

Spring 2015 NYU Dept. of Cinema Studies
 CINE-GT 1806
 Class # 8927; 4 units
 Curating, Programming, Exhibiting, and Repurposing/Recontextualizing Moving Image Material
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Curating Moving Images

Meetings: Tuesdays, 12:30-4:30 pm; room 674 (721 Broadway)

Professor: Dan.Streible@nyu.edu

Office hours: W 3-5 pm, or by appointment; room 626

Description: This course embraces a broad conception of curating as the treatment of materials from their discovery, acquisition, archiving, preservation, restoration, and reformatting, through their screening, programming, use, re-use, distribution, exploitation, translation, and interpretation. This course focuses on the practices of film and video exhibition in museums, archives, cinemathèques, festivals, and other venues. It examines the goals of public programming, its constituencies, and the curatorial and archival challenges of presenting film, video, and digital media. We study how archives and sister institutions present their work through exhibitions, events, publications, and media productions. We also examine how these presentations activate uses of moving image collections. Specific curatorial practices of festivals, seminars, symposia, and projects will be examined in detail.

Objectives: After successfully completing the course you should be able to:

- understand professional practices of film and video curators and content programmers;
- demonstrate knowledge of the history of film exhibition and programming;
- discover the location of historical footage, copyrighted works in distribution, and other media;
- define key concepts in audiovisual preservation, restoration, reformatting, and access;
- participate in debates about the appraisal of moving image works;
- discuss how curatorial practices affect the writing of history and the production of media;
- understand the materiality of audiovisual media carriers (film, tape, disk, file);
- assess the curatorial needs of organizations and institutions that work with film and video;
- demonstrate knowledge of institutions that present content to publics, including festivals, museums, cinemathèques, art houses, distributors, and Web content providers.

Required readings:

- David Bordwell, *Pandora's Digital Box: Films, Files, and the Future of Movies* (Irvington Way Institute Press, 2012). PDF download at davidbordwell.net/books/pandora.php.
- Scott MacDonald, *Cinema 16: Documents towards a History of the Film Society* (Temple University Press, 2002). Also in [ebook](#) editions.
- Essays, website readings, online screenings, and other documents. Some are posted on the course's "NYU Classes" site. Others will be distributed via e-mail or paper.
- **Recommended:** Paolo Cherchi Usai, David Francis, Alexander Horwath, and Michael Loebenstein, *Film Curatorship: Archives, Museums, and the Digital Marketplace* (Vienna: Österreichisches Filmmuseum, 2008); distributed by [Columbia U Press](#).

Attend all class meetings. Missing 2 classes will lower your final course grade by a half letter. Missing 3 will lower your final course grade by a full letter (B+ becomes C+, and so on).

Course grades will be determined by performance in four areas. Each receives a numerical score. The final letter grade for the course is determined by numerical total. 92 or higher (A); 90-91 (A-); 88-89 (B+); 82-87 (B); 80-81 (B-); 70-79 (C); 66-69 (D); less than 66 points (F).

Participation:	20 points
Midterm:	25 points
Proposal:	15 points
<u>Final project:</u>	<u>40 points</u>
TOTAL:	100 points maximum

Participation (20%) Contribute actively to discussions. Be prepared to respond to questions about readings, screenings, and research. (If students demonstrate lack of familiarity with readings, the instructor reserves the right to require written summaries of some readings.)

Contribute to the course blog: <http://curatingmovingimages.blogspot.com>. Read the blog postings as they appear. Post at least two thoughtful entries. An appropriate length is about 250 words, but you may write more. Images, links, and video embeds welcomed. Any topic relevant to curating moving images is fair game. Your post might address something topical you read about on your own. Or it might responded to a reading, screening, lecture, class discussion, or a preceding post. You may also post shorter, newsier items (in addition to the two required). Lively is good. Failure to post at least two substantive entries will result in the lowering of your course grade by a full letter grade.

Note: Because too many people use laptops, tablets, and phones during class for things not related to class, during our first class meeting we will discuss this practice. How should we conduct ourselves during class time? Should there be a ban on texting, web surfing, and the like during class time?

For all writing in this course, use the guide provided (15s_Curating_Format_Style_Guide.doc).

MIAP Digital Archive: All course work must be submitted with accompanying electronic copies. These will be made part of the web-accessible archive. Name files thusly: 15s_1806_Surname_a1.suffix. (Suffixes = pdf, doc, xls, mov, etc.)

