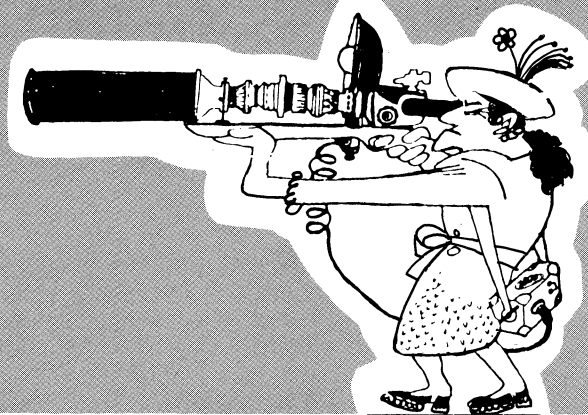


# How to Give a 'Woman and Film' Course in Ten Easy Lessons

Brig Anderson



Are you bored and tired of the sexist films on TV and don't want to pay to see the latest commercial offerings putting down women in various ways as sex objects? Then put on your own 'Women & Film' course: all you need is imagination, ingenuity, and a group of women who have a sense of fun and want to find out about herstory on the screen. You don't need a college degree for this, but it does help to check local schools, colleges and university film departments as well as the National Film Board, to see whether they would let you have their films free of charge. There is also the local Arts Council, Heritage Fund or membership fees that can help pay for the cost of rentals if there are any. Here is my introductory list, chosen from those most popular, to which you may add any you particularly like:

**GREAT GRAND MOTHERS**, dir. Lorna Rasmussen and Anne Wheeler, colour, 16 mm, 38 min., available from the NFB. Discuss this film in conjunction with the book made from stills left over from the movie, *A Harvest Yet to Reap: A History of Prairie Women*, published by The Women's Press, Toronto, 1976.

**RIDDLES OF THE SPHINX**, dir. Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen, colour, 16 mm. feature length, available from the British Film Institute, 81 Dean St., London W1, England. Script of this film is available in *Screen*, Summer 1977, also from the BFI. Reviewed in *Spare Rib* No. 59, and *Take One*, Vol. 6 No. 6, May 1978.

**SALT OF THE EARTH**, dir. Harold Biberman, 1954, b/w, feature length. Read and discuss Engels's *The Origin of the Family*; alternate film: **UNION MAIDS**, dir. Julia Reichert, b/w, 55 min., 16 mm; available from New Day Films, P.O. Box 315, Franklin Lakes, NJ 07417.

**THIS FILM IS ABOUT RAPE**, dir. Bonnie Kreps for NFB, colour, 58 min., 1978. Has educational package for discussion by groups. Contrast with **CHAINSAW MASSACRE**, reviewed in *Jump Cut*, No. 14, 1977.

**DANCE, GIRL, DANCE**, dir. Dorothy Arzner, b/w, US 1940, 90 min., rental \$25, available from Astral or Kingston Film, s 645 Uxbridge Rd., Hayes End, Middlesex, England. Arzner's most complex film about eight dancing girls struggling to make

a living. Important for the treatment of traditional Hollywood female stereotypes. Reading: *Dorothy Arzner, Towards a Feminist Cinema*, by Claire Johnston, ed., published by the BFI, 1975.

**WANDA**, dir. Barbara Loden, US 1970, colour, 100 min., rental \$50 from Connoisseur Films Ltd., 167 Oxford St., London W1R 2DX. Wanda is divorced, out of a job, drifts from man to man and becomes involved with a bank robber. Compare with **HAPPILY UNMARRIED**, dir. Anne Wheeler, NFB 1977. Reading: "Barbara Loden Revisited," *Women and Film*, Vol. 1 No. 5-6, 1974.

**LE TEMPS DE L'AVANT**, English version **BEFORE THE TIME GOES**, dir. Anne-Claire Poirier, 1976, NFB Montreal. The subject is abortion. Reading: *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, Boston Health Collective, 2nd ed., 1972.

**THE BLUE LIGHT**, dir. Leni Riefenstahl, Germany, 1932, b/w, 55 min. Compare and contrast with her other films, especially **TRIUMPH OF THE WILL** (excerpts) from BFI or local colleges. Reading: *Nazi Cinema*, trans. Gertrud Mander & David Wilson, with "Appendix: Documents on Triumph of the Will and Olympia", 1974.

**FILM ABOUT A WOMAN WHO...**, dir. Yvonne Rainer, 1974, US, 16 mm, b/w, 105 min. from Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and Films, Inc., 420 West Broadway, New York, NY 10012. Avant-garde film about the difficulties of communicating and an attempt to create a new feminist cinema. The best discussion of her work is in *Camera Obscura, a Journal of Feminism and Film Theory*, P.O. Box 4517, Berkeley, Ca 94704.

**WOMEN'S HAPPY TIME COMMUNE**, dir. Sheila Paige, US, 1972, 50 min., colour, from Women Make Movies (USA); and **WOO WHO? MAY WILSON**, dir. Amalie R. Rothschild, US, 1970, 33 min., colour, from Anomaly Films (USA). Both very funny films, the first about two frontier women who run away from a strait-laced community and form a commune; the second is about an artist who begins a new life at 60.

Alternate choice: **OUR DEAR SISTERS**, dir. Kathleen Shannon, NFB Studio D, Montreal, approx. 50 min., colour. Featuring a Native Indian Princess as singer. This is the conclusion of the NFB's Working Mothers' Series, 1975; all films are meant as discussion starters and serve to raise consciousness.