

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES**  
**WOMEN FILMMAKERS**  
**SP3901G / Film3311G / WS3357G**  
**Winter 2019**



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**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Constanza Burucúa - [cburucua@uwo.ca](mailto:cburucua@uwo.ca)

**OFFICE:** UC 4309

**OFFICE HOURS:** Monday, 12.30 to 1.30 & Tuesday, 11.30 to 12.30

**TEACHING ASSISTANT** Spencer Moyes – [smoyes@uwo.ca](mailto:smoyes@uwo.ca)

**OFFICE** UC 4305

**OFFICE HOURS** Tuesday, 11.30 to 12.30 or by request

**COURSE TIMETABLE**

Tuesday 9.30 to 11.30 – SCREENING → UC 1405

Thursday 9.30 to 11.30 – LECTURE / TUTORIAL → UC 2110

**AIMS OF THE COURSE**

This course explores the notion of film authorship in relation to its utterances and implications when associated to the praxis of contemporary women film directors, from the early 1960s to the present. While troubling the notion of women's cinema, its definition, limits and limitations, a wide range of case studies – films emerging from dissimilar contexts of production and reception – will be mostly read and discussed in the light of feminist approaches to questions about gender and representation. In this sense, the course will also offer a historical and critical overview of feminist scholarship within film studies and of the ongoing debates in this area of study.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Critically reflect upon questions concerning women and film, both in terms of their involvement in production and in the processes of reception.
2. Ponder the key notions involved in the debates around, and the study of, feminist film theory, gendered representations and considerations on point of view.

## REQUIRED READINGS

All the bibliography listed under the title of the film/s that will be screened each week is compulsory reading. It will be available online through the course OWL site or the appropriate links will be provided in this syllabus.

### For general reference:

- Kuhn, Annette and Radstone, Susannah (eds.). **The Women's companion to international film**. London: Virago, 1990.
- Women in Film & Television: A Bibliography of Selected Materials in the UC Berkeley Libraries
- <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/womenbib.html>
- The Women and Film Project  
<https://womenandfilmproject.wordpress.com/>

## ASSESSMENT

- Attendance and preparation for class discussions (via email) (10%)
- Participation in class discussions (15%)
- Pop Quizzes (15%) → On: January 24, February 14, March 14
- Report and Film Reviews (20%) → Due: February 26
- Oral presentation and discussion leading (%20)
- Final Research Project (20%) → Due: April 11

### 1. ATTENDANCE AND PREPARATION FOR CLASS DISCUSSIONS (10%)

#### 1.a. ATTENDANCE:

Students are required to attend all sessions. Attendance will be taken at every class, screenings and lecture/tutorials. More than three unjustified absences will seriously affect the grading of this section, automatically reducing it to 50% or below, if absences persist.

If you are absent from a screening or a lecture / tutorial, you need to provide supporting documentation to your Academic Counselor. For more information, please visit the Student Central Office: [http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/general-information/student\\_central\\_office.html](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/general-information/student_central_office.html)

Students **should not sleep** during the screenings or during the lectures and/or tutorials. If a student is caught sleeping, the instructor retains the right to ask them to leave the room and it will be counted as an absence.

### **1.b. PREPARATION FOR CLASS DISCUSSIONS (VIA EMAIL):**

This course follows a seminar-like structure. This means that most of the in-class time is dedicated to the discussion of both the films and the readings studied.

These (hopefully insightful) conversations will be structured around the students' own ideas and interests. As a means to organize these meetings beforehand, students will send the questions / ideas that they would like to discuss in class to the instructor and to the teaching assistant via email. At least one of the questions have to be directly related to the readings.

Questions, together with comments (voluntary), should be sent by Wednesday at 6 pm. This will give us time to carefully go through your ideas and introduce them in the slides for Thursday's session.

### **2. PARTICIPATION IN CLASS DISCUSSION (15%)**

Seminar participation is a central component of the course (seminars are mostly structured around the debates generated by presentations and the discussion of the readings).

Make sure to come to class having read and thought about all of the weekly readings and with the relevant notes and material in hand.

Participation marks will be given on the basis of active engagement in seminar discussions and of the critical responses to required readings and viewing.

### **3. POP QUIZZES (15%) → On: Thur. Jan 24, Thur. Feb 14, Thur. March 14.**

Throughout the term, there will be three pop quizzes about the films studied in the course and the weekly readings. In the quizzes, students will answer in a very succinct manner to a series of very specific questions about the films' narrative and about the main points raised in the readings.

The purpose of this component is to corroborate that students are up to date with the readings and with the viewing of the films studied in the course. Quizzes shall not last for longer than 20 minutes.

**4. REPORT AND FILM REVIEWS (20%) → Due: Tuesday Feb 26, 9.30 am.**  
Submission in print and online (see below).

This assignment is based on Kanopy, a streaming platform that UWO students can access through: <https://uwo.kanopy.com/>.

