ENG 380: Film, Media, History
Women’s Genres in Global Cinema
Spring 2013
Prof. Miller | PLC 529
Office Hours | W 1 - 4

Course Description
This course introduces students to issues and concepts related to the “women’s films” Hollywood produced during its classical period. Focusing on histories, theories and criticism of cinema addressing women, we examine a range of films produced outside of Hollywood to study how different filmmakers, characters, and narratives have foregrounded women’s lives and viewpoints. Looking at comedy, melodrama, action, musical, and documentary productions, students learn the vocabulary of genre studies while contemplating questions related to gender. These include: Is the “woman’s film” a byproduct of Hollywood sexism? Is every film potentially a woman’s film? Do women’s films resist, oppose, or perpetuate sexism within their cultural contexts? Taking up various approaches to film aesthetics, media contexts, women’s genres, and “the woman’s film,” students develop their own ideas about authorship, audiences, stardom, fandom, and feminism. Considering gender as a category of analysis, “women” as a contested term, and films as texts and commodities, we explore how constructions of race, class, sexuality, and nationality shape women’s genres in global cinema.

Note: Screenings contain nudity, sex, violence, profanity, and sensitive issues. If this presents a problem, consider registering for a different course. Films will be screened without censorship or notice of content.

Expectations
Read and study assigned texts in preparation for class meetings. Complete outside screenings as scheduled. View and review moving image texts on BB. Prepare questions and comments for class discussion. Arrive to meetings on time. Respect your classmates’ different backgrounds, insights, and frames of reference.

Course Work
Attendance and Participation [10%]
Midterm Exam [15%] TH May 2
Essay 1 [20%] due TH May 9
Essay 2 [25%] due TH May 23
Final Exam [30%] due T June 11

Reading is on the course Blackboard site. Recommended Reading on Reserve at Knight Library: Doane, The Desire to Desire: The Woman’s Film of the 1940s (1987).

Course Policies
Your final grade drops if you miss more than two class meetings. After two, each absence will lower your final grade a notch (A- to B+, etc.). All essay assignments must be submitted in order to pass the course. Contact the professor at least two days in advance to ask for an extension. Essay grades drop a full mark for every day past due. You are responsible for meeting Student Conduct Code and Community Standards. Students with disabilities: Alert me to accommodations you may need. If bad weather or another emergency requires cancelling a class, I will notify you by email or put a note on the classroom door. Use your discretion in traveling to class.
**Course Schedule** subject to change

**Week 1**

**T April 2**  *Caramel* (Nadine Labaki, 2007, 92 min.); Dern TV, “Drunk Girls”

**TH April 4** Gender Norms, Genre Categories, and Feelings

* Annette Kuhn, “Women’s Genres”
* Robyn R. Warhol, “Preface: Six Readers Reading—and Feeling,” *Having a Good Cry*

**Hollywood “Women’s Pictures” and Global Counterpoints**

* Attend a screening of *Blow Up, The Cockettes*, or both at The Bijou.

**Week 2**

**T April 9**  *The Women* (George Cukor, 1939, 103 min.)

Light Melodrama
* Feminist Frequency videos
* Keywords entries on “genre,” “audience,” and “gender”
* media consumption self-study

**TH April 11**  *Mary Ann Doane, “The Desire to Desire”* 1-13, 33-37

**Week 3**

**T April 16**  *Set It Off* (F. Gary Gray, 1996, 123 min.)

* Alili Sharon Larkin, “Defining Ourselves”

**TH April 18**  *Kara Keeling, “Ghetto Heaven”*

**Week 4**

**T April 23**  *Desperately Seeking Susan* (Susan Seidelman, 1985, 104 min.)

The Independent Women’s Picture
* Jackie Stacey, “Desperately Seeking Difference”

**TH April 25**  *Sarah Street, “Textures of Transformation”*

**Beyond Hollywood, Beyond “Women’s Genres”**

**Week 5**

**T April 30**  *Vagabond* (Agnes Varda, 1987, 105 min.)

Late New Wave
* Holly Willis, “Vagabond”
* Rebecca J. DeRoo, “Unhappily Ever After”
* Kelley Conway, “A New Wave of Spectators”

**TH May 2**  *Midterm*  shot identification, vocab, short answer, essay
Week 6
T May 7  Documentary and Asian/American Representation
* The Grace Lee Project (Grace Lee, 2005, 68 min.)
* Celine Parreñas Shimizu, The Hypersexuality of Race, Chapter 1

TH May 9  Essay 1 due  5-pp. critical analysis with original argument

Week 7
T May 14  The Bachelor Family and International Newlyweds
* Jim Brancato, “Domesticating Politics”
* Divya C. McMillin, “Marriages Are Made on Television”

TH May 16  Work, Class, Action, Authorship II
* Faat Kiné (Ousmane Sembène, 2000, 121 min.)

Film Theory, Aesthetics, Politics

Week 8
T May 21  Water (Deepa Mehta, 2005, 117 min.)
* Sarah Berry, “Subversive Habits”

TH May 23  Essay 2 due  5-pp. Faat Kiné analysis with original argument

Week 9
T May 28  Stardom, (Dis)ability, and a Musical Weepie
* Dancer in the Dark (Lars Von Trier, 2000, 140 min.)
* Linda Williams, “Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess”

TH May 30  * José Arroyo, “How Do You Solve a Problem Like Von Trier?”
* Slate dossier on Von Trier

Week 10
T June 4  Surveillance, Romance, the Domestic
* Circumstance (Maryam Keshavarz, 2011, 107 min.)
* Samar Habib, “Queer-Friendly Islamic Hermenutics”
* Habib, “Historical Context and Reception of… I Am You”

TH June 6  Wrap-up: More “Women’s Work”
* Michelle Citron, “Women’s Film Production: Going Mainstream”

Final Exam  shot id, vocab, short answer, essay  June 11, 8:00 a.m.

Optional Final Paper  Students who receive A’s or B’s on their essays may submit, by
June 10, an 8-pp. paper on one of the following films (or sets of films) in place of a final
exam: The Godfather; Hedwig and the Angry Inch; Brown Bunny; All About Eve and
All About My Mother; Floating Clouds; Dance, Girl, Dance