Course Objectives:

In this course we will examine theories, issues, questions, and debates arising from the relationship between gender and visual representation. We will approach this topic from several interrelated perspectives: not only will we investigate the ways in which gender is constructed in and constructs visual representations of men and women, we will also consider how it may inform the production and reception of visual texts. Special attention will be given to issues of current interest in media studies, including the new (?) focus on masculinity and the male body, gay representations, the female gaze, notions of identification and spectatorship, and the reciprocal relationship between the construction of gender and the construction of social categories such as race, age, and class. Although our discussion will encompass virtually all visual media--art, photography, advertising, film, television, the web, etc.,--special consideration will be given to contemporary narrative forms, especially those which seek to problematize or challenge dominant traditions of representation. Readings will reflect both theoretical and applied research, and will be chosen in part according to the interests of class members.

Course requirements:

Assigned responses to readings: 1-2 page typed responses in which you focus on a term, concept, assertion, etc. from the readings that either you understand very well and can apply to a visual text, or that confuse you or trouble you for some reason.

Course paper (12-15 pages) on an aspect of gender and visual representation that interests you. I will meet with each of you individually early in the term to discuss paper topics and make suggestions for additional readings.

Presentation of paper with appropriate visuals. Presentations will take place the last week of class.