

Welcome to the *Feminism and Media* First Year Seminar



Film Still from Jane Campion, *A Girl's Own Story*, 1984

Course Description: In this class we will discuss the following questions: What is feminism and what does it have to do with media culture? We will be investigating such historical movements as the suffrage movement and current movements of feminist resistance such as #metoo with the aim of defining all the waves of feminism, including the current female empowerment phase (e.g., *Barbie: the Movie*). We will also highlight the extent to which media technology might intrinsically *help* feminism, as could be argued with some recent examples of animated films (e.g., *Devoted*), and science fiction writing and film (e.g., *Pumzi*), or cases in which technologies *hinder* feminism, as when the pressures of social media negatively impact the social development of young women, particularly affecting the vulnerability of the female body and its representations.

Class Climate: I am committed to create a welcoming classroom climate where all of you feel supported intellectually, emotionally, and academically. I want you to feel a sense of belonging in my classroom regardless of your identity and personal background. Sometimes we will be working together in small discussion groups to learn from one another, and above all we will practice active and critical listening. We will create the atmosphere of vibrance, thoughtfulness, and respect that is necessary for academic excellence.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the semester, you will be familiar with the expectations of an academic seminar and will be trained in critical thinking and critical public discussion. (This will likely be different from classes you have taken so far in high school.) You will be familiar with the concept of feminism in its history and theory; you will have an overview of historical feminist movements; you'll be able to distinguish the various waves of feminism (1st to 4th); you will be able to critically discuss some of the feminist claims in the various political manifestos, petitions, and liberation movements from the historical suffrage movement to postcolonial debates to questions of intersectionality (race and gender) to current debates about feminist identity politics. You will also be able to learn the transgender movement in its history and current configurations from a professor of transgender history, currently teaching in our own History department.

In addition, after taking this course you will also understand the connection between feminism and media in their relation to old versus new media: from pamphlets in the 19th century to the success of the scandalous novel [The Bachelorette](#) from the 1920s, to such contemporary feminist movements based in new media discourse as #metoo. Finally, you will be able to understand what “female empowerment” means in the context of media and particularly film. You will also have had the experience of working through these concepts in a group, and not least, have made friends with your fellow students and your professor!

Logistics: We will be meeting in Gilman 134 twice every week, unless otherwise communicated. On November 7, I am planning a guided visit to the Simone Leigh exhibit at the [Hirshhorn Museum](#) in DC. Please, talk to your other professors early in the semester to ask if they would consider letting you miss afternoon classes that day, as we will be leaving at 12:00 and coming back around 6pm.



Film still from Wanuri Kahiu, *Pumzi*, 2009

Sensitivity of Material: You will be confronted with some sensitive materials in this class: people writing about their feelings regarding their trans-identities and the desire for sex changes; women reporting on sexual abuse and the ramifications and repercussions of violence; the film by Rosine Mbakam deals with a woman from Cameroon who is being forced into prostitution in Belgium; if you feel uncomfortable about this material, please let me know and there is no obligation to engage with it. I will find alternatives for you to watch or read that avoid too difficult content.

Accessibility: Johns Hopkins University is committed to providing welcoming, equitable, and accessible educational experiences for all students. Students with disabilities (including those with psychological conditions, medical conditions, and temporary disabilities) can request accommodations for this course by providing an Accommodation Letter issued by Student Disability Services (SDS). Please request accommodations for this course as early as possible to provide time for effective communication and arrangements. For further information or to start the process of requesting accommodations, please contact Student Disability Services at Shaffer Hall #101, call: 410-516- 4720, or email: studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu or visit the [website](#).

Academic Integrity: The strength of any university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Report any violations you witness to the instructor. You can also contact the associate dean of student conduct (or designee) by calling the Office of the Dean of Student Life at 410-516-8208 or via email at studentconduct@jhu.edu.

Canvas & Discussion Board: You will find all necessary information and weekly announcements about our class on canvas. On canvas you will also find an updated syllabus, if necessary, due to unforeseen circumstances. As a supplement to our in-class discussions I will enable a discussion board on Canvas on our weekly topics. This is an opportunity to continue discussions started in class, begin new discussions related to the course, and in general, to keep the conversation going outside of class time. As part of your discussion board engagement, please post at least one original reading or viewing commentary, or engage in another student's post weekly.

Grading and Evaluation: As you know there is no letter grade for this class.

