



# Using films and visual materials in feminist classroom

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- Film and **streamable digitized media** as a teaching resource and powerful teaching tool
- **Video pedagogy** (Andrist, et al, 2014)
- **Edutainment** (Education+Entertainment)
- Films' unique quality as communication medium
- Various **film and visual material types** – featured films, documentaries, webisodes, television programs, interview clips, abbreviated segments from films and television episodes, theatre productions, and commercials.
- Different types of videos can achieve **specific learning goals**
- Students as **“TV generation”**
- Students who have grown up with powerful television images may have a **preferred observational learning style** that conflicts with standard classroom experiences



# Websites

- [Films for the Feminist Classroom](http://ffc.twu.edu/) (FCC) is an online, open-access journal that publishes film reviews that provide a critical assessment of the value of films as pedagogical tools in the feminist classroom.  
<http://ffc.twu.edu/>
- The Society for Women in Philosophy (SWIP) List of Suggested Films to Use for Teaching Feminist Philosophy  
<http://www.uh.edu/~cfreelan/SWIP/Femfilms.html>
- [http://search.alexanderstreet.com/search?ff\[0\]=publishing\\_body\\_facet:filmmakers%20library\\*Filmmakers%20Library|32395&showall=1](http://search.alexanderstreet.com/search?ff[0]=publishing_body_facet:filmmakers%20library*Filmmakers%20Library|32395&showall=1)



# Advantages of using films

- Films offer **visual portrait of abstract theories and concepts** (application of concepts)
- to see **concepts in a contextual setting**
- Greater feeling of reality
- Communication power of films (it goes beyond what we can experience in reality)
- Films see **reality differently** from ordinary human experiences. Focusing techniques, editing, framing of shots, camera angles, sounds - A viewer sees an image unavailable to ordinary human vision



# Potential of films (Champoux, 1999)

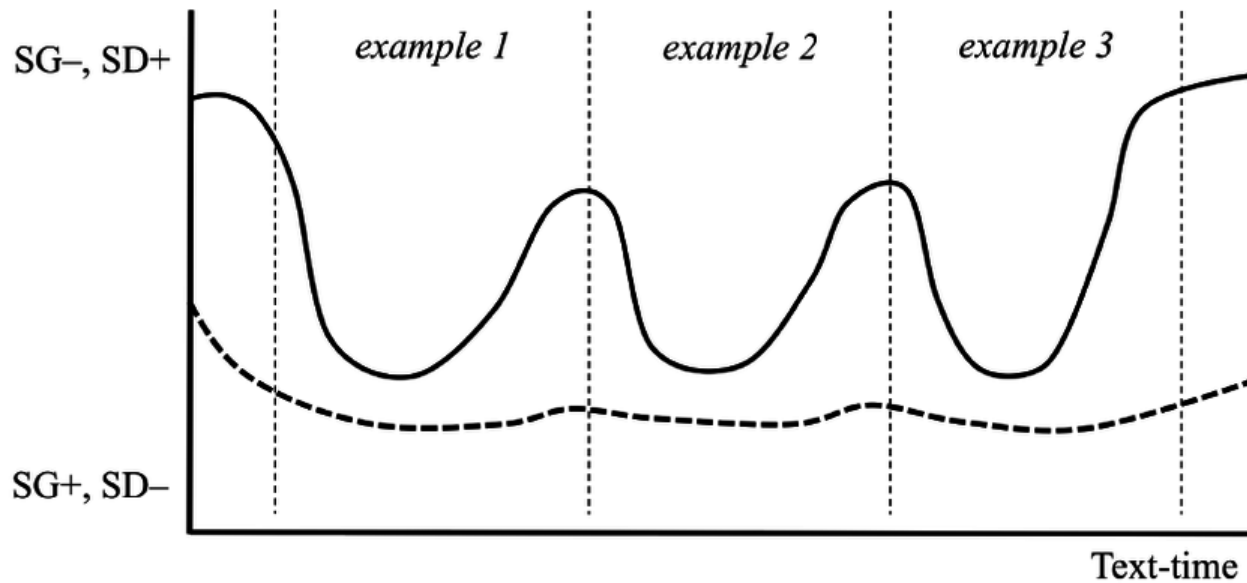
- Films editing puts series of images together in a unique sequence that creates a cinematic experience with specific affect on viewer. Cinematic experience transcends physical reality and creates what is **impossible in reality**
- A potential to express **complex feelings**
- Power of **sound (dialogs, music, special affects)** to enhance the visual image and film's effect on a viewer. Power of sound is added to power of image.
- Viewers' responses. Viewers are not passive observers.
- Viewing experiences which don't happen in real world
- **strong images and emotional content**
- **Visualization of emotions** (joy, stress, despair, etc.). Various emotional responses to videos



- Differences in **brain functioning** (left and right hemispheres of the brain). **Left side** – verbal (oral, written) media and deductive tasks; **right side** – iconic, visual media, intuitive tasks.
- Different symbol systems – **different cognitive processes**. People learn abstract and new concepts when they are presented in both in verbal and visual forms



# Karl Maton: semantic waves



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# A film: from symbolism to experience (Champoux, 1999)

