Reel Women: Sirens and Saints
Film Studies – U18 335
Washington University's University College
Fall 2019

Instructor: M. Jean Rodgers Russell, Ph.D.
Mobile phone: 202-550-1909
Faculty e-mail: maryjeanrussell@wustl.edu
Office hours: 15 minutes before and/or after class, or by individual appointment
Class meeting times: Mondays, 5:30 – 9pm
Students should email the Instructor with any questions or concerns.
Students will receive a response to their inquiries within 24 hours.
Class location: Seigle 205

Course Description:
Reel Women: Sirens and Saints studies American fiction and American cinema with images of women in our society, which these media provide. The assertion of the course is that cinema and prose fiction are interactive, with films taking their themes from fiction, and fiction applying its techniques of presentation from film. The course provides an examination of the writings of American women authors, and traces their works through film adaptations. Through critical analyses, students will interpret the relationships between fiction and films, and learn how seemingly diametric mediums blend to portray women in American culture.

Additional Comments:
The literature, and film adaptations, for this course are representative of decades. These works were selected because the both the literature and the film were written and produced within two years of each other, making these expressions a representation of culture during that time period. These works are also selected because of the authors' literary achievements and because of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science's recognition.

Course Goals for Student Learning:
• Analyze, compare, and contrast the characters in written works to those images in the film adaptations;

• Identify the cultural and economic development of motion pictures in the United States; and

• Master and utilize terms relevant to fiction and film analysis that include Denotative Meanings, Connotative Meanings, Codes, Mise en scene, Sound, Diachronic Shot: Distance; Focus; Angle; and POV, point of view.

Required Readings:
• How to Read Film: The Art, Technology, Language, History, and Theory of Film and Media, James Monaco, Part Three, The Language of Film: Signs and Syntax, distributed by Instructor
- *Stella Dallas*, Olive Higgins Prouty, 1923, students can order at feministpress.org
- *Laura*, Vera Caspary, 1942, students can order at feministpress.org
- "The Wisdom of Eve," Mary Orr, 1950, distributed by Instructor
- "Julia," from Lillian Hellman's 1973 novel *Pentimento*, distributed by Instructor

**Films To Be Screened As A Class:**
- *Stella Dallas*, 1925, silent version
- *Stella Dallas*, 1937
- *These Three*, 1936
- *Laura*, 1944
- *Notorious*, 1946
- *All About Eve*, 1950
- *The Children’s Hour*, 1962
- *Julia*, 1977

**Additional Course Information:**
Additional text items used during the semester are selected by the instructor and given to students as class handouts. These book, magazine, newspaper, and journal articles are intended to supplement students' knowledge about the authors, and describe the literature through film adaptation.

Additional course materials will include information regarding: Acting and Actors; Directors; Editing; Film Festivals and Promotion; History of Film; Lighting; Makeup; Producers; Production Design; Sound; Technology: Cameras, Stock, Editing; and Writers.

**Daily Work/Homework**
**Preparation**
Students are expected to come to class meetings thoroughly prepared. “Thoroughly Prepared” means having reviewed material from previous meetings and having read readings sufficiently to participate actively and effectively.

**Class Participation**
This course will only utilize Canvas as the platform for assignments, syllabus changes and other issues pertaining to the course. Therefore, students must have a University e-mail account in order to participate in this course.

**Participation**
Students are to be prepared to participate in class discussions and activities. Preparation for those discussions implies that all assigned work is read and completed in accordance with the deadlines outlined in the Syllabus and Schedule.

Equally important, participation through the sharing of each student’s research during class discussions will expand and support the knowledge of other students in the course.

