

Women in Cinema and TV**COMM 203/WSGS****Cinema History: Women in Cinema and Television****Instructor: Elizabeth Coffman****Time: Mon. 4:15-6:45****Classroom: Cudahy 318, LSC****Office: SOC 219 WTC****Office Hours: Mon. 2:00-4:00 pm, Info Commons cafe; By appointment****E-Mail: ECoffma@luc.edu**

“I make my pictures for what Hollywood spends on lipstick.” Maya

Deren



Sandi Tan's autobiographical documentary **Shirkers** (2018)

Course Objectives: From the birth of cinema to the popularity of reality television, women and the narratives that often accompany them (romances, comedies, melodramas, musicals) have dominated audience choice awards—if not the Academy awards. But times are changing! This course covers the history of the roles and representations of women in film and television history, and an overview of key figures as producers, directors, writers, actors and more—Dorothy Arzner, Kate Hepburn, Maya Deren, Josephine Baker, Agnes Varda, Lucille Ball, Jane Campion, Julie Dash, Mira Nair, Ava DeVernay, Lena Dunham, Kathryn Bigelow, Wachowski siblings, Jill Soloway and more.

Learning Outcomes:

- To understand the importance of women-both in front of and behind the camera- for the history of cinema and television

- To be able to define, identify, and critically apply historical challenges in the industry with the representations of women and gendered roles
- Research and produce critical and creative projects (film stills, scripts, reviews) about women in cinema and television

Grade Requirements and Course Expectations:

Regular attendance is strongly encouraged. A note from the doctor or infirmary will excuse you for illness. Work must be turned in on time. Speak with me **before** the deadline if you have a conflict. If you have not heard from me via email in 24 hours, then please re-email. Always print or backup a copy of your work for yourself. Plagiarism follows SOC guidelines and will result in an “F” for the course. Speak to me with any questions.

--Your final grade will be based on the following percentages:

Untitled Film Still (photo with 1 pg description)	15%
Reading Presentation- (Powerpoint, 1 pg overview)	15%
5 Reading responses (350 words, quotes)	15%
Me Too! Film Scene scripted (3-5 pgs)	15%
Multimedia research/electronic paper (6-8 pgs)	30%
Participation	10%

CALENDAR

All readings and assignments should be completed on the day assigned. Instructor may make changes to syllabus during semester so check Sakai for announcements.

Readings are all available via library reserves and Sakai

Introductions

1/14 **Screen: Shirkers** (2018) directed Sandi Tan

Read: (if you choose to respond): [Shirkers interview on Medium.com.](#)

1/28 **Producers, Dancers, Directors**

Presentation #1

Read: “Women and the American Silent Film Industry”; Review “Lois Weber in Early Hollywood”; Martha Lauzen, “The Celluloid Ceiling Report 2016”

Watch: The Silent Era, [Kanopy](#).

Screen: “Women in Hollywood,” [Kanopy](#); related short films

Dance, Girl, Dance (1940), dir. Dorothy Arzner, excerpts- films by Loie Fuller, Alice Guy Blache, Lois Weber, Maya Deren

2/4 **Behave Yourself. Naturally.**

Presentations #2, #3

Read: David Shumway, "Screwball Comedies: Constructing Romance, Mystifying Marriage; Elizabeth Coffman, "Uncanny Performances in Colonial Narratives"; Overview of screwball comedy:

<http://cinecollage.net/screwball-comedy.html>

Watch: **His Girl Friday** (1940) dir. Howard Hawks [Kanopy](#)

Screen: **Philadelphia Story** dir George Cukor (1940), **Princess Tam Tam** dir. Edmond Greville (1935), **To Be or Not to Be** (1942) dir. Ernst Lubitsch

2/11 **Possessed: The Woman's Film of the 1940s**

Presentations #4, #5

Read: Mary Ann Doane, "The Woman's Film: Possession and Address" in

Home is Where the Heart is; pp 309-316; Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"

Watch: Hitchcock's **Rebecca** or **Vertigo**, reserve or online

Screen: **Gaslight**, **Spellbound**, **Stella Dallas**

2/18 **Tears and Pathos**

Presentation # 6, #7

Read: Linda Williams, "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess," in **Film Theory & Criticism**, 7th; "Mary Ann Doane, "Pathos & Pathology-Todd Haynes"

Due: Untitled Film Stills; present in class

Screen: **Written on the Wind**, **Safe**, **Superstar: the Karen Carpenter Story**

2/25 **Grab 'Em by the Midterms: Vampires and Mean Girls**

Presentation # 8

Read: Richard Nowell, "'There's More Than One Way to Lose Your Heart: the American Film Industry, Early Teen Slasher Films and Female Youth"

J.M. Tyree, "Warm Blood: **True Blood** and **Let the Right One In**" Film Quarterly, 2009; "Girls Just Want to Be Mean," in **NYTimes**

Recommended: Carol Clover, "The Final Girl--Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film," **Representations**, 1987.

Watch: Horror film of your choice

Screen: **Halloween, Near Dark, Twilight, Mean Girls**

Due: **Response Papers #1-3 due by March 4th**

SPRING BREAK!!!!