Advisory on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: Any student guilty of plagiarism or cheating will be assigned a course grade of F. Read the accompanying Advisory on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity, and act accordingly.

a1. Midterm report (25%)

Write a report (ca. 2,000 words) assessing a curated exhibition or screening you attend. Submit via e-mail no later than 12:00 noon on Friday, March 6. Then, submit a final printed copy at the beginning of class, Tuesday, March 10. Within a week after receiving feedback from the instructor, post a final version of your report to the class blog. For the blog version, include at least two illustrations, one of which must be a photograph you took on site. Also include at least one useful link (URL).

a2. Proposal (15%): Write a description (ca. 500 words) of the project you will submit at semester's end. Include: (1) a working title for the project; (2) an argument for the significance

of the project; and (3) a bibliography of at least five substantive resources you have consulted. Submit a paper copy in class on March 24; also e-mail a copy to dan.streible@nyu.edu.

a3. Final project (40%): Due May 13. You have several options. You may work solo, or with one or two classmates. Or you may collaborate with a third party on an existing curatorial project. You will deliver a short in-class presentation on May 5 (or earlier in some cases). PechaKucha style recommended.

The nature of the projects will vary widely. In terms of scope and depth, use the first example below (a prospectus for a curated series) as a guide. However, you don't necessarily need to do something this conventional (program a film series). An online exhibition of ten annotated video works. A research paper assessing a curatorial issue. A symposium proposal. A plan to premiere a restored film. A stand-alone video production using archival or "found" material. A database. Or a creative idea of your own. These are all acceptable final projects. All should demonstrate original research and a polished presentation of it.

Research into under-used archive collections is encouraged. Curators at, for example, NYU Fales Library, can be a great help in guiding you to newly accessible material waiting for a good scholar-curator to interpret it. (See separate document from Fales.)

◆ Prospectus for a curated series: Produce a substantive, in-depth research project. Create a document (illustrated to some degree) to persuade a potential funder to support your proposed project. As a general guideline, program five sessions of approximately two hours each. Identify, research, and put in context the works to be screened, the venue for presentation, and supporting material. Identify appropriate speakers. Describe the supporting elements of the presentations (performance, music, text, slides, lighting, audio, etc.), and the audience being addressed. Append a budget and a filmography. Assess which versions of films and videos are available and justify the one you choose. Give your series a title. Give each session a title. Include well-researched, salient notes for each screening. Your vision can be as fantastical or ambitious as you choose, but all of the details must be concrete.

◆ Conduct a research project using the William K. Everson Collection of papers, ephemera, and films housed at NYU Cinema Studies. Many of Everson's program notes (1940s through 1990s) are digitized and online, as are press kits, photographs, and more. You may access 16mm prints and video copies. www.nyu.edu/projects/wke/bio.htm. (Scott MacDonald's book on the Vogels' Cinema 16 might spark some ideas.)

◆ Collaborate on the NYU-based Amateur Film Project [working title], developing content (text, video, images) for a curated online selection of amateur films. Work with Dan Streible and others who originated the idea, including Kimberly Tarr (NYU Libraries), Jonah Volk (NYPL), Walter Forsberg (Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture), and Kathleen Maguire (The Exploratorium). [FYI. The online movie service Fandor, has offered to host a curated group of such films. <https://www.fandor.com/company/about>]

◆ A research project connected to the NYU Audiovisual Preservation Exchange initiatives, presumably one in Buenos Aires in June 2015. (The two-week venture will culminate in a day-long colloquium with all of the participants. Of what will it consist?)

- ◆ A program of film/video/audio housed at MLB Productions. Work with Nick Trotta, manager of library licensing, to access historic recordings from throughout the lifespan of Major League Baseball. He welcomes such.
- ◆ Work with Stephanie Sapienza (Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities, University of Maryland) on a database and online portal project that aggregates and enhances filmographic information from past Orphan Film Symposiums. She has created an initial spreadsheet with metadata categories. A portal outcome she compares it to is her site www.alternativeprojections.com, devoted to Experimental Film in Los Angeles, 1945-1980.
- ◆ A project or production on the theme of sound and orphan films, in preparation for the 2016 Orphan Film Symposium at the Library of Congress National Audio Visual Conservation Center. Designed in consultation with an LOC curator and the instructor.
- ◆ A curatorial project or media production for online display, using unedited video and/or audio recordings from past editions of the Orphan Film Symposium. These include Indiana University Cinema's video from the "Orphans Midwest" film symposium (Materiality and Moving Image, 2013), audio recordings from the 2014 symposium in Amsterdam, raw footage shot at Museum of the Moving Image's 2012 symposium ([downloadable](#)), and much more.

COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to revision as we progress)

Jan 27 [Snow day.] Read the syllabus and the Advisory on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity.

Feb 3 Introduction to the course; What is curating? what do curators do?; + orphan films

- Paolo Cherchi Usai, "A Charter of Curatorial Values," *NFSA Journal* 1.1 (2006): 1-10.
- Laura U. Marks, "The Ethical Presenter: Or How to Have Good Arguments over Dinner," *The Moving Image* 4.1 (2004): 34-47.
- Dan Streible, "Saving, Studying, and Screening: A History of the Orphan Film Symposium," *Film Festival Yearbook 5: Archival Film Festivals* (St. Andrews Film Studies, 2013).
- "Orphan Films," *Oxford Bibliographies Online: Cinema and Media Studies*, ed. Krin Gabbard. (Oxford University Press, 2013), www.oxfordbibliographies.com.
- [Booklet](#) for the DVD set *Orphans in Space: Forgotten Films from the Final Frontier* (2012).

Feb 10 Publicity and Programming: **Livia Bloom** (Icarus Films / indie curator) @Livia_Bloom

- Livia Bloom, "Traveling without Moving at 'Wavelengths,'" *Filmmaker* (Sep. 19, 2010), FilmmakerMagazine.com/news/2010/09/toronto.
- "Considering Horror: Panel Discussion," *Moving Image Source*, June 17, 2007 (audio and transcript), MovingImageSource.us/dialogues/view/280, 21 pages.
- Daniela Bajar, "The Impure Goddess: A Conversation with Isabel 'Coca' Sarli," *Film Comment* (July-Aug. 2010), www.FilmLinc.com/fcm/ja10/isabelsarli.htm.
- Jeffrey Sconce, "'Trashing' the Academy: Taste, Excess, and an Emerging Politics of Cinematic Style," *Screen* 36.4 (1995): 371-93.
- Familiarize yourself with <http://icarusfilms.com>.
- Bloom, Sample press releases and publicity material (see NYU Classes site).

Feb 17 Documentary and the Robert Flaherty Film Seminar

- Flaherty Seminar readings (see folder), including screening notes from *Sonic Truth* (2011).
- excerpts from “The Flaherty: Four Decades in the Cause of Independent Film,” ed. Erik Barnouw and Patricia R. Zimmermann, *Wide Angle* 17.1-4 (1996), flahertyseminar.org/60thanniversary/wide-angle, including Laura U. Marks, “The Audience Is Revolting: Coalition and Transformation at the Flaherty Seminar,” 277-91.
- Scott MacDonald, *Cinema 16*, Introduction, 1-36;
- Amos Vogel, “Film Do’s and Don’ts” (1949), 130-33; “Cinema 16 and the Question of Programming” (1955), 259-61.

Feb 24 Film Festivals: **Toby Lee**

- Toby Lee, “Festival, City, State: Cultural Citizenship at the Thessaloniki International Film Festival,” in *Coming Soon to a Festival Near You: Programming Film Festivals*, ed. Jeffrey Ruoff (St. Andrews Film Studies, 2012), 1-15.
- Thomas Elsaesser, “Film Festival Networks: The New Topographies of Cinema in Europe,” in *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood*. (Amsterdam U Press), 82-107.
- Ragan Rhyne, “Film Festival Circuits and Stakeholders,” in *Film Festival Yearbook 1: The Festival Circuit*, ed. Ragan Rhyne and Dina Iordanova (St. Andrews Film Studies, 2009), 9-22.
- Vanessa R. Schwartz, “The Cannes Film Festival and the Marketing of Cosmopolitanism,” in *It’s So French! Hollywood, Paris, and the Making of Cosmopolitan Film Culture* (Chicago U Press, 2007), 57-99.
- Mark Cousins, “Film Festival Form: A Manifesto,” Film Festival Academy website, Sept. 2012: <http://www.filmfestivalacademy.net/publications/film-festival-form-a-manifesto>.

RECOMMENDED:

- Liz Czach, “Film Festivals, Programming, and the Building of a National Cinema,” *The Moving Image* 4.1 (2004): 76-88.
- Bill Nichols, “Discovering Form, Inferring Meaning: New Cinemas and the Film Festival Circuit,” *Film Quarterly* 47.3 (1994): 16-30.

Mar 3 European archives and festivals: **Tami Williams** (UW Milwaukee)

- Tami Williams, *Germaine Dulac: A Cinema of Sensations* (U of Illinois Press, 2014), excerpts.
- items from the Fonds Germaine Dulac (La Cinémathèque Française), Cinema Ritrovato, et al.