- Film as a **case** (solid plot and coherent story)
- Film as an **experiential exercise** (analysis of scenes in small groups)
- Film as **metaphor** . Films as metaphorical images of abstract theories and concepts
- Films as **symbolism** (unusual shots, sequences, lighting, black-and -white). Symbolic meaning of concepts
- Film as **experience**. It creates strong experience for viewer



# Properties of films

(Andrist, et al, 2014)

- **Intent** (video's purpose as conceived by its creators and describes how a video's message is constructed to shape viewer experience)
- **Authority** (narrative legitimacy, which is the persuasive power behind that message.
- **Style** (aesthetic and artistic expressions).
- **Historical tradition** (historical context in which a video is situated, developments within film history and criticism, larger narrative traditions).

# Critical media literacy: criteria for a source's trustworthiness (Marcus, 2005)

- The perceived authority and/or knowledge of a source
- The perceived motive, agenda, or bias of a source
- The nature of the source as a primary or secondary account

# Types of video materials

(Andrist, et al, 2014)

- **Conjuncture** (documentaries, visual ethnographies; „real life“- documenting actual events and historical processes).  
Understanding how social change effects individuals
- **Testimony** (firsthand accounts of particular events or issues; nonfiction narrative. Speaker authority derives from subjective social location)
- **Infographic**
- **Pop fiction**
- **Propaganda**
- **Détournement**



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- **Conjuncture** (documentaries, visual ethnographies; „real life“- documenting actual events and historical processes). Understanding how social change effects individuals
- **Testimony** (firsthand accounts of particular events or issues; nonfiction narrative. Speaker authority derives from subjective social location). It allows exposing students to diverse cultural viewpoints and promoting humanistic values

# Example: Documentary on Female Genital Mutilation

- [FGM: the film that changed the law in Kurdistan](#) (watch video)



EXAMPLE: Documentary **BASTARDS** (Deborah Perkin, 2014) on illegitimate children in Morocco  
([watch video](#))



# Infographics

- **Infographics** presents information, ranging from statistical data to abstract. Feature expert narrators and employ special effects to summarize information or present explanations about given phenomena
- To summarize and place large amounts of information in easily understood narratives:
- [The Global Gender Gap Report 2015 \(watch video\)](#)

Combination of animation with popular academic lectures

- [David Harvey 'Crises of Capitalism', 2010 \(watch video\)](#)

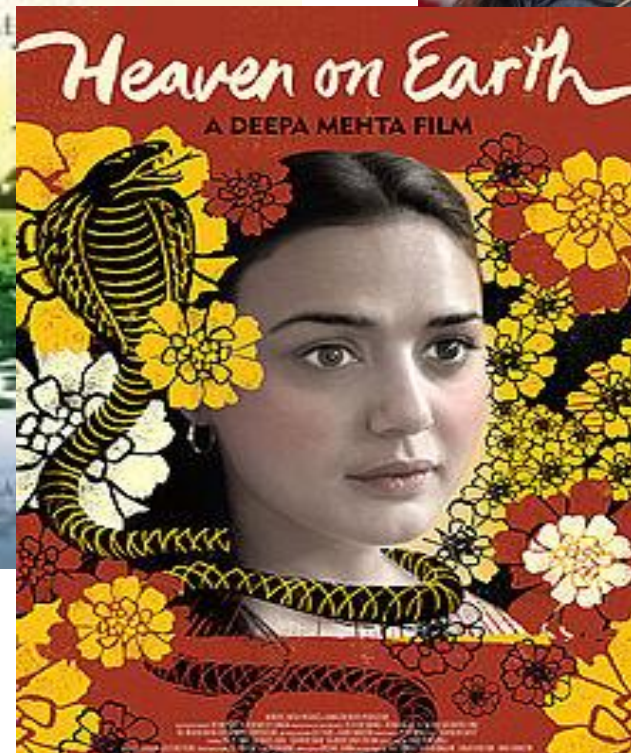


# Pop fictions

- Genres (comedy, drama, others). Hollywood feature films, short films, music videos, and television shows
- Capacity to engage viewers emotionally
- Authority is based on a relationship, feeling, or experience that resonate with the viewer
- The characters and events are fictional