To achieve a **Satisfactory** in this 3-credit class, you are expected to do the following:

- 1, Attend all classes. See below for class attendance policy.
- 2, Complete weekly readings, viewings, and other tasks discussed in class, and prepare for the next class by having made some notes on the assigned content for yourself.
- 3, Introduce one of the assigned readings/ viewings as a "kick-off" presentation (approximately 10-15 minutes) to the class by summarizing it and raising two or three questions for discussion. You can sign up for the kick-off through the Calendar Canvas option.
- 4, Participate in every class by contributing to discussions, asking questions, responding to classmates, and participating in group activities.
- 5, Stay engaged by reading and posting in the course discussions on canvas.



Photograph by Mélodie Descoubes, Manifestation contre les agressions sexuelles - 19 juillet 2020 - Montréal

Absences: Because we don't have any written assignments other than canvas postings, and all assignments are based on class presence, this class does not allow for unexcused absences. I kindly ask that you to email me if you must miss a class due to illness or another unavoidable conflict. Please, let me know as soon as you can and talk to me about how you can be sure to keep up with the class.

Lunch with the professor: This class offers some external funding to be used for lunch or coffee with each of you once during the semester. It is also possible to meet in small groups. There are some lunch openings for you to sign up for through Canvas/Calendar.

Office Hours: Coming to my office hours is often a nice way to follow up on a special theme, a question, or even a concern with me privately. My office hours will be held T/TH 3:00-4:30pm in Gilman 461. Please, email me ahead to make an appointment as I tend to see many students.

Anxiety, Stress, and Mental Health: If you are struggling with anxiety, stress, depression, or other mental health related concerns, please consider visiting the JHU Counseling Center. If you are concerned about a friend, please encourage that person to seek out their services. The Counseling Center is located at 3003 North Charles Street in Suite S-200 and can be reached at 410-516-8278 and online at <http://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/counselingcenter/>

The Writing Center: *The Writing Center* offers undergraduate and graduate students free, individual conferences with experienced peer tutors, all of whom are trained to consult on written work at any stage of the writing process. Bring in your assignments for help with brainstorming, drafting, organizing, building your argument. They can help you hone your editing skills. [The Writing Center](#) is the perfect place to talk about your writing and receive assistance from your fellow students here at Johns Hopkins.



Film Still from Roberta Torre, *Le favolose (The Fabulous Ones)*, 2022

Feminism and Media Syllabus

| Topic | Tuesday Aug 29 | Thursday Aug 31 | To do |
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| Introduction of course; <i>First and Second Waves of Feminism</i> : Oldest feminist pamphlet from 1642; Women's suffrage movement, petitions and equal rights; | Icebreakers and Introduction of syllabus and theme: "What is repair?" and "What needs fixing and who says so?" Discuss: "Petition of the Gentlemen and Tradesmen's Wives London, England," February 4, | 1 st academic discussion Discuss: what were these early petitions by women about; what media were involved? | Read: ° "Female Anti-Slavery Society of Salem, Massachusetts"; February 1832 ° "Lowell Factory Girls Association; Lowell, Massachusetts;" October 1836; both in <i>Feminist Manifestos a Global Documentary Reader</i> , 2018 |

