

Experimental Workshop II

School of Film and Media Studies

Purchase College, State University of New York

FLM 3620 CRN 60652

Spring 2020, Mondays, 6:30 PM - 9:30 PM

Music Building, MUS0017 (Mix Studio)

Instructor: Prof. Joel Neville Anderson

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Office: Music Building, MUS0053

Office Hours: Wednesdays 10 AM - 12 PM, Thursdays 11 AM - 12 PM, and by appointment

Students are expected to register for both Fall (FLM 3610) and Spring (FLM 3620).

Course Description:

This two-semester hybrid production/history course invites students to expand their creative horizons and sharpen their conceptual approach with a hands-on introduction to moving-image art and truly independent filmmaking. Students will have a unique opportunity to experience, discuss, and make a number of their own experimental media productions. Lectures and screenings will be complemented by group critique, visits with contemporary working artists, and multiple trips to the city for screenings. Experimental Workshop will explore the outer fringes of non-commercial cinema and moving-image art through an engagement with canonical works, key filmmakers, landmark movements, contemporary artists, amateur dabblers, stylistic genres and general aesthetic concerns. We will screen a broad selection of narrative and non-narrative, diaristic, abstract, structural, lyrical, and unclassifiable works by artists from all milieus and eras. While screenings are an important part of the course, we will not focus on traditional film analysis. We watch historic and contemporary works to better inform our own practice moving forward. The goal is not to recreate or imitate, but rather to understand what has preceded us in order to push to new creative realms. As the class title implies, experimenting (and sometimes failing) will be at the core of our practice. We will work with the knowledge that an experiment must have a control; it is not random, but done with great care and intention.

Course Goals/Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the year-long course, students will:

1. Develop a formally unique and conceptually rigorous practice in moving image art that can be sustained into the future.
2. Demonstrate understanding of key issues in history and theory of experimental film/video.
3. Understand key elements of contemporary avant-garde film culture and tools for navigating the current landscape as a filmmaker, curator, or critic.

Reading and Viewing Assignments:

Readings will be posted on Moodle as PDFs. Films/videos assigned for viewing outside class will be available on reserve at the library or via online streaming, as specified by the instructor.

(Whatever devices you choose to use to watch films/videos outside of class, I encourage you to do so in an environment free of distractions so you may concentrate on the creators' work.) Texts, film/video pieces, and exhibitions offered on a weekly basis as "Recommended" sources are optional and meant for students with a particular interest in the topic, possibly for later reference as part of their future research and creative work.

Off-campus Screenings:

This class is actively engaged with contemporary experimental moving image production and as such students will be expected to attend cinematic events, screenings, and exhibitions around New York City. Often these events will correlate directly with our classwork, in-class conversations and screenings, and the work of visiting artists. Seeing contemporary work in context greatly enriches this course and attendance is mandatory. Plan and budget accordingly.

Weekly Journals:

Each week, students are required to respond to the assigned viewing and reading material while reflecting on your own creative process, analyzing the form and content of given cinematic works. Your journal entries should be informal, offering thoughtful observations and questions. Each written response should address at least one film/video and at least one text assigned for that week. Post to Moodle under the appropriate weekly listing. Posts should be a minimum of 400 words in length. Students can miss one response out of the ten total due and still receive full credit. *Due by 9 AM on the day of class, beginning the second week, and due every following week until several weeks before the end of the semester to give students time to work on their Final Essay.*

Film/Video Projects:

This two semester course culminates in students' production of their Spring Thesis Project. In developing our practice and preparing for that goal, students will create a number of short-term projects or exercises based on a set of controls offered by the instructor. The syllabus notes when these projects will be introduced/assigned, as well as when they are due to be screened in class. Please ask the instructor any questions regarding the process of completing your project on the day they are assigned, during office hours and scheduled meetings, or via email. On the due date, please come prepared with your project on an external hard drive with appropriate cables, a laptop with appropriate cables and/or dongles, an online streaming link with appropriate passwords, or if screening on film, confirm the availability of the necessary projector in the mixing room where class will be held. If you foresee any time delay due to file transfer or another technical process, please let the instructor know before class begins so that any necessary adjustments in screening order can be made.