**Discussion Guidelines**
The discussion always starts with a question that all members understand, then: People will participate at different levels which is permitted within class and time limits; Some level of participation is expected of everyone; Domination of the conversations by one or two people is unacceptable; Let people finish their thoughts – do not interrupt; When someone is talking listen to what they are saying – concentrate on what they are saying rather than formulating a response; Separate the person from the opinion; Divergent views are encouraged – assume that everyone may have a piece of the truth; Asking for and giving the basis for a view or observation is encouraged; Debating the goodness, badness or right, wrong of a position is discouraged; and Share, rotate roles and responsibilities for discussion management within the group. Personal attacks will not be tolerated! Anyone may remind anyone else, including reminding the instructor, if violations of the ground rules occur.

**Controversial Course Content**
There may be times when legitimate class discussions, assignments, or media resources deal with issues, images or symbols that are viewed as controversial by some class members. This is unavoidable in a course that comprehensively deals with contemporary issues and themes. The student should be aware that some materials covered in class might be perceived as offensive to his or her individual sensibilities.

**Civility**
It is assumed that respect for the WUSTL Community and its rules, as well as respect for the rights of others are standards for all WUSTL Students. Each student is expected to act with civility. Freedom of expression is an essential part of the University life, but it does not include intimidation, belligerence, threats of violence, or the inducement of others to engage in violence or in conduct that harasses or is disrespectful of others. Conduct that threatens, harasses, or denigrates others for any reason is unacceptable and will be dealt with severely. Proper social conduct includes not only civil behavior in interacting with members of the University community both within and outside of the classroom, but also respect for University facilities and property. If each member of the class lives up to these standards, the members of the class can be confident that everyone will benefit fully from the diversity found here. Civil behavior also includes good manners.

*Please turn off cell phones or set to vibrate during class.*

**Disruptive Behavior**
Behavior that is disruptive to the instructor or students is contrary to quality education. Should the instructor determine that an individual student’s verbal or nonverbal behavior is hampering another student’s ability to understand or concentrate on the class material, the instructor will speak with that student in an effort to rectify the problem behavior. If the behavior continues after this discussion, the instructor will have the disruptive student leave the class. Permission to return to class may be dependent upon assurances that the student has met with a responsible
individual about the problem: a counselor, the Dean, etc.

*Children are not permitted in the classroom, and only students enrolled in the class are allowed to attend class.*

**Course Grading:**
Five hundred (500) points may be earned by each student.

- Seven (7) quizzes will cover the course texts. Each quiz is worth 25 points, 175 points total.

- Four (4) reviews of the course films are required. Each review is a minimum of 3 pages in length, and is worth 40 points, 160 points total. Reviews are due the week immediately following the screening.

- In addition to quizzes and written reviews, each student is expected to bring to class a film clip for screening and make an oral presentation concerning the film. The student will provide a published film review for the class, and complete a review of his or her presentation utilizing cinematic language. This assignment is worth 65 points. **Failure to complete all aspects of this assignment, on the assigned date, will result in a lower grade for the assignment.**

- A final paper worth 100 points.

Failure to complete all aspects of an assignment, on the assigned date, will result in a lower grade for the assignment.

Late assignments will drop one letter grade for each class period overdue.

**Additional Class Policies:**

*Cheating and/or Plagiarism:*
Students who are caught cheating on tests or assignments will automatically fail the course.

Students who are suspected of cheating on tests or assignments may be asked to retake the test (or a similar test) or to redo the assignment (or a similar assignment).

Students who are caught plagiarizing materials (i.e., representing someone else's work as one's own) will automatically fail the course.

Students who are suspected of plagiarizing materials may be asked to present evidence (sources, first draft, notes, etc.) and/or to redo the assignment.

Any paper submitted without references will earn zero points for the assignment.

**Course Policies and Information for Students**

**INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT STATEMENT**
The best learning environment—whether in the classroom, studio, laboratory, or fieldwork site—is one in which all members feel respected while being productively challenged. At Washington
University in St. Louis, we are dedicated to fostering an inclusive atmosphere, in which all participants can contribute, explore, and challenge their own ideas as well as those of others. Every participant has an active responsibility to foster a climate of intellectual stimulation, openness, and respect for diverse perspectives, questions, personal backgrounds, abilities, and experiences, although instructors bear primary responsibility for its maintenance.