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| | 1642. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Sojourner Truth, “Two Speeches” (1851, 1867); ◦ Harriet Taylor Mill, “The Enfranchisement of Women,” 1851, both in <i>The Essential Feminist Reader</i>, 2007 |
| Topic | Tuesday Sep 5 | Thursday Sep 7 | To Do |
| <p><i>Third and Fourth Waves of Feminism:</i> Intersectionality and Queer Feminism — some definitions</p> | <p>Discuss in small groups: below concepts and compare answers: ◦Eurocentrism ◦Intersectionality ◦Public vs private pursuits</p> | <p>Jo Gardini, post-doc fellow in the Program of Women Gender and Sexuality will lead this class.</p> <p>Discuss: Queer feminism and the 4th wave</p> | <p>Read: ◦ “Liberal Feminism,” in: <i>Feminist Thought</i>, ed. Rosemarie Tong and Tina Fernandes Botts, p. 11-36.</p> <p>Sign up: kick-offs and lunch dates</p> |
| Topic | Tuesday Sep 12 | Thursday Sep 14 | To Do |
| <p>Victor Margueritte: <i>La Garçonne (The Bachelorette)</i> — a scandalous bestselling novel from 1922</p> <p><i>La Garçonne</i>, the film adaptation from 1936 by Jean de Limur</p> <p>Today’s Reality Show: <i>The Bachelorette</i> (2003-2023, ABC)</p> | <p>First kick-off:</p> <p>Discuss in small groups: ◦why does the heroine from <i>The Bachelorette</i> decide she wants to leave her life behind. ◦ why is her new life considered amoral? ◦ who are her adversaries and her helpers?</p> | <p>Discuss: the book was soon adapted into the film La Garçonne, 1936 by Jean de Limur. We will watch parts of the 1936 film in class and compare the book and the film’s messages in a general class discussion.</p> <p>We will also discuss today’s Bachelorette Reality Show in comparison.</p> | <p>Read: ◦ Parts of the novel The Bachelorette (tbd);</p> <p>Watch: ◦ Some episodes from the reality show <i>The Bachelorette</i> on hulu or youtube (whatever you can find without having to subscribe)</p> |
| Topic | Tuesday Sep 19 | Thursday Sep 21 | To Do |
| <p><i>The Politics of Housework:</i> women revolt and document themselves doing housework</p> <p>Recent films from Latin America thematizing post-colonial hierarchies within home economies in</p> | <p>Second kick-off:</p> <p>Discuss in small groups: ◦ the personal is political: explain. ◦ the concept of automation in Raspé’s work: why is she using automation as a metaphor for her own exploitation? ◦ how is housework</p> | <p>Watch excerpts in class: ◦ <i>I love Lucy</i>, epis. 1, 1951 ◦ Jeanne Dielman, 1975 ◦ Housemaids, 2013</p> <p>General class discussion: the different visual and narrative approaches to the question of house-workers, their</p> | <p>Read: ◦ Pat Mainardi, “The Politics of Housework,” 1970; Boston Women’s Health Book Collective “Our Bodies Our Selves” (1973); in: <i>The Essential Feminist Reader</i>, 2007</p> <p>Watch short clips: ◦ Martha Rosler, Semiotics of the Kitchen, 1975 ◦ Scroll through the Margaret Raspé exhibit</p> |


AS. 001. Feminism and Media Fall 2023 | professor Bernadette Wegenstein
T/Th |12:00-1:15pm | Gilman 134

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| Chile, Brazil, and Mexico | remunerated in symbolic terms? ° why is self-documentation a feminist medium? | submission through societal norms, and the problem of self-awareness; Discuss the different cinematic representations between the films you watched from Chile, Brazil, Mexico | currently in Berlin ° Watch Jennicam Reality TV from 1999 OPTIONAL – Watch one of these films on Kanopy: ° The Maid (La Nana) , by Sebastián Silva, 2009 ° The Chambermaid (La Camarista) , by Lila Avilés, 2019 |
| Topic | Tuesday Sep 26 | Thursday Sep 28 | To Do |
| Decolonial Feminism and Afrofuturism | Third kick-off: Watch in class: ° <i>Pumzi</i> by Wanuri Kahiu, 2009 ° Excerpts from: <i>Delphine's Prayer</i> by Rosine Mbakam, 2021 | Käthe Erichsen , PhD candidate in Jewish Studies and Media Studies will hold this class. Discuss in small groups: ° What is Afro futurism: describe the aesthetics of <i>Pumzi</i> ? ° Who is <i>Delphine</i> , through the filmic narration of her life by Rosine Mbakam: is she Cameroonian, Belgian? ° What is Decolonial feminism? | Read: ° "African science fiction cinema: Wanuri Kahiu's 21-minute Film <i>Pumzi</i> , 2009 in: <i>Short Film Studies</i> , Vol. 1, No. 2, 2021 ° "How To Film My Mother. An Interview with Rosine Mbakam," in <i>Radical Equalities and Global Feminist Filmmaking</i> , ed. Bernadette Wegenstein and Lauren Mushro, p. 250-262 Optional: ° "Toward a Decolonial Feminism," by María Lugones, <i>Hypatia</i> , 2010, Volume 25, No. 4 |
| Topic | Tuesday Oct 3 | Thursday Oct 5 | |
| Transgender histories: The Transgendered Child | Watch in class: Framing Agnes , 75 min., 2022 | Fourth kick-off: Special guest: Professor Jules Gills-Peterson , History department – in conversation with professor Wegenstein Alternative: Watch in class: <i>Feminism WTF</i> , 2023 | Read: <i>Histories of the Transgender Child</i> , by Jules Gills-Peterson, 2018 ° Chapter 2: Before Transsexuality: the transgender child from 1900-1930 Chapter 5: Transgender Boyhood: Race and Puberty in the 1970ies |
| Topic | Tuesday Oct 10 | Thursday Oct 12 | |

