Film**
 Class film: Fried Green Tomatoes (Avnet, 1991)
 Reading: Weiss, "A Queer Feeling When I Look at You: Hollywood Stars and Lesbian Spectatorship in the 1930s" (book 2)
 Vickers, "Excuse Me, Did We See the Same Movie?" (book 2)
 (for grad students): Koontz, "My Mother Was a Saint" (book 2--some sentences cut off by copier)
- Nov. 16* Discussion of film and readings
- Nov. 21* **Alternative Narratives: Documentaries**
 Class film(s): Greetings From Out Here (Spiro, 1993)

Nov. 23* Class films: Fast Food Women
Stories No One Wants to Hear

Nov. 28* **Revenge, Violence, and Women**
Class film: A Question of Silence (Gorris, 1982)
Reading: Glaspell, "A Jury of Her Peers" (book 1)
Gentile, "Feminist or Tendentious?" (book 1)
Murphy, "A Question of Silence" (book 1)
Williams, "A Jury of Their Peers: Questions of
Silence, Speech, and Judgment in Marlene
Gorris's A Question of Silence" (book 2)

Nov. 30* Discussion of film and readings

Dec. 5 **Revenge, Violence, and Men**
Class film: TBA
Reading: Clover, "Falling Down and the Rise of the Average
White Male" (book 2)
Jeffords, "The Big Switch: Hollywood Masculinity
in the Nineties" (book 2)
Boose, "Techno-Muscularity and the 'Boy Eternal':
From the Quagmire to the Gulf" (book 2)
(for grad students): Cohn, "Wars, Wimps, and
Women: Talking Gender and Thinking War"
(book 2)

Dec. 7* Discussion of film and readings

Course Requirements:

4856: Response papers (5) 60% (10% each for the lowest three
grades, 15% each for the two
highest grades)

Journal 15%
Final exam 15%
Class participation 10%

6856: Response papers (6) 60% (5% for the lowest grade, 10% each
for the four next highest grades,
15% for the highest grade)

Journal 15%
Final exam 15%
Class participation 10%

Please note: you are required to attend one of the two University lectures on gender and science (Oct. 17 or Nov. 10) and to discuss it in your journal. Please note these dates on your calendar.

Response Papers: 4856 students are required to turn in five response papers this semester (each approximately three pages long), and 6856 students are required to turn in six response papers (each approximately four to five pages long). These papers will not be formal essays (unless you want them to be). They will be your critical responses to the films and the readings assigned for specific topics. These may be personal, informal, and loosely structured papers; they must, however, reveal a true thoughtfulness about what you have seen and read. You are free to discuss other films you've seen (or plays you seen, books you've read, television shows you've watched). Any paper which does not connect ALL of the readings to the films, however, will not be considered an acceptable paper, no matter how interesting it may be. (I will hand it back for revision). Informality is no excuse for poor grammar and spelling, nor for sloppy sentence structure. I'm looking for thoughtful discussions; intelligence, creativity, lively thought, and serious wrestling with the often controversial issues and ideas we're dealing with are the characteristics of superb content. Don't try to write about what you think you are supposed to write about. Write about what you believe to be the important, disturbing, or most interesting aspects of the films and readings. Play to your strengths (i.e., if you are most interested in history, discuss the material from an historical point of view; if you are more interested in social issues, discuss the material from a political or sociological point of view). Write the papers in a way that allows you relative freedom. Some people write dialogues, some write mini-plays, some write letters, etc. (Helpful advice: DO NOT retell the plots of films. Assume your reader--your instructor--has seen the films.) You are free to turn in more than the required number of papers. I will count only the top five (for 4856) or six (for 6856) grades. These assignments should be fun and/or exciting. If they're not, something's wrong. Come see me immediately.

Journals: Each student must keep a journal of his or her reactions to films, media events, and relevant experiences encountered outside of class this semester. 4856 and 6856 students are required to have fifteen entries in their journals. Each entry should be 1-2 pages long, and should discuss the film, ad, tv show, play, news segment, magazine article, music video, or personal experience in light of the ideas we are studying in this course. Seven entries may concern non-film events; one must report on one of the "Women and Science" speakers coming to campus on the nights of Oct. 27 and Nov. 10; and the other seven must concern films seen outside of class (on tv, a rented video, or in a theatre). There is no "formula" for completing the entries; just discuss interesting ideas triggered by the "events" that are related to our concerns in this course (i.e., images of men and women, and their psychological, social, and political implications). Entries do not need to be typed, but should be rewritten before

submission if they are illegible. Journals are due anytime before the last day of class (the last day of class, Dec. 7, is the LAST day to turn in journals).

The final will be comprehensive, and will consist of essay questions.

Attendance will be taken on each lecture/discussion day (or any film day that is noted [*] as a required day). You are allowed two unexcused absences. More than two will negatively affect your final grade. Please provide documentation for excused absences (e.g., physicians' or attorneys' notes).

Participation is very important in this class. You are encouraged to participate actively to enhance the quality and interest of our discussions. A high participation grade can change a "C" to a "B," or a "B" to an "A."

Notes: Since film lengths vary, film classes often run over the official ending time listed in the Schedule of Classes. I'll try to let you know ahead of time if a particular film will run over our allotted time.

Because we will be centrally concerned with contemporary themes and issues-- which are often controversial-- some of the films and readings in this course may contain explicit or graphic language and images. Texts for the course are chosen for their ability to illuminate these issues, not for their sensational value, but if this is a problem for any student, he or she should see me after the first class; otherwise, there will be no further mention of the "rating" levels of films or readings.

Official notice: Plagiarism is a university offense punishable by expulsion from the university. Your papers should be presentations of YOUR ideas. Please feel free to use as many sources as you like, but remember to CITE them. Use quotation marks and indicate whose words you are citing.