

Kimberlee Gillis-Bridges

Meeting Times: Mondays, 2:30-5:20, and Wednesdays, 2:30-4:20 p.m.

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Web Page: <http://faculty.washington.edu/kgb/345>

Course Description

This course examines the work of female directors from the silent to the contemporary era, concentrating on the work of filmmakers from the U.S., Germany, and France. Throughout the quarter, we will address the following questions:

- What, if anything, unites the work of women directors? Are there particular stylistic or narrative strategies that characterize films directed by women?
- How does an investigation of women directors change our conception of film history?
- How does feminist film criticism help us to interpret films made by women? What challenges do particular directors pose to critics?
- How do historical, cultural, and industrial factors shape the work of women directors?

As we explore these questions, we will discuss films made both within and outside the mainstream film industry. We will also hone our critical skills by analyzing how directors structure their films' narrative and visual styles.

Requirements

Class Participation

Students should come prepared for each class session, with assigned reading completed. I expect prompt, regular attendance and active participation in discussions of readings and films. Students should plan to ask questions, make comments, summarize critics' arguments, paraphrase their electronic postings, evaluate class activities, or contribute to small-group discussions. If you tend to remain quiet in class, you may supplement your participation points by making additional postings to the class discussion board or by submitting URLs and short descriptions of links I can add to the course web site.

Electronic Postings

Students will use the class discussion board to post responses to each film or reading. To facilitate discussion, I will post questions to which I want you to respond. Your posting should provide a 150- to 250-word response to a selected question; you may also address your classmates' ideas as you respond to the question. The electronic discussion site allows us to extend class discussion and to raise issues for in-class discussions. Your postings receive points on a credit/no credit basis, with full points granted to on-time postings that meet the length requirement and demonstrate serious engagement with the discussion questions. To access the electronic discussion board, go to the course web site, click on "Discuss," and follow the instructions.

To keep the discussion board manageable, I have divided the class into four groups as follows:

- Group One: Students with last names A-E
- Group Two: Students with last names F-J
- Group Three: Students with last names K-P
- Group Four: Students with last names Q-Z

Midterm

During the fourth week of class, students will complete a short midterm exam in which they analyze clips from selected class films.

Final

The final exam consists of an analytical essay on films viewed after the midterm exam. Students will select from a range of topics.

Assignment Options

Students may submit up to three assignments from the following list. While you may complete a maximum of two essays or critiques, you may do only one profile, presentation, or role-play. Due dates for written assignment options are noted on the course schedule; you may select from among these due dates if you complete fewer than three written assignments. Presentations and role-plays will occur throughout the quarter, with scripts, write-ups, and memos due the Monday following the group's presentation or performance.

During the first week of class, interested students will sign up for presentations and role-plays. Once I have assigned groups, students may not drop the activity, except in cases of documented illness or family emergency. Those who do will receive a zero for the assignment and will not be allowed to make up the points with another assignment option.

Because several of the assignments require research or allow for use of multimedia, I will conduct optional workshops on cinema studies research and PowerPoint. I will also respond to drafts of profiles, essays, memos, critiques, and role-play scripts, provided students submit materials one week in advance of the due date. I am also available to discuss ideas-in-progress with individuals or groups.

Profile

A profile offers a researched six- to seven-page analysis of a director featured in class. Along with presenting a brief background on the filmmaker, a profile explores the themes, motifs, or character types that distinguish at least three of the director's works. The analysis should also engage critical responses to the director's films and her characterization of her own work.

Essay

An essay provides a four- to five-page comparison of how two directors treat a similar theme. The essay should not simply outline similarities and differences in the directors' works; rather, it should analyze the significance of these similarities and differences.

Group Presentation

In a presentation, students will work together to conduct research and develop a 20-minute lecture on the historical, cultural or industrial conditions that influenced a particular film, controversies over a director or her work, the director's characterization of her films, contemporary responses to a film, or recent critical discussions of the director or her work. Presenters should use visual aids (film clips, PowerPoint, transparencies, handouts) to structure their remarks or illustrate points. They should also conclude the presentation with two or three questions for class discussion. After the presentation, each group member will submit a one- to two-page memo briefly describing his or her contribution to the presentation and explaining how the information presented is essential to our understanding of the director and her work .

Critique

Two to three pages in length, a critique assesses an analytical article read for the course, focusing on how the critic's argument contributes to or limits our interpretation of a director or her films.