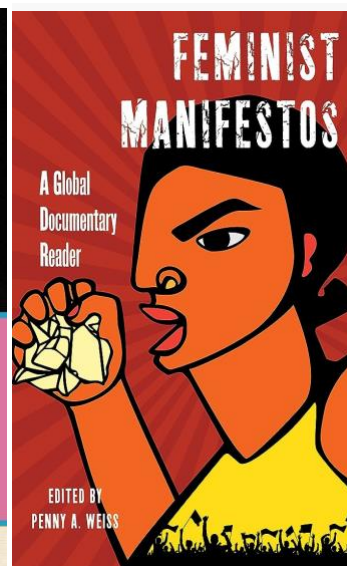
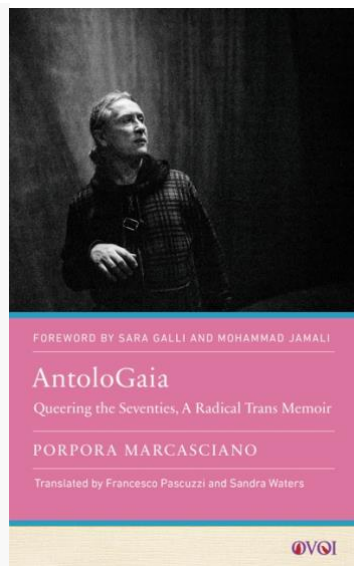
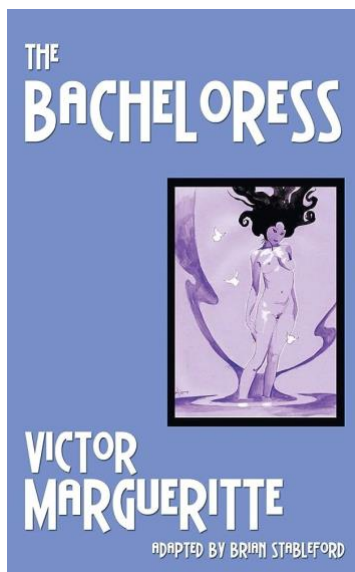
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| <p>Female Authorship in Documentary Films</p> | <p>Fifth kick-off:</p> <p>Watch in class:</p> <p>Discuss in small groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Define the “female gaze.” ◦ What is a “domestic ethnography”? ◦ How is observation displayed in a female documentary? ◦ What is participatory authorship? ◦ Why Self-documentation? | <p>Special Guests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Annette Porter, producer of <i>The Conductor</i> ◦ Stefan Fauland, editor of <i>The Conductor</i>, present by zoom <p>General class discussion:</p> <p>Prepare interview questions about <i>The Conductor</i></p> | <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lisa French, “Women in the director’s chair: the Female Gaze in Documentary Film, in: <i>Female Authorship and the Documentary Image</i>, ed. Boel Ulfsdotter and Anna Backman Rogers 2018 <p>Optional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Michael Renov, “New Subjectivities. Documentary and Self-presentation in the Post-vérité age,” in: <i>Feminism and Documentary</i>, ed. Diane Waldman and Janet Walker, 1999 <p>Watch on your own:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The Conductor, by Bernadette Wegenstein, 2021 |
| <p>Topic</p> | <p>Tuesday Oct 17</p> | <p>Thursday Oct 19</p> | |
| <p>The Woman Auteur: Female Empowerment in Narrative Films</p> | <p>Sixth kick-off:</p> <p>Watch in class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Jane Campion, <i>A Girl’s Own Story</i>, 1984 ◦ Excerpts from: <i>Pasqualino Settebellezze (Seven Beauties)</i>, 1975 <p>General Class Discussion:</p> <p>Compare female auteurs Wertmüller, Campion, and Gerwig in their different historical waves of film productions?</p> | <p>Fall Break</p> | <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barbie: the Movie Reviews ◦ NYT ◦ The Guardian ◦ Reuters on Lebanon ◦ Find more on your own <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Greta Gerwig and Jane Campion at the Governor’s Awards: honoring Lina Wertmüller, the first woman to have been nominated for an Oscar: <i>Pasqualino Settebellezze (Seven Beauties)</i>, 1975; ◦ Greta Gerwig, <i>Barbie: The Movie</i> (2023) |
| <p>Topic</p> | <p>Tuesday Oct 24</p> | <p>Thursday Oct 26</p> | |
| <p>Italian Feminist Studies: Women’s</p> | <p>Seventh kick off:</p> | <p>Special guest: MLL’s professor</p> | <p>Read:</p> |

