WS 235H: Women in World Cinema
Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
Oregon State University
Winter 2013
Tues. 4:00-6:50 PM
STAG 233
(3 UHC credits)

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CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION
Explores constructions and practices of gender in a transnational, multi-religious, and global framework by examining a wide variety of films about women around the world. (Bacc Core Course)

COURSE DESCRIPTION
In this honors level discussion-oriented interdisciplinary course, we will examine representations of women and gender through screening films from various genres within a global context. In particular, we will explore films produced by women and/or about women’s lives and experiences in order to analyze constructions and practices of gender in a transnational framework. Analyzing the politics of representation will allow us to consider the ways in which women around the world have been imagined, constructed, regulated, and represented in various discourses and media formats. Doing so also allows us to understand how women’s lives have been deeply affected by colonialism, globalization, nationalist movements, war and militarism, and other processes. Students will be introduced to concepts in feminist film theory and criticism, and various themes and theoretical principles of transnational feminist organizing, with special emphasis placed on women of the global South. By examining the context of various films created within particular historical and cultural contexts, we will develop and expand our understanding of the cultural productions, meanings, and intersections of race, gender, culture, class, sexual identity, and nation. Satisfies BCC, Cultural Diversity.

Cultural Diversity
Baccalaureate Core Requirement

WS 235H fulfills the Cultural Diversity (Perspectives) requirement in the Baccalaureate Core. As part of this requirement, students who take this course will be able to: 1. Identify and analyze characteristics of a cultural tradition outside of European/American culture. 2. Demonstrate an understanding of how perspectives can change depending on cultural or historical contexts. 3. Describe aspects of Non-Western culture that influence or contribute to global cultural, scientific, or social processes.
STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

As a result of having taken this course, students will be able to:

- discuss and explain key concepts and themes in feminist film and media studies.
- analyze the intersections of gender, race, class, sexuality, and nation, including how these are strategically represented in cinema.
- demonstrate the necessary skills to historically and socially contextualize media images and representations, using a feminist framework.
- analyze power, particularly in terms of structural and institutionalized forms of oppression, and recognize the ways in which certain representations may sustain and/or challenge power and privilege.
- identify and explain the construction of the exoticized “other”—both the racialized “other” of the white/western gaze and the gendered “other” of the male gaze.
- develop a better understanding of the gendered dynamics of colonialism, globalization, and militarism.
- consider the ways in which women’s lives and experiences around the world have been configured in distinct ways, shaped by specific cultural contexts and international relations.
- develop greater sensitivity and critical awareness about women’s experiences in various parts of the world.
- demonstrate writing skills in feminist critical analysis on the politics of representation.

These objectives will be assessed through each student’s participation in class discussion and/or an online Blackboard discussion, completion of a critical essay, a film review, and a class presentation.

LEARNING RESOURCES


The texts are available at the university bookstore, and are also on reserve at the Valley Library. Additional required readings for this class are available through Blackboard under “course readings.”

EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

1. Attendance/Participation (25%)
Students are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings for this course, and to actively participate in all class discussions. This is a discussion-oriented class, so you should come to class prepared to discuss all films and reading assignments. Films and reading assignments are listed next to the day during which they will be discussed. Occasionally, quizzes will be administered in class, and grades for quizzes will be factored into the attendance/participation grade. If you miss class, it is always your responsibility to find out what you missed, including changes in assignments or readings.

2. Class Presentation (25%)
Each student is required to make a collaborative presentation about one of the films we watch in class. Presentations should be approximately 20 minutes and should make use of course materials and outside research to engage your classmates in a brief critical discussion. You may make use of discussion questions, handouts, audio-visual materials, games, performance, or other creative exercises. Your style of presentation should be appropriate to the topic and materials assigned for your presentation. You
should fully collaborate with the other members of your presentation group, and presentations cannot be rescheduled. If you fail to attend your presentation, you will receive a zero for this assignment.

