

ENG 4134: WOMEN AND FILM

ENG 4134: Women and Film

Instructor: Megan Fowler

Email: mjfowler@ufl.edu

M asynchronous, TWRF synchronous
Period 4; MW asynchronous Period 6-7

Classroom Meeting ID: TBA

Office hours: TR Period 5

Office Meeting ID: TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine women in cinema as film subjects and objects, spectators, and filmmakers. The primary purpose of this class is to teach you as students women's role in film history, familiarize you with influential works in feminist film theory, and help you hone your oral and written critical analysis skills in viewing and reading film.

Tracing the last 100 years of cinematic history, we will begin with the early silent period before moving into the "Golden Age" of classic Hollywood cinema. Topics of note from this period will include the significance of the Hollywood starlet as a figure, the hidden history of female editors (known at the time as "cutters"), and the significant contributions women made to Hollywood film during the eras of the New Woman, the Great Depression, and WWII. Moving to the 60s, 70s, and 80s, we will consider historical shifts for women both in front of and behind the camera in the wake of emerging film movements like the French New Wave and rising social movements such as second wave feminism. Finally, we will conclude in the contemporary era, focusing on the rise of female directors in both independent and mainstream film. With more women assuming primary roles in film production, this era offers new opportunities to approach film from an intersectional feminist lens. Our class will accordingly tackle questions about the role of race, queerness, and disability in cinematic depictions of women. Potential filmmakers from this period include Cheryl Dunye, Lana and Lily Wachowski, Ana Lily Amirpour, and Aurora Guerrero.

Given our wide breadth, this class will also include films from a wide variety of genres and mediums. For example, we will explore generic traditions that have primarily been associated with women's films including the melodrama, romantic comedy, and historical drama. In our conversations around these genres, we will discuss both the ways in which such subject matter reflects women's daily lives as well as the often denigratory treatment of these films (frequently dubbed "chick flicks" in the contemporary) by the wider public sphere. In addition, this class will consider the feminist possibilities of speculative genres such as film noir, horror, and science fiction, synthesizing our conversations with feminist scholarship.

CLASS DELIVERY

ENG 4134 “Women and Film” is an online course. As such, the class will be offered through a combination of synchronous and asynchronous sessions on digital platforms Zoom and Canvas. With the exception of the very first class session (Monday May 10th) all subsequent Monday class sessions will be held asynchronously (meaning there will be no Zoom session, with all class work for the day conducted through Canvas). In addition, all film screenings will be asynchronous, with students individually responsible for viewing course materials. Students may NOT, however, enroll in any other courses that take place during asynchronous class time. Participation in the form of class attendance, discussion posts, and attentive engagement with course materials is required.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication and critical thinking:

- **Content:** Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the academic discipline.
- **Communication:** Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Texts

Holliger, Karen. *Feminist Film Studies*, 1st Edition. New York: Routledge, 2012. **ISBN-13:** 978-0415575287.

*All additional readings will be available through Canvas. All viewings are available to stream for free through Kanopy or Pluto and/or to rent through Amazon Video or iTunes.

ASSIGNMENTS

Brief Response Papers (150 points; 15% of grade)

Brief responses to the film each week. Students will write **5** posts of **150+ words** to be uploaded to Canvas. Response should include close reading of individual moments or scenes and/or engage with reading material related to the topic of that week. Though short, these assignments should show the same detail of thought and professional tone demonstrated throughout the course. Responses will be due before class on Tuesday.

Film Analysis Essay (350 points; 35% of grade)

For this assignment, you will write a film analysis paper (**5-7 double spaced pages**) discussing any film we have viewed together as a class up to this point. You will make an argumentative claim about the film and analyze formal film elements such as editing, framing, cinematography, mise-en-scène, sound, and pacing to support your claim. You are welcome to take a variety of approaches (including comparative analysis or short research paper) to this essay, as long as your paper includes a strong thesis, convincing supporting evidence, and careful close readings of your chosen film.

Final Research Paper (350 points; 35% of grade)

For this final assignment, you will write a research paper (**5-7 double spaced pages**) related to one or more of the topics or films we have discussed in class this semester. Your paper should make an innovative argument synthesized with sound research [at least 4 sources]. In addition, the body of your paper should explain and support your argument by providing close analysis of several key scenes or sequences as evidence. You are encouraged to discuss the film within its historical context, in conversation with other films of the same genre or period, and/or through the various lenses of feminist film theory we have utilized throughout the course. Be sure to emphasize the different elements and theoretical frameworks studied throughout the semester as well as focusing on technical components of film including editing, mise-en scene, cinematography, and/or sound.