**\*\* IMPORTANT NOTE:** you have to Sign In and create a KANOPY account. Make sure that you are familiar with the platform and that you start watching films well before Reading Week, when you are expected to be working on the assignment.

This is an individual exercise, in which students are required to explore the platform and then:

- a) Write a brief report (500 words) about their findings in relation to the films directed by women included in the catalogue, considering questions such as: how are they classified? How can they be searched? Is there a wide range of selection in terms of: genres, periods when films were made, their provenance? Etc.  
→ Length: 500 words min / 750 max.
  
- b) Choose two films to concentrate on and explain why and how each one of them is particularly significant in relation to the ideas that the course is structured around (as per course description, initial lectures and readings). Students are encouraged to include image capture to illustrate and strengthen their arguments.  
→ Length: 750 min / 1000 max.

The following are some questions that you might want to consider in this second section:

- 1) Can you identify in the film/s specific authorial traits?
- 2) How does/do the film/s represent the female character/s?
- 3) What do you find interesting about the textual features of the films that you have chosen to focus on? For example, are there any technical aspects of the cinematography, editing or soundtrack that are relevant to your arguments?

**\*\* Include word count at the end of the assignment, followed by bibliographical references.**

## 5. ORAL PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION LEADING (20%)

Working in groups of two or three, students have to produce a double-sided handout to distribute in class (please make sure to bring the necessary copies). It will include:

(Side 1)

- a. Title of your presentation.
- b. Title of film/s studied, director/s, year/s of release.
- c. 2 or 3 photogram/s: the captured images have to be illustrative of the ideas that you will be presenting on.
- d. Between 4 and 5 bullet points explaining the choice of film/s as representative of the ideas discussed throughout the course.
- e. (Optional) Other relevant information (production notes, exhibition, etc.).

(Side 2)

- f. Annotated bibliography: at least five different sources (they have to be either primary sources or scholarly ones; no more than two from the course's readings) <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/tutorials/annotatedbibliographies/index.html>

Oral presentations are to be between 30 and 40 minutes in length and not one minute more.

Students should select key aspects of a given text which intrigue them and will sustain further investigation. You are encouraged to incorporate clips, images, and/or additional research into your presentation as long as you remain thoroughly engaged with the course topics and material for that week.

As discussion leaders, the students doing the presentation might wish to raise questions to encourage class discussion. Still, every student has to submit their respective weekly questions.

Please notify the instructor by email as soon as possible about your choice for a slot. ***Presentations by students will begin in week 5 and they will run until week 11 (included). The films will be assigned as I hear from students between January 8<sup>th</sup> and January 15<sup>th</sup>. Given the number of students enrolled in the course, more than one group may end up presenting on the same week. In these cases, we will work together to avoid overlapping.***

## 6. FINAL RESEARCH PROJECT (20%) → Due: Thur. April 11, 9.30 am.

Submission in print and online (see below).

As this is a research-based course, the final project must address some of the central ideas, debates and critical concepts included in the syllabus and discussed in class, plus additional primary and secondary materials that you gather through your research and integrate into your own work. So, on one hand, the course content should inform and enhance the analysis of your chosen topic, on the other, it is expected that you will pursue sources beyond what is offered on the syllabus, with the aim of further developing your arguments.

For this project, students may choose to work with the same colleagues that they did for the presentations and they may expand on the work and the research done on that occasion. If you do so, you have to observe the **continuity** between the two assignments and make sure that you incorporate into this final project the feedback received on the presentation.

As your instructor and the person accompanying you in the process, I will be looking at the development of your arguments (complexity, originality) between the presentation and the final project.

**Make sure that you meet at least twice with me throughout the term (ideally, at least once before each assignment is due) to go over your ideas and make sure that you are on the right track.** Whereas I am open to discuss ideas in general, methodological approaches, mind maps, graphs, structures, sources, etc., do keep in mind that I don't read or comment on drafts of essays.

This assignment can be completed in the traditional essay format or as a video essay.

\* **WRITTEN ESSAY:** 2000 to 2500 words (+/- 5%).

The following is a list of **topics** that you may want to work on:

- Focus on one particular director's body of work: its critical and theoretical reception and its circulation in the film festival circuit.
- Research on one particular topic or issue of interest (ex. representations of childhood and youth; romantic relationships; mothers / daughters / motherhood; men as portrayed by women, etc.). You can work by comparing different films studied in the course; you can also work with one or more films from the course and do research on other ones.