Creative projects will be graded according to the following criteria:

- **Concept:** Evidence of the thoughtful conceptualization of an idea and your realization of that idea in the work. The multi-layered, nuanced, and surprising moments in your work will be evidence of your thoughtful approach, as well as production materials such as sketches and notes, which can be shown additionally, however, it is the work itself that matters the most.

- **Risk:** Evidence that you attempted to synthesize some of the new ideas discussed in class and incorporate them into your work in a way that pushes the limits of what you already know. In order to grow as artists we must feel discomfort at times. It is important to see in your work, evidence that you are attempting to reach beyond what you feel like you already master, both technically and conceptually.
- **Rigor:** The project should be put together with intention and care. Going through the motions or throwing things together is not sufficient. With each assignment it is your task to discover the thing you want to say and say it completely and coherently, even if you do not understand what you mean at the time. This thought must be fully executed for us to try to read your work.

Grading:

Attendance/Participation: 25% of final grade

Weekly Journals/Presentations: 15%

Film/Video projects: 60%

Policies and Guidelines:

- **Attendance:** Your attendance at each class is mandatory. A single absence will be excused without question, however repeated absences will result in a lowered letter grade: 2 will result in a B as a maximum possible grade, 3 in a C, and 4 absences will result in automatic failure of the course. Arriving to class after the start time on two occasions will be recorded as one absence. Arriving more than 20 minutes after the start time will be considered an absence. Excusing absences will require documentation (such as a doctor's note following a medical visit). If you do miss class, please check with me or your peers to catch up on assignments and handouts—this will be your responsibility.
- **Preparation and Participation:** Approximately two to three hours of screening material, in addition to one to two articles or book chapters will be assigned each week. Students are expected to review the material in detail, and come prepared to participate in discussion. Your thoughts are valuable to me and your fellow students. Students are responsible for all assignments, even if they are absent, unless otherwise discussed.
- **Respecting Yourself and Others:** You are expected to treat others in the class with respect. This means listening to their words and choosing your own with care.
- **Classroom Technology:** Laptops, tablets, and mobile phones are not to be used once class has begun. Laptops or tablets may be used during class presentations. Please bring a notebook and pen or pencil to class.
- **Breaks:** There will be a short break during class, usually between the lecture/discussion and screening portions. Returning after the class resumes will count as a late arrival. Please only leave the class outside of this set break time in case of emergencies. It is not necessary to ask for the instructor's permission, but please return within five minutes, and do not leave more than once. Inform the instructor at the start of the semester if you require an accommodation.
- **Food and Drinks:** Food and drink are allowed when class is held in the Music Building (MUS0017), though please be discrete and be sure to dispose of any trash. Please note there will not be time to run and purchase a snack outside the classroom building during break. However when class is held in the Center for Media, Film, and Theatre screening room

(CMFT0065), there are strict rules regarding food and drink due to the sensitivity of technology. Please only bring water into the CMFT screening room. You may eat a snack during the break. Please note there will not be time to run and purchase a snack outside the classroom building during breaks.

- **Email Correspondence:** Please check your university email regularly for announcements and updates to the syllabus and assignments.
- **Moodle:** Moodle will be an important resource for this class, and students should check it regularly for announcements.
- **Instructor Delay:** In rare instances, the instructor may be delayed arriving to class due to an emergency. If the instructor has not arrived by the time class is scheduled to start, students must wait a minimum of thirty minutes for the instructor's arrival before leaving. In the event that the instructor will miss class entirely, a sign will be posted at the classroom.

Academic Integrity Policy:

The Purchase College academic integrity policy explicitly forbids cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another person and the representation of them as one's own original work. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the definition of plagiarism and the acceptable methods of attribution. These are serious matters and you need to be aware of what is and is not permissible. See <https://www.purchase.edu/offices/community-standards/student-code-of-conduct/section-a-academic-integrity/index.php> and related links for more information.