A range of resources is available to those who perceive a learning environment as lacking inclusivity, as defined in the preceding paragraph. If possible, we encourage students to speak directly with their instructor about any suggestions or concerns they have regarding a particular instructional space or situation. Alternatively, students may bring concerns to another trusted advisor or administrator (such as an academic advisor, mentor, department chair, or dean). All classroom participants—including faculty, staff, and students—who observe a bias incident affecting a student may also file a report (whether personally or anonymously) utilizing the online Bias Report and Support System.

*My commitment is to create a climate for learning characterized by respect for each other and the contributions each person makes to class. I ask that you make a similar commitment.—Dr. Russell*

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

The instructor believes that an essential part of the class design is the classroom experience. Your attendance is required for all scheduled class meetings, **FOR THE ENTIRE CLASS TIME**, and you are responsible for information covered in assigned readings, handouts, discussions, and activities.

Attendance is stressed because you will have opportunities to a) improve your knowledge base through discussions of critical topics and issues, (b) practice skills needed to engage in professional dialogue and exchange with colleagues, (c) practice skills required to present information to others, (d) participate in discussions and activities, and (e) submit required assignments.

Therefore, excessive student absences will have a detrimental effect on learning and grades.

Students who arrive late are a disruption to the instructor and other students. Please be punctual!

The University’s attendance policy does not allow for the instructor to withdraw a student for excessive absences. *The student must initiate the withdrawal process.*

**Last day to add/drop:** September 10, 2019, without a late fee  
September 10, 2019, without a “w” on record - for full refund

**Last day to withdraw:** December 3, 2019

**WRITING ASSIGNMENTS**

All written assignments must be prepared in a professional manner. All final papers must be typed and free of grammatical or spelling errors. Assignments, which in the judgment of the instructor, do not meet these criteria or are unprofessionally prepared, will be returned not graded for revision and resubmission.
When including citations in the text and making references to resources, use the APA format. Assignments are expected to be reflective and include analysis/synthesis of knowledge and practical applications. Appropriate citations of literature and class readings should be included. Please keep a copy (disk or hard copy) of everything and record your work in the course for future reference.

ETHICS/VIOLATIONS OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Ethical behavior is an essential component of learning and scholarship. Students are expected to understand, and adhere to, the University’s academic integrity policy: wustl.edu/policies/undergraduate-academic-integrity.html. Students who violate this policy will be referred to the Academic Integrity Policy Committee. Penalties for violating the policy will be determined by the Academic Integrity Policy committee, and can include failure of the assignment, failure of the course, suspension or expulsion from the University. If you have any doubts about what constitutes a violation of the Academic Integrity policy, or any other issue related to academic integrity, please ask your instructor.

At times, I may ask you to do group work for your presentation and your individual project. For that specific assignment, you are allowed to share material, ideas and information; however, for any related work that is to be submitted on an individual basis, I expect your submission to be your own in its entirety.

Resources for Students
1. DISABILITY RESOURCES: If you have a disability that requires an accommodation, please speak with instructor and consult the Disability Resource Center at Cornerstone (cornerstone.wustl.edu). Cornerstone staff will determine appropriate accommodations and will work with your instructor to make sure these are available to you.

2. WRITING ASSISTANCE: For additional help on your writing, consult the expert staff of The Writing Center (writingcenter.wustl.edu) in Olin Library (first floor). It can be enormously helpful to ask someone outside a course to read your essays and to provide feedback on strength of argument, clarity, organization, etc.

3. THE UNIVERSITY’S PREFERRED NAME POLICY FOR STUDENTS, with additional resources and information, may be found here: registrar.wustl.edu/student-records/ssn-name-changes/preferred-name-policy/preferred-name-policy-student/.