3. Film Review (25%)
Each student will be expected to complete a film review, focusing on a film or films we screen for this class. You may wish to focus on just one film, or you may choose to structure your review around a particular theme, such as violence against women or women’s sexuality, to discuss representations in two or more films. Your reviews should cite at least two readings from our class, and should include discussion of the key themes in the film(s). You may consult the film reviews we read for this class as models of appropriate reviews. Film reviews should be approximately 2-3 pages in length (750-1200 words), and will be due on Blackboard on February 18, by 5:00 pm.

Grading Criteria for Film Reviews

10 points – This review is well organized, with a clear and focused thesis. It is turned in on time and meets the length requirement (approximately 2-3 pages, or 750-1200 words). It is well written, with virtually no grammatical or spelling errors. The argument is original, analytical, concise, and well supported by textual examples from at least two of our required readings, which are actively engaged and properly contextualized and cited. It clearly demonstrates that the student has read and thought carefully about the themes of the film(s) and readings. Finally, this essay reflects the complexity of the issues under consideration, clearly connecting the film(s) to the readings and themes of the course.

9 points – This review has a clearly focused thesis, and is well written. It clearly demonstrates that the author has read the assigned materials, and is actively engaged with the ideas of the class, film(s), and readings. It has an original and well-structured argument, which is well supported by examples from the film(s) and at least two course readings. Any quotations are adequately contextualized and interpreted.

8 points – This review has a clearly focused thesis, and is generally well written. It has an interesting argument that is well supported with materials from the class (including at least two readings), and it goes beyond mere summary of the film and/or readings, but it does not go beyond class discussions. Also, it may contain some spelling or grammatical errors.

6-7 points – This review has no thesis, or its thesis is unclear and confusing. The argument is unfocused or absent. It may contain substantial grammatical, spelling, and documentation errors, which further obscure the argument. And it either fails to make use of sources, or they are simply inserted into the body of the text without contextualization, interpretation, or analysis. Finally, it may be too brief, generalized, vague, or obscured by grammatical problems to address the material in any depth.

5 points or less – This review has no thesis, and does not make any sort of argument (or, its argument is seriously obscured by grammatical, spelling, and typing errors). It fails to adequately make use of required sources, and it is clear from reading this essay that the writer has not read assigned materials for class.

0 points – Any paper that is plagiarized earns no points.

4. Critical Essay (25%)
For this course, students are required to write a short analytic paper (approximately 5-7 pages, or 2000-3000 words), synthesizing and critically analyzing the themes and readings. These papers should
demonstrate mastery of the readings while also asserting your own ideas and arguments about the topics we have addressed. Your critical essays are due two days after our last class meeting, on March 14, by 5:00 PM. All critical essays must be typed, double-spaced, and on numbered pages. They should make use of at least two sources from this class. You are free to use additional outside sources, but you are not required to do so. In addition, your essays must be properly documented with the use of standard citations (including bibliographies, footnotes where necessary, and page numbers of all quoted materials). If you are unfamiliar with the use of citations, please consult a reference guide, a reference librarian, or the writing center.

Please select one of the following topics for your critical essay. You should begin with the suggested topic, and develop it into a more specific discussion of your own, taking this as an opportunity to demonstrate your mastery of the reading materials, and your ability to synthesize and analyze readings and films for our class. You should view these questions as starting points for your own analysis. Remember to avoid generalizations, to be as specific as possible, and to check for spelling and punctuation. Essays will be graded for the careful development of an argument, engagement with our class themes and readings, the meaningful use of sources, clarity, originality, creativity, and grammar. Late papers cannot be accepted.

- Kaplan focuses a great deal of attention on the looking relation in cinema, particularly with regard to the male “gaze” or “look,” and the imperial gaze. What are the politics of these looking relations? How do such relations highlight the ambivalence of postcolonialism we’ve discussed as represented in certain films? What does it mean to “see” the Other, and to “know” the Other? And what happens when the look is returned?