Tutoring Support:

All students at Purchase College can take advantage of tutoring services in the Learning Center (LIB0009) and the Einstein Corner (NSB3044). These are free, 45-minute, peer-to-peer tutoring sessions in a variety of subjects and in writing across the disciplines. I encourage you to take advantage of this service to help you excel in this class, as well as your other courses. Please visit the Learning Center (<https://www.purchase.edu/offices/learning-center/>) and Einstein Corner (<https://www.purchase.edu/academics/school-of-natural-social-sciences/academic-support/index.php>) websites for more information.

Accessibility:

The Office of Disability Resources collaborates directly with students who identify with disabilities to create accommodation plans, including testing accommodations, in order for students to access course content and validly demonstrate learning. For students who may require accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Resources as soon as possible: (914) 251-6035, ODR@purchase.edu (Student Services Building, 316A), www.purchase.edu/odr.

Religious Accommodations:

If you require academic accommodations for a religious observance, please speak with me as soon as possible to consider a reasonable modification.

Course Schedule:

(Note: all readings/screenings should be completed *before* the class for which they are assigned)

Week 1 (January 27): Semester Overview: Modes and Sites of the Avant-garde

* **Review: Thesis Project Timeline**

* **Introduction of Project #1: Fine Cut / Redux**

* **Schedule individual meetings for Thesis Project and Project #1 to be held before next class.**

In-class screening: Miko Revereza

Week 2 (February 3): Beyond Story

* **Individual meetings for Thesis Project and Project #1 throughout day before class (scheduled prior week).**

Have read: Jordon Cronk, "Interview: Miko Revereza," *Film Comment*, April 18, 2019.

Alexandra Juhasz and Alisa Lebow, "Beyond Story: an Online, Community-Based Manifesto," *World Records 2* (2018). Scott MacDonald, *Avant-Doc: Intersections of Documentary and Avant-Garde Cinema* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), excerpt.

Have watched: *Fainting Spells* (Sky Hopinka, 2018)

In-class screening: Sensory Ethnography Lab

* **First Weekly Journal entry (on Moodle) due today and each following week unless noted.**

Week 3 (February 10): Structuring Vision

* **Film Festival Submissions Workshop**

Have read: Adrian Martin, "The Beauty and a Beast," *Transit*, April 11, 2013. Christopher Pavsek, "Leviathan and the Experience of Sensory Ethnography," *Visual Anthropology Review* 31, no. 1 (2015): 4-11.

Have watched: *Oxhide II* ("Niu Pi II," Jiayin Liu, 2009)

In-class screening: Kaori Oda

Recommended reading: Kiki Tianqi Yu, "Toward a Communicative Practice: Female First-Person Documentary in Twenty-first Century China," in *China's iGeneration: Cinema and Moving Image Culture for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Matthew D. Johnson, Keith B. Wagner, Kiki Tianqi Yu, and Luke Vulpiani (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 23-43.

Week 4 (February 17): (Community) Video Art

* **Thesis Project Workshop: Prepare updated Proposal, Timeline, and Budget with custom Outline (tailored to formal needs of your project as script, shot list, storyboard, diagram, etc. approved by instructor) as well as Conceptual Bibliography.**

Have read: Rosalind Krauss, "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism," *October* 1 (1976): 50-64.

Anne M. Wagner, "Performance, Video, and the Rhetoric of Presence," *October* 91 (Winter 2000): 59-80. Joel Neville Anderson, "(Community) Video Art: DCTV's Expanded Documentary Practice," *Millennium Film Journal* 65 (Spring 2017): 38-45.