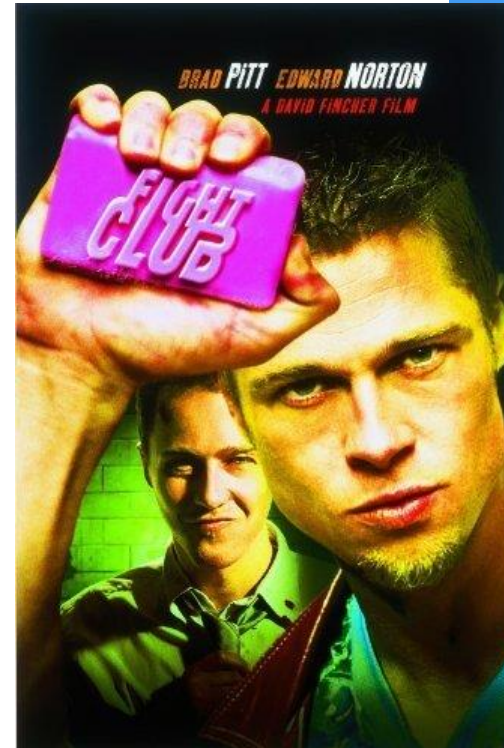
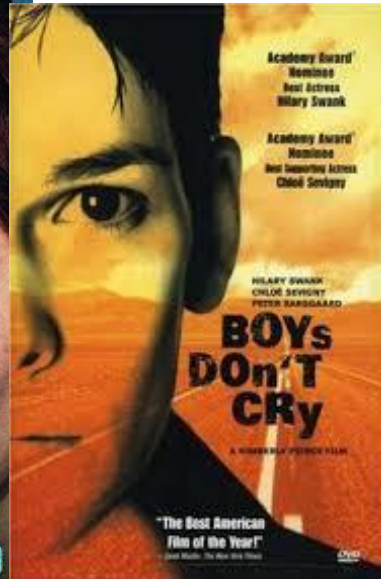
# 'Water' and 'Heaven on Earth' (Deepa Mehta) on topics on postcolonial feminism



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# On masculinity, gender identity, performativity of gender ('Fight Club', 'Danish Girl', 'Boys don't cry', 'Transamerica')



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# Propaganda videos

“Propaganda, as viewed in the context of **mass persuasion** that benefits the manufacturer and sender, often begins where **critical thinking ends.**”

- Messages typically created or financed by governments or corporations with the aim of promoting an **ideology, policy, or product**
- **Commercials** which persuade consumers of a product’s value or endorsement of a particular lifestyle ([Nike Pro Hijab commercials](#)).
- Some **television news** can also be considered in light of propaganda
- **Learning goals:** Illustrations of how visual media persuade people to behave and think about the world in particular ways

# TED lectures

- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie [‘We should all be feminist’](#) (watch [video](#))
- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie [‘Danger of single story’](#) (watch [video](#))



# Didactical ways of using films

(Champoux, 1999, Smith 2009)

- Video materials as **supplementary** written material and as the **primary instructional medium** (Smith 2009).
- The course focuses almost entirely on the application of the concepts as seen in the films.
- Identification of **learning goals of course** (Andrist, et al, 2014)
- To use film scenes **before** and **after** theories and concepts
- Students can work **in groups** and **individually outside class** or scenes can be shown **in class**.
- To **repeat scenes** – to run scenes before discussion to give students a visual anchor.
- Usually students are asked to connect films' scenes with theories and concepts
- **Comparison**



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## Example of assignment - the use of film 'Water' in the course Critical Social Work

- Write an essay (small academic work) on importance of ideas of postcolonial feminism for social work
- Watch movie ,Water‘ on lives of widows in India in 1938.
- Discuss an approach of postcolonial social work to think on global and local, historical dimensions of gender – to focus on lives and oppression of women in other than ‘Western’ cultures and societies. Comment how the movie ‘Water’ depicts social and historical construction of gender, complexity of gender and racial power relations, oppressive structures produced by religion and culture. Reveal complex interconnection of cultural, social and economic relations and structures.
- Compare lives of widows presented in the movie with contemporary situation of women in your own culture and society. Describe life of widows in nowadays society as an intersection of social, economic and cultural factors. How does this situation of widows in your country differ from lives of India women depicted in the movie?
- Discuss in the essay how situation of widowed women deals with field of social work and how social issues and problems are defined in the social work
- While analysing the topic provide examples from the movie. Look for other additional resources on this phenomena (widows in India) in media and in other relevant materials
- Recommended length of the work is 3-5 pages.

## **Example of assignment - the use of several movies on masculinity, gender identity in the B.A. program course Critical Social Work**

- Read materials (lecture, articles) on masculinities in social work. Read article on males social workers and their stand to normative biography (Mažeikienė & Dorelaitienė, 2016)
- watch 1-2 movies on masculinity ("TransAmerica", 'Boys don't cry', 'Fight Club', 'Danish Girl')
- On the basis of materials provided and referring to main ideas, theories and concepts discuss diversity and variety of types and experiences of masculinity and being a male. Discuss pressure of hegemonic masculinity on lives of 'ordinary' males and females and discrimination faced.
- Length of the work is not less than 3 pages



# 'Water' and 'Heaven on Earth' (dir. Deepa Mehta) on topics on postcolonial feminism, women' oppression



**Deepa Mehta**



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# Group assignment

- Watch documentary ‘Bastards’
- Discuss in groups how this film presents concepts of family, sexuality, motherhood, oppression of women, local and historical dimensions of gender. Comment how the film depicts social and historical construction of gender, complexity of gender and power relations, empowerment of women. Describe how the film exposes oppressive structures produced by religion, culture and society. Reveal complex interconnection of cultural, social and economic relations and structures.
- What other theories and concepts could be used in your course(s) while using this film in your classroom
- Describe lives of single mothers and their children in your own culture and society and compare with situation presented in the film ‘Bastards’.
- Present discussion of your small group to larger group of participants of the event

# Bibliography

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