- Discuss the intersection of patriarchy and colonialism in cinema. How do these two systems shape representations? In Kaplan’s discussion of Hollywood travel films, for example, how does gender change or complicate colonial endeavors? (You might choose to discuss these issues in relation to a specific film or set of films, or in terms of a theme, such as violence against women, war and masculinity, or women’s sexuality.)

- What does it mean to “heal imperialized eyes,” and when/how is this possible, if at all? How do certain filmmakers work to resist problematic and/or stereotypic representations, creating new looking relations? How do feminist and/or anticolonial films participate in such processes of resistance?

**GRADING**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent work. An example for all to follow. Exhibits openness and unusually sharp insight into many sides of an issue. Shows considerable critical thought. Written work is virtually flawless in terms of grammar, spelling, cogency, and content. Performs far above minimum requirements. Exceptionally articulate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Above average. Speaks and writes well. Performs above the minimum requirements. Demonstrates very good understanding of ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Speaks and writes in an acceptable manner. Work is satisfactory, average. Meets minimum requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Below average work. Minimally acceptable, but unacceptable if this course is required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Unacceptable work. Does not meet minimum requirements</td>
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A  95%  B  85%  C  75%  D  65%
A- 90%  B- 80%  C- 70%  D- 60%
B+ 88%  C+ 78%  D+ 68%  F below 60%
Note on Incompletes
Incomplete (I) grades are given only in documented emergency cases (usually only for a death in the family, major illness or injury, or birth of a child, etc.), and if the student has completed the majority of the coursework (in other words, usually everything but the final research paper). If you are having any difficulty that might prevent you completing the coursework, please do not wait until the end of the term; contact the professor immediately.

Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities
Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty, and Disability Access Services (DAS). Students with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at 737-4098.

Expectations for Student Conduct
Many students do not understand what academic dishonesty is. It is important to become familiar with its different forms and the University's definitions.

At Oregon State University academic dishonesty is defined by the Oregon Administrative Rules 576-015-0020.1.a-c as: An intentional act of deception in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or effort of another person or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic work. Academic dishonesty includes:

- **CHEATING** - use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information or study aids or an act of deceit by which a student attempts to misrepresent mastery of academic effort or information. This includes unauthorized copying or collaboration on a test or assignment or using prohibited materials and texts.
- **FABRICATION** - falsification or invention of any information (including falsifying research, inventing or exaggerating data and listing incorrect or fictitious references.
- **ASSISTING** - helping another commit an act of academic dishonesty. This includes paying or bribing someone to acquire a test or assignment, changing someone’s grades or academic records, or taking a test/doing an assignment for someone else (or allowing someone to do these things for you). It is a violation of Oregon state law to create and offer to sell part or all of an education assignment to another person (ORS 165.114).
- **TAMPERING** - altering or interfering with evaluation instruments and documents.
- **PLAGIARISM** - representing the word or ideas of another person as one's own OR presenting someone else's words, ideas, artistry or data as one's own. This includes copying another person's work (including unpublished material) without appropriate referencing, presenting someone else's opinions and theories as one's own, or working jointly on a project, then submitting it as one's own.

Academic dishonesty cases are handled initially by the academic units (collection of evidence and documentation of incident, meeting with student regarding the situation, determination of responsibility and academic penalty) but will also be referred to the Student Conduct Coordinator for action under the rules. For more information on student conduct, see [http://oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/regulations/index.php](http://oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/regulations/index.php)
In an academic community, students and faculty, and staff each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment, whether online or in the classroom. Students, faculty, and staff have the responsibility to treat each other with understanding, dignity and respect. Disruption of teaching, administration, research, and other institutional activities is prohibited by Oregon Administrative Rule 576-015-0015 (1) and (2) and is subject to sanctions under university policies, OSU Office of Student Conduct.