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| <p>Film & Ecofeminism</p> | <p>Watch in class: ◦ Essere donne (<i>Being a woman</i>) by Cecilia Mangini, 1965 (version w ST available in class) ◦ Excerpts from: Processo per stupro (<i>rape trial</i>), 1979</p> <p>Discuss in small groups: ◦ What does self-awareness (“auto-coscienza”) mean in the Italian feminist context of the 1970s? ◦ Why was the live broadcast of a rape trial different from a written report?</p> | <p>Laura Di Bianco will in conversation with professor Wegenstein about her book on contemporary women’s cinema and eco-cinema in Italy</p> | <p>◦ “Introduction” from Laura Di Bianco: <i>Wandering Women: Urban Ecologies of Italian Feminist Filmmaking</i>, 2022 ◦ “The Means of Autonomy: Women’s Documentary and Experimental Film in 1970s Italy,” Giovanna Zapperi, in: <i>Feminist Worldmaking and the Moving Image</i>, ed. Erika Balsen and Hila Beleg, MIT Press, 2022</p> |
| <p>Topic</p> | <p>Tuesday Oct 31</p> | <p>Thursday Nov 2</p> | <p>To Do</p> |
| <p>Transgender as Political Movement; discussion of the recent Italian film, <i>Le Favolose</i> (2022) by Roberta Torre</p> | <p>Watch in class: Le Favolose (The Fabulous Ones), 76 min. special screening arranged by the libraries; in presence of Italian PhD student, Sam Zawacki</p> | <p>Eighth kick off: Class conducted by PhD student, Sam Zawacki, Italian Section of MLL</p> <p>Discuss: The transgender movement in Italy</p> | <p>Read: ◦ Monica Wittig, “One is not born a woman,” 1981, in: <i>The Essential Feminist Reader</i> ◦ Chapter from Porpora Marcasciano: <i>AntoloGAIA: Queering the Seventies. A Radical Trans Memoir</i>, 2023 (will be uploaded to canvas a week prior)</p> |
| <p>Topic</p> | <p>Tuesday Nov 7</p> | <p>Thursday Nov 9</p> | <p>To Do</p> |
| <p>Feminism and New Media Discourse: The #metoo movement</p> | <p>Second kick-off:</p> <p>Discuss in small groups: ◦ Define advocacy and social justice in the #metoo context. ◦ What are the impacts of the #metoo movement for Art and Literature? ◦ Depp vs Heard: how does a televised</p> | <p>Field Trip to Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, DC for a retrospective on Simone Leigh</p> <p>Details tbd</p> | <p>Read: ◦ <i>Feminist Principles of the Internet Gender, Sexuality, and the Internet Meeting</i>, Malaysia; 2014; in: <i>Feminist Manifestos</i>, 623-626 ◦ “Overview of the #metoo movement,” and “Impacts of the #metoo Movement,” in: Laurie Collier Hillstrom: <i>The #metoo movement</i>, 2018</p> <p>Optional:</p> |