Group Role-Play

For the role-play, students will work in groups to research the background of and critical responses to one or two course directors. They will then script a 15-minute scenario that presents a dialogue between two directors, an exchange between a director and her audience, a discussion between a director and the characters in her films or an interchange between the director and her critics. After the role-play, each group member will submit a one- to two-page memo briefly describing his or her contribution to the project and explaining why the role-play highlighted particular issues. Groups will also turn in one copy of their script.

Policies

Lateness and Completion Policy

I will not give make-up exams or accept any work submitted after assigned deadlines except in cases of documented illness or family emergency. Assignments turned in as email attachments must arrive in the format indicated on the schedule, or I will consider them late. To avoid computer problems, you should save frequently while working, and you should back up work saved to a hard drive on disk or your Dante account. Remember also to avoid storing floppy disks next to cellular phones.

Please note that students must complete midterm and final exams and submit at least seven of the electronic postings in order to pass the course.

Plagiarism Policy

In your electronic postings and optional assignments, you may draw upon the ideas and words of other writers. However, you must make clear to your audience that you are incorporating another's work by placing quotation marks around exact words and citing the author's name whenever you quote, summarize or paraphrase. Failure to credit sources may result in a failing grade for the assignment, a failing grade for the course, or expulsion from the university.

E mail and Access to Course Web Site

You must have a working email account and a way to access the course web site. I frequently upload schedule changes, assignment guidelines, and grading criteria to the course web site. The site also contains links and sample papers not distributed in class.

Films

Film titles in bold are on reserve at the Odegaard Media Library. Film titles followed by an asterisk are available on reserved compilation tapes. Along with the films listed, I have placed on reserve additional works by course directors. Go the course web page, click on "Texts," and follow the reserve texts link to view a complete list of reserve films.

The Bigamist (Ida Lupino, 1953, 80 minutes)
The Blot (Lois Weber, 1921, 80 minutes)
Blue Steel (Kathryn Bigelow, 1990, 102 minutes)
Boys Don't Cry (Kimberly Peirce, 1999, 118 minutes)
Christopher Strong (Dorothy Arzner, 1933, 77 minutes)
The Cinematic Jazz of Julie Dash (Yvonne Welbon, 1992, 26 minutes)
Cléo de 5 à 7 (Agnès Varda, 1962, 90 minutes)
Clueless (Amy Heckerling, 1995, 97 minutes)
Craig's Wife (Dorothy Arzner, 1936, 73 minutes)
Daughters of the Dust (Julie Dash, 1991, 112 minutes)
Fast Times at Ridgemont High (Amy Heckerling, 1982, 90 minutes)
Film About a Woman Who . . . (Yvonne Rainer, 1974, 105 minutes)
The Hitchhiker (Ida Lupino, 1953, 71 minutes)
How Men Propose* (Lois Weber, 1913, 6 minutes)
Illusions (Julie Dash, 1982, 34 minutes)
Maedchen in Uniform (Leontine Sagan, 1931, 88 minutes)
Making an American Citizen* (Alice Guy Blachè, 1912, 14 minutes)
Marianne and Juliane (Margarethe Von Trotta, 1981, 106 minutes)
Matrimony's Speed Limit* (Alice Guy Blachè, 1913, 14 minutes)
Meshes of the Afternoon* (Maya Deren, 1943, 18 minutes)
Not Wanted (Lupino, 1949, 94 minutes)
Officer Henderson (Alice Guy Blachè, 1913, 12 minutes)
Olympia, Parts I and II (Leni Riefenstahl, 1936-1938, 199 minutes)
Point Break (Kathryn Bigelow, 1991, 122 minutes)
Ritual in Transfigured Time* (Maya Deren, 1946, 15 minutes)
Sink or Swim (Su Friedrich, 1990, 48 minutes)
A Study in Choreography for Camera* (Maya Deren, 1945, 4 minutes)
Tender Fictions (Barbara Hammer, 1995, 58 minutes)
Triumph of the Will (Leni Riefenstahl, 1934, 114 minutes)
The Watermelon Woman (Cheryl Dunye, 1996, 90 minutes)

Textbooks

Gillis-Bridges, Kimberlee. *Reading Packet for English 345*. Available at Professional Copy N' Print on the northeast corner of 42nd and University.

Available for check-out: Kolker, Robert. *Film, Form, and Culture* (CD-ROM)

Reserve Texts

I have placed a sizeable collection of books on three-day reserve at Odegaard Undergraduate Library. These books should prove valuable as you conduct research for presentations, role-plays, and profiles. Go the course web page, click on “Texts,” and follow the reserve texts link to view a complete list of reserve books.