3/11 **Women who Changed TV—Lucille Ball, Joan Rivers, Oprah**

Presentation # 9

Read: Aurelie Blot, "Lucille Ball, the Queen of Show Business versus Lucy Ricardo, the Failed Actress" in **Transatlantica**, 2010

Watch: **The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel**, Amazon

Screen: **Funny Ladies**, [Kanopy](#).

3/18 **Queer in Love**

Presentations # 10, 11

Read: Enck, Morrissey, "If Orange is the New Black, I Must Be Colorblind"; B. Ruby Rich, "The New Queer Cinema," in **Sight and Sound**; Amy Villarejo, "Jewish, Queer-ish, Trans, and Completely Revolutionary: Jill Soloway's **Transparent** and the New Television" **FILM QUARTLY**, Vol. 69 No. 4, Summer 2016)

Recommended:; Andrea Weiss, "'A Queer Feeling When I Look at You': Hollywood Stars and lesbian spectatorship in the 1930s"

Watch: **Orange is the New Black** (any episode); **Transparent** (any episode); Wifey.TV

Screen: **The Kids are All Right (2010) Queen Christina (1933), Safe (1995), Far From Heaven (2002), Tangerine (2015)**

3/25 **Me Too! Scripts Due**

Optional presentations of Scripts/Read a Scene

4/1 **Global Gleaning and Playing Pianos**

Presentation # 11

Read: Andrea Stuart, “Mira Nair: a hybrid cinema; Stella Bruzzi, “Jane Campion: Costume Drama and reclaiming women’s past”

Watch: **Mississippi Masala** (1991) dir Mira Nair or any Jane Campion film-**The Piano** (1993—Academy Award winning) (reserve); **Sweetie (1989)**; **Top of the Lake**, season 1 (2013), **Hulu**

Screen: **The Gleaners and I** (2000) dir. Agnes Varda; **Passionless Moments** dir. Jane Campion

Soaps and Series—From One Life to Live to Housewives of Atlanta

4/8 Presentation # 12

Read: Tania Modeleski, “Loving with a Vengeance,” “Soap Opera: Introduction” in **Media Studies**; Warner, “They Gon’ Think You Loud”

Screen: Glee, Classic Soap Operas, **Sex & the City**, **Girls**, **America’s Next Top Model**

It’s a New Day--Women Make Movies

4/15 Skype/Visit with female filmmaker, TBD

Read: K. Alexander, “Julie Dash, Daughters of the Dust & Black aesthetic”; Review of [Discontinuity](#); excerpt from Coffman/Stein’s “New Day Films: Collective Aesthetics and the Collection”; [NYTimes review of The 13th](#), Manohla Dargis

Screen: **New Day films**, **The 13th**, **Daughters of the Dust**, **Daughter Rite**, **Discontinuity**

Due: Response Paper #4,5 due

4/22 **Due:** Presentations of Final Projects

4/29 **Research Paper Due Online**, 4:15

Special Needs: If there is any student who has special needs because of any disability, please go to the Dean of Students to report your needs and provide documentation of your disability for certification. If a film includes offensive materials for you, feel free to leave the class and/or to discuss with me in private.

Assignments:**1. Untitled Film Still**

Using Cindy Sherman's [photo series](#), "Untitled Film Stills" as inspiration (see web link), recreate a film still from any movie that suggests conflicted desire, pathos or power relations. Use eyeline, lighting, foreground/background, costumes, etc and write a one-page (300 word) description explaining your mise-en-scene, camera angle, and directing choices to achieve desired emotional/narrative response.

Use cell phone, digital camera and any other props, lights, costumes available to you compose, recreate and photograph a still image.

2. Reading Presentations: Identify important points in readings, supported with an interesting example(s) that your group shares with class. Don't feel like you have to cover every major point in the articles. Video examples should be shorter than two minutes. Your speaking time is around ten minutes. Film clips are extra.) Creativity is encouraged. Besides one person submitting the presentation for the group, each member must describe the work they completed (a paragraph) and upload to Sakai assignments.

3. Reading Responses (3): Write a 350-word response that addresses a point from a reading topic and any films that we've already discussed and/or you've watched outside of class. Integrate film readings/discussions with interesting examples (include Youtube-URL links in your response) Make sure you quote or directly reference the readings.

4. Me Too! Film Scene Script: Write/Create a scene that addresses the complexities of the sexual harassment moment—describe an encounter from a workplace romance, or one that involves power/confidence questions, legal interpretations, etc... Use CeltX or any free online template for screenwriting to integrate dialogue and unspoken moments. 3-5 pages. May read in class.

5. Multimedia Research Paper

6-8 pgs of writing—images are above this count. At least five sources. Endnotes are required. Full bibliography should be included.

For your final research paper, you will analyze a relevant film director, genre or television series within its historical setting. You should work on defining the genre, explaining context, identifying internal structure, analyzing broadcast/distribution history and impact. You must include images, links or creative forms of media analysis—e.g. interviews or emails with scholars, surveys of different age groups responding to materials, etc... More extended media work may justify shorter written work. Discuss with Coffman.