Finally, students are expected to conduct themselves in the course (e.g., on discussion boards, email postings) in compliance with the university's regulations regarding civility. Students will be expected to treat all others with the same respect as they would want afforded themselves. Disrespectful behavior to others (such as harassing behavior, personal insults, inappropriate language) or disruptive behaviors in the course (such as persistent and unreasonable demands for time and attention both in and out of the classroom) is unacceptable and can result in sanctions as defined by Oregon Administrative Rules Division 015 Student Conduct Regulations.

**Diversity Statement**
The Women’s Studies Program strives to create an affirming climate for all students, including underrepresented and marginalized individuals and groups. Diversity encompasses differences in gender, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, citizenship, religion, socioeconomic background, physical or mental ability, veteran status, and sexual identity and/or orientation.

**Religious Holiday Statement**
Oregon State University strives to respect all religious practices. If you have religious holidays that are in conflict with any of the requirements of this class, please see me immediately so that we can make alternative arrangements.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

| WEEK 1   | Jan. 8 | I. Introduction: Gender, Race, and Body Politics  
Film Screening: Real Women Have Curves (2002, Dir. Patricia Cardoso, 86 min.) |
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| WEEK 2   | Jan. 15| II. The Male Gaze and the Imperial Gaze  
Film Screening: King Kong (1933, Dir. Merian Cooper, 100 min.) |
| WEEK 3   | Jan. 22| III. Representations of Patriarchy and Colonialism  
Film Screening: Yesterday (2006, Dir. Darrell James Roodt, 96 min.) |
| WEEK 4   | Jan. 29| Lisa Kennedy, “Lives Fracture in A Separation” (Bb)  
E. Ann Kaplan, “Theories of Nation and Hollywood in the Contexts of Gender and Race” (27-55)  
Film Screening: A Separation (2011, Dir. Asghar Farhadi, 103 min.) |
| WEEK 5   | Feb. 5 | IV. The Ambivalence of Postcolonialism  
E. Ann Kaplan, “’Can One Know the Other?” (154-194)  
Svati Shah, “Born Into Saving Brothel Children” (Bb) |
| Week 6 | Feb. 12 | Stephen Holden, “Aborigine Girls Run Away from a Racist Program” (Bb)  
**Film Screening**: *Rabbit Proof Fence* (2002, Dir. Phillip Noyce, 93 min.) |
|-----------------|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 7 | Feb. 19 | **V. The Politics of Conflict and Militarism**  
Joni Seager, Part 7: “Power” (94-105)  
Tamlyn Monson, “Osama” (Bb)  
A. O. Scott, “In a Land of Female Repression, a Girl Survives as a Boy” (Bb)  
**Film Screening**: *Osama* (2003, Dir. Siddiq Barmak, 83 min.)  
*Film Reviews Due Feb. 18* |
| Week 8 | Feb. 26 | **VI. Gender, Violence, and the Global Economy**  
Joni Seager, Parts 5-6: “Work” and “To Have and To Have Not” (60-91)  
Linda Lopez McAlister, “Once Were Warriors” (Bb)  
Janet Maslin, “For a Family, the War at Home” (Bb)  
**Film Screening**: *Once Were Warriors* (1994, Dir. Lee Tamahori, 103 min.) |
| Week 9 | March 5 | **VII. Healing Imperialized Eyes**  
E. Ann Kaplan, “Healing Imperialized Eyes: Independent Women Filmmakers and the Look” (218-255)  
Stephen Holden, “Odyssey of Loss and War in a Land of Languid Beauty” (Bb)  
**Film Screening**: *Regret to Inform* (2000, Dir. Barbara Sonneborn, 72 min.) |
| Week 10 | March 12 | E. Ann Kaplan, “Body Politics” and “Afterword: Reversing the Gaze: Yes: But is Racial Inter-Subjective Looking Possible?” (256-302)  
Stephen Holden, “A Brooklyn Girl Who’s Just Not Frilly” (Bb)  
**Film Screening**: *Pariah* (2011, Dir. Dee Rees, 86 min.)  
*Critical Essays Due March 14* |