Evaluation

Grades in English 345 will be computed by points, with 400 points equaling a 4.0, 300 points a 3.0, and so on. If your total falls between grades, I will round up if you score one to five points below the higher grade and round down if you score one to four points above the lower grade. For example, 274 points equals a 2.7 and 275 points a 2.8.

Although all students must take exams, participate in class, and submit electronic postings, individual students are free to complete any combination of assignment options that yields the total number of points—and thus the grade—that he or she wishes to earn. A student who wants to try for a 3.0, for example, may turn in an essay or do a presentation in addition to taking exams, doing postings, and contributing to class discussion. Remember, however, that you may submit a maximum of three optional assignments. Point values for assignments are as follows:

Required Assignments (200 points total)	Optional Assignments (Submit 3 maximum)
Class Participation: 40 points Electronic Postings: 80 points Midterm and Final Exam: 40 points each	Critique: 50 points Essay: 100 points Presentation: 100 points Profile: 150 points Role-Play: 100 points

Apart from postings, which are graded on a credit/no credit basis, points for each assignment will be awarded based on quality of work submitted. I will distribute grading criteria for each assignment early in the quarter. Students who score less than 65 points total will receive a 0 for the course, as the UW grading system does not scale grades lower than .7. Because the UW grading system does not allow grades above 4.0, students who earn more than 400 points total can receive only a 4.0.

While our grading system provides you with options, it also requires you to keep careful track of the points you're attempting and the points you've received. Double-check your math when you select and complete assignment options.

Schedule

This schedule may be altered at any point in the term at the instructor's discretion. Students must complete readings by the dates listed; all assigned readings are in the course packet unless otherwise indicated. Page numbers refer to the hand-printed numbers at the bottom center of each packet page.

Date	Activity	Reading	Due
9/30	Course introduction Screening: <i>How Men Propose</i> (Weber, 1913), <i>Making an American Citizen</i> (Guy Blaché, 1912), <i>Matrimony's Speed Limit</i> (Guy Blaché, 1913), <i>Officer Henderson</i> (Guy Blaché, 1913), <i>The Blot</i> (Weber, 1921)		
10/1			Posting on Guy Blaché and Weber films due by 10:00 p.m.
10/2	Discuss films of Alice Guy Blaché and Lois Weber	Acker, "Introduction: The Feminization of Filmmaking," 1-10; Rich, "In the Name of Feminist Film Criticism," 11-21; Acker, "Alice Guy Blaché," and "Lois Weber," 22-31; Harrison, "Studio Saunterings," 32-36; Guy Blaché, "Woman's Place in Photoplay Production," 37-39; Parchesky, "Lois Weber's <i>The Blot</i> ," 40-60	
10/7	Screening: <i>Christopher Strong</i> (Arzner, 1933) and <i>Craig's Wife</i> (Arzner, 1936)		
10/8			Posting on Arzner films due by 10:00 p.m.
10/9	Discuss films of Dorothy Arzner	Acker, "Dorothy Arzner," 61-67; Johnston, "Dorothy Arzner: Critical Strategies," 68-72; Mayne, "Odd Couples," 73-82	
10/14	Screening: <i>Not Wanted</i> (Lupino, 1949) and clips from <i>The Bigamist</i> (Lupino, 1953) and <i>The Hitch-Hiker</i> (Lupino, 1953)		
10/15			Posting on Lupino films due by 10:00 p.m.

10/16	Discuss films of Ida Lupino	Kuhn, "Intestinal Fortitude," 83-88; Waldman, "Not Wanted," 89-102; Rabinovitz, "The Hitch-Hiker," 103-113	
10/21	Midterm Exam Screening: <i>Maedchen in Uniform</i> (Sagan, 1931) and clips from <i>Olympia</i> , Parts I and II (Riefenstahl, 1936-1938) and <i>Triumph of the Will</i> (Riefenstahl, 1934)		
10/22			Posting on <i>Maedchen in Uniform</i> and Riefenstahl clips due by 10:00 p.m.
10/23	Discuss <i>Maedchen in Uniform</i> and Riefenstahl clips	Rich, "From Repressive Tolerance to Erotic Liberation," 114-131; Ohm, "The Filmic Adaptation of <i>The Child Manuela</i> ," 131-135; Heck-Rabi, "Leni Riefenstahl: A Crystal Grotto," 136-156	
10/28	Midterm exams returned and discussed Screening: <i>Marianne and Juliane</i> (Von Trotta, 1981)		
10/29			Posting on <i>Marianne and Juliane</i> due by 10:00 p.m.
10/30	Discuss <i>Marianne and Juliane</i>	Acker, "Margarethe Von Trotta," 157-161; Byg, "German History and Cinematic Convention," 162-168; Linville, "Retrieving History," 169-181	
11/1			Assignment Option due via Word for PC email attachment or in hard copy at Padelford A-305 by 4:00 p.m.
11/4	Screening: <i>Cléo de 5 à 7</i> (Varda, 1962)		
11/5			Posting on <i>Cléo de 5 à 7</i> due by 10:00 p.m.

