



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1995 Volume II: Film and Literature

Women in Film: What Are They Telling Us?

Guide for Curriculum Unit 95.02.04
by Alan K. Frishman

This curriculum unit is a general overview of the way women have been represented in American films, especially since the 1950s. After a brief discussion of the power of film to shape opinion and make impressions, the unit is divided into the following four week-long sections:

- Women and Themselves, including self-image, identity and stereotypes, “good girl” vs. “bad girl,” and the tension between love, career and maternal desires
- Viewing and discussion of “Imitation of Life” (1959 version)
- Women and Men, including issues of age, male domination, and the viewing and discussion of “Tootsie” (1982)
- Black and White, including “whiteness” as protection, “blackness” as both sexuality and nurturing, the symbolism of the mulatto, concluding with a viewing and discussion of the PBS documentary “A Question of Color” (1992).

At the end of the subsection (equivalent to one day’s lesson), and after each of the three recommended videos, there are a number of questions for discussion, suitable for both oral and written response.

(Recommended for U.S. History grades 11-12; Social Development grades 9-12; Psychology and English, grade 12)

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2019 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University
For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>