- Film Festival Section - programming proposal:
  - Minimum of 10 films (no less than 2, no more than 3 from course)
    - Basic info about the film: title, director, year, country/ies, duration.
    - Synopsis (150 words max; original – not copied from company’s website, IMDB or any other source)
  - Rational of section and of choices (500 words max)
    - Focus should be on course’s name plus one or two of the following:
      - Regional approach
      - Particular national film industry
      - Theme
      - Genre
      - Questions about class, race, ethnicity.
      - Etc.
  - Theoretical justification (minimum of 750 words)

In terms of **sources and references** you need to work within the following parameters as far as sources and references go:

- At least 10 different, non-internet references in the Works Cited page / Closing Credits:
  - At least 3 must be primary sources
  - At least 3 must be from the course readings
  - At least 3 must be scholarly sources not included in the syllabus

**Word count and bibliography** used should be included at the end of the assignment. All essays must be cited in proper MLA format.

\* **VIDEO ESSAY:** At its best, the purpose of the videographic essay is to “produce the most potent knowledge effect—employ[ing the] audiovisual source materials in a poetically imaginative way”.<sup>1</sup>

The following are a couple of suggestions on how to structure your video essay:

Option 1. Produce an ‘alterntive trailer’ focusing on the ways in which the film could be read as exemplary of the general ideas discussed throughout the course and/or representative of a specific textual feature or of the body of work of a specific filmmaker, etc. The ‘alternative trailer’ has to contain

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<sup>1</sup> For the design of this component, I am following: Keathley, Christian and Mittel, Jason. *The Videographic Essay. Criticism in Sound and Image*. Montreal: Caboose, 2016. Students interested in this format can purchase the book online for less than CAD\$10. This first quotation is from page 8.

titles and must include at least three brief, yet significant, quotations from the bibliography.

Option 2. Multi-screen composition: this option is good when planning on working by comparison. It allows for the exploration of how films “seem to begin to ‘talk’ to one another”.<sup>2</sup> The focus of the analysis should remain the core ideas of this course. Titles and at least three brief, yet eloquent, quotations from the readings should be included.

#### THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

\* If you need technical assistance with video capture and/or with basic editing skills, you can contact the faculty’s media technician, Tegan Moore, at [tmoore47@uwo.ca](mailto:tmoore47@uwo.ca)

\* If choosing the video essay option, there are certain copyright constraints affecting the use of film clips that you will have to be aware of. A brief presentation on these matters will be provided by the university’s copyright librarian, on Tuesday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, at 9.30 (tentative date).

\* Video essays must include credits of all the films and references cited.

#### PLEASE NOTE

##### **SUBMISSION OF ESSAYS, VIDEO ESSAYS AND WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**

All essays and written assignments have to be submitted both through OWL and in print to the instructor. If you fail to submit your essay in either one format or the other by the due date and time, it will be considered a late submission and it will be marked accordingly. The essay you submit through OWL and the one that you hand in have to be identical. Students have to keep a copy of every assignment they hand in.

*\*Make sure to comply to this requisite in order to avoid late submission penalties\**

All essays and written assignments will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism (Turnitin). For more information on plagiarism and plagiarism checking see headings below.

##### **LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

With the exception of properly documented medical illnesses, emergencies or unexpected circumstances, late assignments will be penalized 3 points per day late (including weekends). All requests of extensions and/or accommodations must come through the office of the Dean – Academic Counseling.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 18.



## **E-MAIL POLICY AND ETIQUETTE**

Generally, all emails will be responded to within 24-48 hours during weekdays (not including holidays). Emails will \*usually\* be addressed during regular work hours (9-5). The instructor may choose, at her discretion, to respond outside these hours, depending on availability. If you send an email at 11 pm, it is highly unlikely that you will get a response before 9:00am.

When sending an email to me, please make sure of the following:

- That it observes the basic rules of etiquette
  - o You have to include the proper salutation and sign-off
  - o You have to avoid abbreviations – an email is not a text message
- That it is clearly written
- That the tone is the appropriate one in an exchange between a professor and a student.

Failure to comply with these simple rules will affect your participation mark.

If you would like to learn more about email writing, there are some useful tips, clarifications and examples in the following website:

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/effective-e-mail-communication/>

## **LAPTOPS, IPADS AND CELL PHONES POLICY**

If, during lecture/tutorials, laptops are used for random web surfing, social networking, game playing or any other activity the instructor deems outside of acceptable usage, your laptop will be banned from the class.

In addition, be sure to turn off cell phones and refrain from text messaging during class. This counts as disruptive behavior and will lower your final participation grade.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at

[http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

## **Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):**

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf)

The Department of Modern Languages and Literatures Policies (which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in the department's courses) are available here: <http://www.uwo.ca/modlang/undergraduate/policies.html>. It is your responsibility to understand these policies, and thus ignorance thereof cannot be used as grounds for appeal

### **ACADEMIC OFFENCES**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

### **Plagiarism**

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

### **Plagiarism Checking**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

### **SUPPORT SERVICES**

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

## GRADING CRITERIA

### A+ (90-100)

**Argument:** Clear development of a specific, challenging and original thesis. The writer has taken significant risks successfully; in the resulting piece, distinctive ideas and content have discovered their necessary distinctive form. Detailed reference to appropriate texts, with evidence of individual response. Ability not only to expound subject but to see it around—subtleties and ambiguities, qualifications and concessions, relations to other subjects, etc.