11/6	Discuss <i>Cléo de 5 à 7</i>	Acker, "Agnes Varda," 182-186; Flitterman-Lewis, "Varda in Context" and "From Déesse to Idée," 187-205	
11/11	Veteran's Day Holiday		
11/13	Screening and discussion of Hollywood filmmakers Kathryn Bigelow and Amy Heckerling, with clips from <i>Fast Times at Ridgemont High</i> (Heckerling, 1982), <i>Clueless</i> (Heckerling, 1995), <i>Blue Steel</i> (Bigelow, 1990) and <i>Point Break</i> (Bigelow, 1991)	Lane, "From <i>The Loveless</i> to <i>Point Break</i> ," 206-224; Wald, "Clueless in the Neocolonial World Order," 225-234	
11/14			Posting on Bigelow and Heckerling clips due by 10:00 p.m.
11/18	Screening of Experimental Filmmakers: <i>Meshes of the Afternoon</i> (Deren, 1943), <i>A Study in Choreography for Camera</i> (Deren, 1945), <i>Ritual in Transfigured Time</i> (Deren, 1946), <i>Sink or Swim</i> (Friedrich, 1990), and clips from <i>Film About a Woman Who...</i> (Rainer, 1974) and <i>Tender Fictions</i> (Hammer, 1995)		
11/19			Posting on Deren, Friedrich, Rainer, or Hammer films due by 10:00 p.m.
11/20	Discuss films of Deren, Friedrich, Hammer, and Rainer	Rabinovitz, "Maya Deren and an American Avant-garde Cinema," 235-252; Friedrich, Script for <i>Sink or Swim</i> , 253-261; Hammer, "The Politics of Abstraction," 280-282; Green, " <i>Film About a Woman Who...</i> ," Electronic Reserve	
11/22			Assignment Option due via Word for PC email attachment or in hard copy at Padelford A-305 by 4:00 p.m.

11/25	Screening: <i>Illusions</i> (Dash, 1982), <i>Daughters of the Dust</i> (Dash, 1991), and clips from <i>The Cinematic Jazz of Julie Dash</i> (Welbon, 1992)	Hartman and Griffin, "Are You as Colored as That Negro?," 283-295; Bobo, " <i>Daughters of the Dust</i> ," 296-313	
11/26			Posting on <i>Illusions</i> and <i>Daughters of the Dust</i> due by 10:00 p.m.
11/27	Class canceled		
12/2	Discuss <i>Illusions</i> and <i>Daughters of the Dust</i> Screening: <i>The Watermelon Woman</i> (Dunye, 1996)		
12/3			Posting on <i>The Watermelon Woman</i> due by 10:00 p.m.
12/4	Discuss <i>The Watermelon Woman</i>	Sullivan, "Chasing Fae," 314-326; hooks, "The Oppositional Gaze," 327-340	
12/6			Assignment Option due via Word for PC email attachment or in hard copy at Padelford A-305 by 4:00 p.m.
12/9	Screening: <i>Boys Don't Cry</i> (Peirce, 1999)		
12/10			Posting on <i>Boys Don't Cry</i> due by 10:00 p.m.
12/11	Discuss <i>Boys Don't Cry</i> Course wrap-up and evaluation	The <i>Boys Don't Cry</i> Debate: Aaron, "Pass/Fail," 341-345; Pidduck, "Risk and Queer Spectatorship," 346-351; White, "Girls Still Cry," 352-356; Halberstam, "The Transgender Gaze in <i>Boys Don't Cry</i> ," 357-361; Henderson, "The Class Character of <i>Boys Don't Cry</i> ," 362-366	
12/16	Final Exam, 2:30-4:20 p.m.		