4. ACCOMMODATIONS BASED UPON SEXUAL ASSAULT: The University is committed to offering reasonable academic accommodations to students who are victims of sexual assault. Students are eligible for accommodation regardless of whether they seek criminal or disciplinary action. Depending on the specific nature of the allegation, such measures may include but are not limited to: implementation of a no-contact order, course/classroom assignment changes, and other academic support services and accommodations. If you need to request such accommodations, please direct your request to Kim Webb (kim_webb@wustl.edu), Director of the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center. Ms. Webb is a confidential resource; however, requests for accommodations will be shared with the appropriate University administration and faculty. The University will maintain as confidential any accommodations or protective measures provided to an individual student so long as it does not impair the ability to provide such measures.
If a student comes to me to discuss or disclose an instance of sexual assault, sex discrimination, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking, or if I otherwise observe or become aware of such an allegation, I will keep the information as private as I can, but as a faculty member of Washington University, I am required to immediately report it to my Department Chair or Dean or directly to Ms. Jessica Kennedy, the University’s Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to speak with the Title IX Coordinator directly, Ms. Kennedy can be reached at (314) 935-3118, jwkennedy@wustl.edu, or by visiting her office in the Women’s Building. Additionally, you can report incidents or complaints to Tamara King, Associate Dean for Students and Director of Student Conduct, or by contacting WUPD at (314) 935-5555 or your local law enforcement agency.

You can also speak confidentially and learn more about available resources at the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center by calling (314) 935-8761 or visiting the 4th floor of Seigle Hall.

5. BIAS REPORTING: The University has a process through which students, faculty, staff and community members who have experienced or witnessed incidents of bias, prejudice or discrimination against a student can report their experiences to the University’s Bias Report and Support System (BRSS) team. See: brss.wustl.edu

6. MENTAL HEALTH: Mental Health Services’ professional staff members work with students to resolve personal and interpersonal difficulties, many of which can affect the academic experience. These include conflicts with or worry about friends or family, concerns about eating or drinking patterns, and feelings of anxiety and depression. See: shs.wustl.edu/MentalHealth

Disclaimer
The instructor reserves the right to make modifications to this information throughout the semester.
**Preliminary Schedule of Topics/Learning Outcomes, Assigned Readings, Homework and Assignments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics/Learning Outcomes/Assigned Readings/Homework</th>
<th>Major Assignments and Deadlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Week 1 – August 26** | Introduction and Overview  
Screen portions of *Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmakers Apocalypse*  
Students will understand the role of women in the creative and business process of the motion picture industry. |                                                                                                 |
| **September 2 Labor Day Holiday – No Class Meeting** | Enjoy the time away!                                                                                                       |                                                                                                 |
| **Week 2 – September 9** | Read *The Language of Film: Signs & Syntax*  
Students will understand terms relevant to fiction and film analysis that include Denotative Meanings, Connotative Meanings, Codes, Mise en scene, Sound, Diachronic Shot: Distance; Focus; Angle; and POV, point of view. |                                                                                                 |
| **Week 3 – September 16** | Screen portions of *Notorious*  
Following the screening this film, students will discuss and utilize terms relevant to film analysis that include Denotative Meanings, Connotative Meanings, Codes, Mise en scene, Sound, Diachronic Shot: Distance; Focus; Angle; and POV, point of view. | Send *Language* quiz via email, prior to Class                                                                 |
| **Week 4 – September 23** | Read *Stella Dallas*  
Reading this literature, students will examination of the writings of the American women author, and then analyze, compare, and contrast the characters to understand how these images form images of women in society. | In Class quiz  
Student Presentations                                                                 |
| **Week 5 – September 30** | Screen *Stella Dallas*, portions of 1925 and 1937 versions                                                                 |                                                                                                 |
Following the screening this film, students will discuss and utilize terms relevant to film analysis that include Denotative Meanings, Connotative Meanings, Codes, Mise en scene, Sound, Diachronic Shot: Distance; Focus; Angle; and POV, point of view.