Have watched: *Centers* (Vito Acconci, 1971)

In-class screening: Nam June Paik, DCTV shorts

Week 5 (February 24): Assemblies and Assembly

* **Watch and critique: Project #1: Fine Cut / Redux**

* **Introduction of Project #2: Curatorial Lab**

* **Introduction of Project #3: Non-Theatrical Project**

Have read: Interview with Ian White by Siri Peyer and Wolf Schmelter, “Issue 3: Curating Film,” *OnCurating.org* (2009).

Week 6 (March 2): NO CLASS—FIELD TRIP SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 3

FIELD TRIP: Tuesday, March 3

* **Field trip to MoMA visiting the “Private Lives Public Spaces” installation (Film Center, T1/T2 levels) and “Each a Poem, Whether Told or Not” screening (Tuesday, March 3, 4:00 PM, Theater 1) with works by Thulani Davis, Ayoka Chenzira, Pearl Sharp, Ngozi Onwurah, and María Magdalena Campos-Pons. Alternate date for those not able to attend March 3: Thursday, February 27, 6:30 PM (Theater 2). (This alternate date will include a discussion between Davis and Campos-Pons.)**

Have read: Jacqueline Bobo, *Black Women Film & Video Artists* (New York: Routledge, 1998), excerpts; Gwendolyn Audrey Foster, *Women Filmmakers of the African & Asian Diaspora: Decolonizing the Gaze, Locating Subjectivity* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1997), excerpts.

Week 7 (March 9): Multimedia Art & Activism

Have read: Joel Neville Anderson, “Pointing Through the Screen: Archiving, Surveillance, and Atomization in the Wake of Japan’s 2011 Triple Disasters,” in *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Cinema*, ed. Joanne Bernardi and Shota T. Ogawa (New York: Routledge, 2020).

Have watched: *The Sketch of Mujo* (Koichi Omiya, 2011)

In-class screening: The Otolith Group, Kota Takeuchi

Week 8 (March 16): Maker-Programmer-Critic Approaches

* **Presentation: Project #2: Curatorial Lab**

In-class screening: Harun Farocki

Week 9 (March 23): Installation and Site-Specific Practice

* **Watch and critique: Project #3: Non-Theatrical Project**

Week 10 (March 30): Rough Cuts

* **Watch and critique: Thesis Project Rough Cuts**

Week 11 (April 6): NO CLASS—SPRING RECESS

Week 12 (April 13): Fine Cuts / Film Manifestos & Media Organizing

* **Watch and critique: Thesis Project Fine Cuts**

Have read: Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, “Towards a Third Cinema: Notes and Experiences for the Development of a Cinema of Liberation in the Third World,” in *Film Manifestos and Global Cinema Cultures: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Scott MacKenzie (Oakland: University of California Press, 2014): 230-249. Zarul Albakri, Teddie Co, Nick Deocampo, Kidlat Tahimik, Noriaki Tsuchimoto, Hsiung-ping “Peggy” Chiao, Manop Udomdej, Su-Chang Kong, Stephen Teo and Shinsuke Ogawa, “The Asian Filmmakers at Yamagata YIDFF Manifesto,” in *Film Manifestos and Global Cinema Cultures*: 469-470. Chi-hui Yang, “DOCUMENTARY POWER: A New Manifesto,” 2018 “Getting Real” conference keynote.

Have watched: Cauleen Smith, Pacific Northwest College of Art 2016 artist talk

In-class screening: Cauleen Smith

Recommended viewing: *The Hour of the Furnaces* (Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas, 1968)

(Note: The SUNY-Wide Film Festival will be held on the SUNY Purchase campus April 17-19.)

Week 13 (April 20): Guest TBA

Have read: TBA

Week 14 (April 27): Experimental Workshop Screening and Installation Reception

*** Details to be determined collectively; currently planned to be sited in the Center for Media, Film and Theatre lower lobby (CMFT 0002) and theater (0065).**

*** Last Weekly Journal entry due today.**

Week 15 (May 4): Final Cuts

*** Watch and critique: Thesis Project Final Projects**

Week 16 (May 11): Final Screening and Discussion

In-class screening: TBA