Participation (150 points; 15% of grade)

This will include attendance, class discussion, in class activities, peer reviews, etc.

COURSE POLICIES

1. You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance*: Missing four or more classes will result in automatic failure of the course.

Exemptions from this policy include:

- University-sponsored events, such as athletics and band
- Religious holidays
- Medical or family emergencies

In each of these instances, students must provide appropriate documentation. Students are responsible for making up all missed work from these sessions within a timeframe of three class periods (unless otherwise specified by the instructor). In addition, three tardies (of five or more minutes late) will result in one absence.

3. *Paper Format & Submission*: All assignments must be MLA style and will be submitted to Canvas (or otherwise specified platform) by 11:59 pm on the due date.

4. *Late Papers/Assignments*: Late papers and assignments will not be accepted for credit. If a student finds that they will not be able to complete an assignment on time, they should consult with the instructor BEFORE that assignment is due.
5. *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities*: Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over. No late work will be accepted.
6. *Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism*: Plagiarism violates the Student Honor Code and requires reporting to the Dean of Students. All students must abide by the Student Honor Code: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.
7. Students with *disabilities* who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu>), which will provide appropriate documentation to give the instructor.
8. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
9. *Grade Appeals*: In 1000- and 2000-level courses, students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008 TUR). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.
10. *Course Evaluations*: Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages asking you to go online and evaluate this course: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>
11. Students who face difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help may call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352) 392-1575, or contact them online: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>
12. *Classroom Conduct*: Students come from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds. All class participants will be required to treat differing ideas with respect. Disrespectful behavior toward the instructor or peers may result in dismissal from class and an absence for the day.
13. *Tech Policy*: Recreational use of cell phones, computers, and other devices (including texting, posting to social media, or web surfing) will not be permitted. Use of technology will be permitted for classroom activities only. Failure to comply may result in dismissal from class and a subsequent absence for the day.
14. *UF's policy on Harassment*: UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty: <https://titleix.ufl.edu/about/title-ix-rights/>
15. Policy on environmental sustainability. Whenever possible, I will use paper-sparing electronic media to distribute our course materials. Consider purchasing electronic editions of assigned texts when they are available, or used copies of print texts. If you do not elect to keep your print books, consider sharing them with others after the semester ends. (For example, you could donate them to the Alachua County Friends of the Library annual book sale.)

COURSE SCHEDULE

*This schedule is subject to change throughout the semester. Please be sure to regularly consult the syllabus posted on Canvas.

Date	Class Topic/Activities	Viewing/Reading Material	Due
<u>Week 1-Classic Cinema</u>			
M 5/10	Class Introductions and Syllabus		
Screening	ASYNCHRONOUS <i>La Souriante Madame Beudet</i> (1923); <i>The Women</i> (1939)		
T 5/11	Women in Early Cinema		
W 5/12	Classic Hollywood and the Women's Picture	<i>FFS</i> Chapter 2 "Women and Genre Films"	
Screening	ASYNCHRONOUS <i>Mildred Pierce</i> (1945)		
R 5/13	Women and Film Noir		
F 5/14	Joan Crawford and the Hollywood Starlet	<i>FFS</i> Chapter 8 "The Actress"	
<u>Week 2-Melodrama and the French New Wave</u>			
M 5/17	ASYNCHRONOUS Genre and Film Movements		Brief Response #1
Screening	ASYNCHRONOUS <i>Imitation of Life</i> (1959)		
T 5/18	Women in Melodrama		
W 5/19	Whiteness, Passing, and Race in Hollywood Cinema		
Screening	ASYNCHRONOUS <i>Cléo from 5 to 7</i> (1962)		