Students will understand and interpret the relationships between fiction and films, and learn how seemingly diametric mediums blend to portray women in American culture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 6 – October 7</th>
<th>Read <em>The Children’s Hour</em>, <em>in Class quiz</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading this literature, students will examination of the writings of the American women author, and then analyze, compare, and contrast the characters to understand how these images form images of women in society.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Class quiz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of <em>Stella</em> Due</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>October 14 Fall Break No Class</th>
<th>Enjoy the time away!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 7 – October 21</th>
<th>Screen portions of <em>These Three</em>, and portions of <em>The Children’s Hour</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read “Diagnosing and Treating the Ophelia Syndrome”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following the screening this film, students will discuss and utilize terms relevant to film analysis that include Denotative Meanings, Connotative Meanings, Codes, Mise en scene, Sound, Diachronic Shot: Distance; Focus; Angle; and POV, point of view.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will understand and interpret the relationships between fiction and films, and learn how seemingly diametric mediums blend to portray women in American culture.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Class discussion of Plummer article</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 8 – October 28</th>
<th>Read “Julia”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading this literature, students will examination of the writings of the American women author, and then analyze, compare, and contrast the characters to understand how these images form images of women in society.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Class quiz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 9 – November 4</th>
<th>Screen portions of <em>Julia</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Following the screening this film, students will discuss and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
utilize terms relevant to film analysis that include Denotative Meanings, Connotative Meanings, Codes, Mise en scene, Sound, Diachronic Shot: Distance; Focus; Angle; and POV, point of view.

Students will understand and interpret the relationships between fiction and films, and learn how seemingly diametric mediums blend to portray women in American culture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 10 – November 11</th>
<th>Read <em>Laura</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading this literature, students will examination of the writings of the American women author, and then analyze, compare, and contrast the characters to understand how these images form images of women in society.</td>
<td>In Class quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 11 – November 18</strong></td>
<td>Screen <em>Laura</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following the screening this film, students will discuss and utilize terms relevant to film analysis that include Denotative Meanings, Connotative Meanings, Codes, Mise en scene, Sound, Diachronic Shot: Distance; Focus; Angle; and POV, point of view.</td>
<td>Review of <em>These Three/The Children’s Hour/Julia</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will understand and interpret the relationships between fiction and films, and learn how seemingly diametric mediums blend to portray women in American culture.</td>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>November 25 Thanksgiving Break No Class</strong></td>
<td>Enjoy the time away!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 12 – December 2</strong></td>
<td>Read “The Wisdom of Eve”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading this literature, students will examination of the writings of the American women author, and then analyze, compare, and contrast the characters to understand how these images form images of women in society.</td>
<td>In Class quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 13 – December 9</strong></td>
<td>Screen portions of <em>All About Eve</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read “The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance”, in class quiz</td>
<td>Review of <em>Laura</em> Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following the screening this film, students will discuss and</td>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Week 15 – December 16 | Screen *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*  
Reading this literature, students will examination of the writings of the American women author, and then analyze, compare, and contrast the characters to understand how these images form images of women in society.  
Following the screening this film, students will discuss and utilize terms relevant to film analysis that include Denotative Meanings, Connotative Meanings, Codes, Mise en scene, Sound, Diachronic Shot: Distance; Focus; Angle; and POV, point of view.  
Students will understand and interpret the relationships between fiction and films, and learn how seemingly diametric mediums blend to portray women in American culture. | Review of *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* Due  
Final Paper Due |
MEDIA PROBE

Do you ever go to the movies alone?

Do you regularly read a particular movie critic?

Do you ever go to see foreign films?

Have you ever made a film or video tape?

Are the first one in your group to suggest a movie?

Do you ever go back and see favorite films a second or third time?

Did you look forward to this course? Why?

Do you pay attention to the name of directors and screen writers?

Do you have a favorite type of genre of film?

Do you like to watch "old" movies?

What is your idea of a classic film? Why?

Who is your favorite female actress? Why?

Are there any special topics you would like to explore this semester?
Student Presentations:

Week 4
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Week 6
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Week 8
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Week 11
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.