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| | media spectacle affect the representation of domestic violence? ° Selfcity: young women's global self-presentation on the internet | | ° Jennifer O'Meara, <i>Women's Voices in Digital Media: the Sonic Screen from Film to Memes</i> , 2022 Watch and read online: ° Selfcity ° GenderIT ° Heard vs Depp on Netflix: Reviews |
| Topic | Tuesday Nov 14 | Thursday Nov 16 | To Do |
| Sexual Violence and the Aesthetic of Reparation in the filmic medium | Tenth kick off: Special guest and lecture: Italian sociologist Michela Villani, Senior Researcher and Scientific Associate in the School of Social Work at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland | Eleventh kick off: Watch in class: Excerpts from <i>Princesita</i> , 2018, by Marialy Rivas Discuss in small groups: ° What is the main difficulty of talking about sexual violence in film? ° What aesthetic strategies do women use to avoid re-traumatization through film? ° How do a victim's and a perpetrator's pov change the dynamic of a film? | Read: "Feminist Counter-Cinema and the Critique of Sexual Violence," in <i>Radical Equalities and Global Feminist Filmmaking</i> , 3-34 Watch one of these films: ° Devoti tutti , by Bernadette Wegenstein, 2023 (private screener available from BW) ° <i>Light Falls Vertical</i> , by Ethymia Zymvragaki, 2022 (screener available with permission of the filmmaker — do not share) ° <i>Kimi</i> , by Steven Soderbergh, 2022 |
| Topic | Tuesday Nov 21 | Thursday Nov 23 | To Do |
| | Thanksgiving | Thanksgiving | RELAX |
| Topic | Tuesday Nov 28 | Thursday Nov 30 | To Do |
| Women's Archiveology and Found Footage Films | General Class Discussion: Collect found footage from your own media libraries or films you have watched and discuss its importance | Twelfth kick off: Watch in class: Excerpts from ° <i>Cameraperson</i> , 2016, by Kirsten Johnson ° <i>Luz Obscura</i> , 2017, by Susana de Sousa Días ° <i>Tutto parla di te (All About You)</i> , 2013, by Alina Marazzi | Read: ° "Any Footage I Shoot is me." An Interview with Kirsten Johnson," in <i>Radical Equalities and Global Feminist</i> , 328-343 ° "Women's Archiveology" Lost Mother, Found Footage," by Laura Di Bianco, in: <i>Radical Equalities and Global Feminist</i> , 285-306 |

| Topic | Tuesday Dec 5 | Thursday Dec 7 | To Do |
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| <p>Women's Ethnographic Films & Sachertorte</p> <p>If you have any food allergies there is no obligation to eat the cake.</p> | <p>Special guest and lecture: Corinne Fortier, French anthropologist and filmmaker at the Center of Scientific Research (CNRS) Paris; Member of the Social Anthropology Lab (LAS) (CNRS-EHESS-Collège de France-Universités PSL, Paris — will be presenting her new ethnographic documentary, <i>Aboard the Abraden</i></p> | <p>Final discussion with <i>Sachertorte</i> made by professor Wegenstein with a secret ingredient.</p>  | <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ “Women, Sister's Others: On Chick Strand's “Woman as Ethnographic Film Maker,” by Counter Encounters (L. Huertas Millán, O. Igwe, and R. Rakes), in <i>Feminist Worldmaking</i>, 423-428 ◦ Prepare any final questions about our class and come hungry for Sachertorte; guessing game “what is the secret ingredient in this cake?” (No google searches in advance!) |

All readings available through Canvas or [E-Reserves](#)
BIBLIOGRAPHY



- Di Bianco, Laura, *Wandering Women: Urban Ecologies of Italian Feminist Filmmaking*, Indiana University Press, 2022
- *Female Authorship and the Documentary Image*, ed. Boel Ulfsdotter and Anna Backman Rogers, Edinburgh University Press, 2018
- *Feminism and Documentary*, ed. Diane Waldman and Janet Walker, Minnesota Press 1999

- *Feminist Manifestos: A Global Documentary Reader*, ed. Penny A. Weiss, NY Press, 2018
- *Feminist Thought*, ed. Rosemary Tong and Tina Fernandes Botts, Westview Press, 2018
- *Feminist Worldmaking and the Moving Image*, eds. Erika Balsom and Hila Peleg, MIT, 2022
- Collier Hillstrom, Laurie, *The #metoo movement*, Twenty-first Century Turning Points, 2018
- Marguerite, Victor, *La garçonne*, 1922; in French; *The Bacheloress*, adapted by Brian Stableford (originally translated as *The Bachelor Girl*), Black Goat Press, 2015
- Preciado, Paul, *Testo Junkie. Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopronographic Era*, Feminist Press at the City University of New York City, 2013
- *Radical Equalities and Global Feminist Filmmaking: An Anthology*, eds. Bernadette Wegenstein and Lauren Mushro, Vernon Press, 2022
- *The Routledge Companion to Gender, Media and Violence*, ed. Karen Boyle and Susan Berridge, Routledge, 2023
- *The Essential Feminist Reader*, ed. Estelle B. Freedman, The Modern Library, 2007

Some additional resources:

- <https://hirshhorn.si.edu/exhibitions/put-it-this-way/>
- <https://hirshhorn.si.edu/exhibitions/simone-leigh/>



Film Still from Greta Gerwig, *Barbie: the Movie*, 2023