R 5/20	Women in the French New Wave		
F 5/21	Feminism and Avant-garde Film	<i>FFS</i> Chapter 3 “Women in Avant-garde and Documentary Filmmaking”	
<u>Week 3-Women in Horror</u>			
M 5/24	ASYNCHRONOUS Women and the Horror Film		Brief Response #2
Screening	ASYNCHRONOUS <i>Rosemary’s Baby</i> (1968)		
T 5/25	Feminist Horror		
W 5/26	The Final Girl	“Her Body, Himself” by Carol Clover	
Screening	ASYNCHRONOUS <i>Alien</i> (1979)		
R 5/27	Gender and Genre Hybrids		
F 5/28	Female Abjection and the Horror of Motherhood	“How to See the Horror: The Hostile Fetus in <i>Rosemary’s Baby</i> and <i>Alien</i> ” by A. Robin Hoffman	Film Analysis Essay
<u>Week 4-New Queer Cinema</u>			
M 5/31	NO CLASS: MEMORIAL DAY		
T 6/1	The Wachowskis Sisters and a Retrospective on Trans Female Filmmaking	Film: <i>Bound</i> (1996)	Brief Response #3
W 6/2	New Queer Cinema	<i>FFS</i> Chapter 4 “Lesbian Film Theory and Criticism”	

Screening	ASYNCHRONOUS <i>Watermelon Woman</i> (1996)		
R 6/3	Black Lesbian Voices in Independent Film		
F 6/4	Postcolonialism and Intersectional Feminist Film	<i>FFS</i> Chapter 6 “Feminist Film Studies and Race”	
<u>Week 5-Literary Adaptations and the Period Film</u>			
M 6/7	ASYNCHRONOUS “Chick Flicks”: the Association of Women with Historical Dramas and Romantic Comedies		Brief Response #4
Screening	ASYNCHRONOUS <i>Clueless</i> (1995)		
T 6/8	Jane Austen and the Teen Rom-Com		
W 6/9	Literary Adaptations and the Period Film	<i>FFS</i> Chapter 5 “Literary Adaptations, Biopics and Women”	
Screening	ASYNCHRONOUS <i>Marie Antoinette</i> (2006)		
R 6/10	Anachronisms and Royal Girlhood in the Biopic		
F 6/11	Sofia Coppola and the Female Auteur	<i>FFS</i> Chapter 7 “The Woman Auteur”	
<u>Week 6-Animation</u>			
M 6/14	ASYNCHRONOUS Feminist Postcolonialism in Contemporary Cinema		Brief Response #5
Screening	ASYNCHRONOUS <i>Persepolis</i> (2007)		

T 6/15	NO CLASS: WRITING DAY		
W 6/16	Women and Animation		Film Research Paper
Screening	ASYNCHRONOUS <i>A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night</i> (2014)		
R 6/17	Radical Reclamations of Female Monstrosity		
F 6/18	Class Reflections and Wrap-Up		

GRADING

Grading Scale

A	4.0	93-100	930-1000	C	2.0	73-76	730-769
A-	3.67	90-92	900-929	C-	1.67	70-72	700-729
B+	3.33	87-89	870-899	D+	1.33	67-69	670-699
B	3.0	83-86	830-869	D	1.0	63-66	630-669
B-	2.67	80-82	800-829	D-	0.67	60-62	600-629
C+	2.33	77-79	770-799	E	0.00	0-59	0-599

Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points can be found here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Rubric

An “A” assignment satisfies the requirements laid out by the assignment sheet at a high quality level and demonstrates creativity and innovation. Work is complete and well organized, and moves beyond the expectations of the assignment. Work displays a thorough understanding of the stylistic conventions of its genre. Assignment critically engages with the concepts of the course and demonstrates a clear and logical rationality. Work is relatively free of error.

A “B” assignment satisfies the requirements laid out by the assignment sheet at a proficient level. Work is complete and reasonably organized. Work displays an adequate understanding of the stylistic conventions of its genre. Assignment engages with the concepts of the course and demonstrates some logical rationale. Work may contain a few errors or require minor revisions.

A “C” assignment satisfies the requirements laid out by the assignment sheet. Work is complete, but somewhat disorganized. Work attempts to engage with the stylistic conventions of its genre. Assignment attempts to engage with the concepts of the course but fails to demonstrate a clear rationale. Work contains errors and requires significant revisions.

A “D” assignment satisfies the requirements laid out by the assignment sheet a poor quality level. Work is disorganized to the point of feeling incomplete. Work fails to engage with the stylistic conventions of its genre. Assignment fails to engage with concepts of the course and lacks a clear rationale. Work contains errors and requires significant and even complete revision.

An “E” is primarily reserved for work that is incomplete or has not been turned in on time. Assignments at this level fail to meet the requirements laid out by the assignment sheet. However, work that is incoherent, shoddy, or shows a lack of understanding of the assignment may also receive a failing grade.