Mar 10 Cinema 16, and its Descendants in the Age of DCP

- Scott MacDonald, *Cinema 16*, interviews with Amos Vogel, Marcia Vogel, and The Documents, 77-112; and Nat Hentoff, “Last Call for Cinema 16,” 413-15.
- David Bordwell, *Pandora’s Digital Box*, 5-45, 131-73.

Mar 24 Distribution: **Dennis Doros & Amy Heller** (Milestone Films)

- About Milestonefilms.com/pages/about-us.
- Amy Heller, “Restoring a Portrait, with Some Help from Our Friends...,” Oct. 13, 2012, Milestonefilms.com/blogs/news/6711064-restoring-a-portrait-with-some-help-from-our-friends.
- Dennis Doros, “My Time with James Card,” James Card Memorial Lecture, Nov. 18, 2012, Milestonefilms.com/blogs/news/6912078-my-time-with-james-card
- Masterpieces of Polish Cinema [press kit](#) (2014);
- Project Shirley and *Portrait of Jason* [press kit](#) (2013);
- finish reading Bordwell, *Pandora’s Digital Box*, chapters 2-5, 8, and conclusion.

Mar 31 Cinephilia + found footage

- Jaimie Baron, *The Archive Effect: Found Footage and the Audiovisual Experience of History* (Routledge, 2014), excerpt.
- Ed Halter, "Recycle It: A Look at Found-footage Cinema, from the Silent Era to Web 2.0," *Moving Image Source*, July 10, 2008, www.movingimagesource.us/articles/recycle-it-20080710.
- Roland Barthes, "Upon Leaving the Movie Theater," (1975) 4 pp.
- Manohla Dargis, "Floating in the Digital Experience," *New York Times*, Jan. 3, 2010.
- Jonathan Rosenbaum, "Goodbye Cinema, Hello Cinephilia," *Trafic* 50 (Summer 2004), reprinted in *Goodbye Cinema, Hello Cinephilia* (U of Chicago Press, 2010).
- Susan Sontag, "The Decay of Cinema," *New York Times*, Feb. 25, 1996.
- Richard Brody, "[Don't Worry About the End of Film](#)," *New Yorker*, Jan. 21, 2014, and "[The Limits of American Cinephilia](#)," Jan. 20 2015.

Apr 7 Dwight Swanson (Center for Home Movies)

- Peruse centerforhomemovies.org.
- Patricia R. Zimmermann, "The Home Movie Movement," in *Mining the Home Movie*, ed. Karen Ishizuka and Zimmermann (U of California Press, 2008), 1-28.
- "The 'Ten Best' Winners, 1930-1994, from the Amateur Cinema League and American International Film & Video Festival," comp. Alan D. Kattelle, *Film History* 15.2, Small-gauge and Amateur Film (2003): 244-51.
- excerpt from *Amateur Filmmaking: The Home Movie, the Archive, the Web*, ed. Laura Rascaroli, Gwenda Young, and Barry Monahan (Bloomsbury Academic, 2014).
- excerpt from Charles Tepperman, *Amateur Cinema: The Rise of North American Moviemaking, 1923-1960* (U of California Press, 2014).

Recommended:

- Dwight Swanson, "Inventing Amateur Film: Marion Norris Gleason, Eastman Kodak and the Rochester Scene, 1921-1932," *Film History* 15.2 (2003)
- Alan Kattelle, *Home Movies: A History of the American Industry, 1897-1979* (Transition Pub., 2000), chs. 14-15

SCREEN: *Amateur Night* (Dwight Swanson, 2011); *Living Room Cinema I* (DVD, 2007); [Home Grown Movies](#) (2014).

Apr 14 FIAF April 11-18

Found footage continued; culture jamming (readings by Guy Debord, Craig Baldwin, et al.)
Access, Presentation, and Projection

- Loan policy documents from LOC, UCLA, and the Academy
 - projection manual excerpts, et al.
 - Linda Williams, "'White Slavery' versus the Ethnography of 'Sexworkers': Women in Stag Films at the Kinsey Archive," *The Moving Image* 5.2 (2006): 106-35.
- + What should the [Kinsey Institute](#) do with its films? A debate.

Apr 21 Negotiating Transnational Obstacles: La Frances Hui (Asia Society, New York)

- Houchang Chehabi, "Iranian History, 1945-79," in *Iran Modern*, ed. Fereshteh Daftari and Layla S. Diba (Asia Society Museum and Yale U Press, 2013), 13-15.
- Hamid Dabashi, *Close Up: Iranian Cinema, Past, Present and Future* (Verso, 2001), 12-32.
- SCREEN: *Downpour* (Bahram Bayzai, 1972)

- BEFORE CLASS WATCH: [Inside Asia Society's 'Iran Modern Exhibition'](#) (2013) 3 min.
- * [Sound the Trumpets, Beat the Drums](#) (Anthony Williams, BBC TV, 1969) 23 min.