**Presentation, structure:** Quotations well integrated into text. Proper paragraphs. Almost no typographical errors.

**Language Skills:** Sentence structure correct, with full range of sentence types (compound, complex, and compound-complex), with full range of punctuation (including semicolons, colons, dashes, parentheses). Graceful style, neither pompous nor breezy, and few errors.

**Research/scholarship:** Evidence of effective, extensive and independent research, with proper documentation of sources. Quotations used appropriately and purposively.

### A (80 to 89)

**Argument:** The writer has taken risks and most of them succeed. Clear development of a specific and challenging thesis, with proper paragraphs. Detailed reference to appropriate texts, with evidence of individual response. Ability not only to expound subject but to see it around—subtleties and ambiguities, qualifications and concessions, relations to other subjects, etc.

**Presentation, structure:** Quotations well integrated into text. Proper paragraphs. Almost no typographical errors.

**Language Skills:** Sentence structure correct, with full range of sentence types (compound, complex, and compound-complex), with full range of punctuation (including semicolons, colons, dashes, parentheses). Graceful style, neither pompous nor breezy, and few errors.

**Research/scholarship:** Evidence of effective and independent research, with proper documentation of sources. Quotations used appropriately and purposively.

### B (70 to 79)

**Argument:** Clear development of a specific thesis, with proper paragraphs. Adequately detailed reference to texts. Ability to expound reasonably sophisticated ideas with clarity.

**Presentation/structure:** Quotations well integrated into text. Proper paragraphs. A few typographical errors.

**Language Skills:** Sentence structure correct, with reasonable range of sentence types and full range of punctuation. Style not too wordy, with errors relatively few and minor.

**Research Scholarship:** Evidence of adequate research, with proper documentation of sources.

**C (60 to 69)**

**Argument:** Reasonably clear development of a thesis, with proper paragraphs. Basic ability to expound ideas, whose development might be rather thin. Effort to support points with references to the text. Tendency to replace analysis with descriptive retelling of plot.

**Presentation/structure:** Presentation showing lapses in tidiness and/or proofreading. Poor use of paragraphs.

**Language Skills:** Sentence structure correct, but perhaps overly simple, with tendency to avoid punctuation besides period and comma. Errors relatively few, but occasionally serious, with evident misunderstanding of some point of elementary grammar (comma splices, fragments, semicolon errors, subject-verb disagreements, poorly integrated quotations)

**Research/Scholarship:** reasonable effort at documentation, but rather thin.

**D (50 to 59)**

**Argument:** Difficulty with paragraphing or consecutive thought. Ideas inchoate but clouded by weak expression. Overgeneralization with inadequate support, or examples that run to lengthy paraphrase, with little or no analysis.

**Presentation/structure:** Very poor to non-existent use of paragraphs. Inadequate and inaccurate documentation. Multiple typographical errors.

**Language Skills:** Errors of grammar or diction frequent enough to interfere with understanding.

**Research/Scholarship:** Little serious effort to research the topic.

**F (49 and down)**

**Argument:** Ideas too simple for level of course. Argument completely incoherent. Erroneous content showing little or no understanding of subject.

**Presentation/structure:** Very sloppy proof-reading. Documentation virtually non-existent.

**Language Skills:** Writing frequently ungrammatical.

**Research/Scholarship:** Non-existent. Content largely “borrowed” from sources with non individual distillation, but no apparent attempt to deceive.

**0 (Report to Department)**

Plagiarism with intent to deceive.

**SENATE REGULATIONS:**

**1. Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a major academic offence. Students must write their essays in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage, from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations.

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

**2. Plagiarism Checking:** All required papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between the University of Western Ontario and [Turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com).

**3. Prerequisites:** Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

**4. UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness:** Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and or assignments must apply to their Academic Counseling Office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

Please go to the following site for information on the university Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness: [www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf)

For information on the examination services provided by the Student Development Centre, please visit

[www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd)

**5. Mental Health:** Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/>

**6. Complaints:** If students have a complaint concerning a course in which they are enrolled, they must discuss the matter with the instructor of the course. If students are still not satisfied, they should then take the complaint to the Film Studies Office, University College, Room 80. These regulations are in place because a failure to follow these procedures creates the potential for injustices of various kinds affecting either the instructor or the students themselves, or both parties. Concerns should not be allowed to fester but should be raised with the instructor in a timely manner, so that they can be addressed in time to make a difference to the course.