Apr 28 Curating Films at the Museum of Modern Art: **Josh Siegel & Katie Trainor** (MoMA)

- excerpt from Haidee Wasson, *Museum Movies: The Museum of Modern Art and the Birth of Art Cinema* (U of California Press, 2005).
- MoMA ephemera

May 5 last class day; presentations

Midterm report (25% of course grade)

Write a report (ca. 2,000 words) assessing a curated screening or exhibition you attend.

Describe, analyze, interpret, and evaluate a curated exhibition that includes moving images. Whether the event consists of a single film screening or multiple pieces in a multimedia show, you are not writing an analysis of the work; you are assessing the context in which the work is presented and received.

Describe what you saw. When and where was the exhibition? What was it called? Was it part of series or a larger frame of reference? Of what did the screening/s consist? Include not only description of the content (images and sounds) but also of the specific media used (projected film? videotape or files played on monitors? DVDs navigated by computer users?). If it is not apparent what media are being used, ask.

Analyze the exhibition or presentation. Break down the whole into parts and discuss connections among them.

What institution, group, or person put the presentation together? Tell us about the curator, programmer, and/or the institution. In some instances, you may consider the artists or filmmakers as curators, especially if they use archival or 'found' material and recombine it for a new purpose. What is characteristic of their previous work? What is their reputation and historical mission? For some of the questions you seek to answer, some basic research will be in order (contemporary periodicals, reference works, an organization's web site, a short interview, promotional and press material, and such). In all cases, locate, read, and cite reviews or commentary about the exhibition.

Who was the audience? Report on the kinds of people you observed and any discernible responses they had. Is there other evidence of the extended audience, or of the intended audience?

What other elements shaped the viewing experience? (e.g., music, spoken introduction, text panels, notes, ambience, narration, current events, the type of screen, adjacent exhibitions, companion website?)

Interpret the exhibition. Why was the material presented in the way that it was? what was the curator's "argument"? If no argument is apparent, are there meanings that can be made by viewers?

Evaluate the presentation, briefly. Did the curator succeed? Were there particular strength or weaknesses in the exhibition?

◆ Fales Library & Special Collections

Archivist Brent Phillips compiled this list of collections with sizeable media holdings for which NYU Fales Library has access copies (or can make them). Much of the media in Fales consists of performance documentation, unfinished works or works-in-progress, source material and production elements, and documentation of conceptual works which no longer have a physical manifestation. The challenge of working with this material within a curatorial and exhibition framework is to properly contextualize the material.

Jaime Davidovich Collection. Co-founder of Cable SoHo, which used early cable technology to broadcast contemporary arts programming to a general audience. Collection processing and reformatting underway.

David Wojnarowicz Papers. Incredible collection of source material, all on Super-8mm. Collection contains many experimental short works in process, *Heroin*, *Death of Peter Hujar*, *Fire in My Belly*, etc. Collection finding aid available:
<http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingaids/html/fales/woj.html>

Frank Moore Papers. With recent funding from the NFPF we preserved the collaborative 16mm short, *Beehive*. See attached excerpt from NFPF grant.

Gay Cable Network Collection contains more than 5,000 hours of programming and more than 2,000 hours of rushes and never-aired original videotape material (ca. 1980-2000).

Mabou Mines Archive contains extensive video documentation of works by Mabou Mines, NY-based experimental theater troupe, www.maboumines.org. Finding aid available.

MIX Collection. Archive of materials relating to the NYC-based Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film and Video Festival. Access to media determined on a case-by-case basis as we do not have access copies yet. Finding aid drafted.

Sarah G. Jacobson Collection consists of the late punk feminist filmmaker's completed works, published articles, transcripts and taped interviews with contemporary underground filmmakers. Jacobson (1971-2004) directed *I Was a Teenage Serial Killer* (1993), *Mary Jane's Not a Virgin Anymore* (1997), and *Making of 'Ladies and Gentlemen, the Fabulous Stains* (2004).

Riot Girrrl Collection, Andrea Callard Papers, and the Downtown Collection

“Other collection materials may be available depending upon areas of interest, project specifics, and collection processing status. I'm available to work with students individually on specific projects.” --Brent.Phillips@nyu.edu
 NYU Fales Library and Special Collections, Bobst Library, (212) 998-2521