

Experimental Workshop II

School of Film and Media Studies

Purchase College, State University of New York

FLM 3620, CRN 60652

Spring 2022, Tuesdays, 9 AM - 12 PM

Center for Media, Film, and Theatre, CMFT0039

Group A (9 AM - 10:25 AM), Group B (10:35 AM - 12 PM)

Instructor: Prof. Joel Neville Anderson

Email: joel.anderson@purchase.edu

Office: Music Building, MUS0053

Office Hours: schedule a time here: <https://calendly.com/joelnanderson/>

Please Note: Students are expected to register for both the Fall (FLM 3610) and Spring (FLM 3620) semesters of this course. Students cannot take this class for only one semester.

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 via online streaming (using the library website or other platforms freely accessible to students), 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 outside of class time, whether conducted virtually or in-person. 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 participation is mandatory. Plan and budget accordingly.

Discussion Platform:

Students will be periodically 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 posts to Moodle should be informal, offering thoughtful observations and questions (300 words minimum) based on a prompt question by the day of class. The following day, students are required to post a response to a classmate's post with further analysis (100 words minimum). Each written response should directly address at least one viewing or reading for the week, and must be constructive and respectful. Students will also be required to post at least one recommendation of a moving image artist they are inspired by that is not on the syllabus (linking to a reading or viewing resource that introduces their work to the class) over the course of the semester. (Students are encouraged to comment on these additional contributions with constructive responses, but are not required). *The first post to Moodle is due by 9 AM on the day of class, and the second post is due by 9 AM two days after class.*

Film/Video Projects:

This two semester course culminates in students' production of their Experimental Workshop 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 available as a private online streaming (Vimeo, YouTube, etc.) or download link (WeTransfer, Dropbox, etc.) with appropriate passwords, or optionally for in-person screenings available on an external hard drive. (In the case of a download link, please provide to the instructor several hours in advance in

order to allow for download time.) 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:

Participation: 25% of final grade

Discussion Platform Contributions & In-Class Presentations: 25%

Film/Video projects: 50%

Policies and Guidelines:

- **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. Students violating this policy will be dismissed from class.
- **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 for students to watch and read outside class. 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.
- **Attendance:** Your attendance at each class is mandatory. Be sure to sign the attendance sheet. 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 consultation with the instructor and may require documentation, such as a doctor's note following a medical visit. If you do miss class, please also check with the instructor or your peers to catch up on assignments and handouts—this will be your responsibility.

- Breaks: There will generally be a short break during class. 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.
- 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, students will be contacted in advance via email or a sign will be posted at the classroom.
- Food and Drinks: The Center for Media, Film, and Theatre and Music Building facilities have strict rules regarding food and drink due to the sensitivity of technology. You may eat a snack outside the building during the break, though please note there will not be time to run and purchase a snack outside the classroom building during break. Please prepare accordingly. Students violating this policy will be dismissed from class.
- Classroom Technology: Please bring a notebook and pen or pencil to class. Laptops, tablets, and mobile phones are not to be used once class has begun. Laptops or tablets may be used during class presentations.
- Notes on Zoom Usage in Case of Virtual Sessions:
 - Remain engaged during lectures and discussions conducted via the Zoom video chat platform, and keep your webcam on as much as your situation permits.
 - When attending class via Zoom, please do your best to contribute to a positive and accepting learning environment. As much as possible, create a dedicated space for class time, with ample light. Find a comfortable position and physical posture, feel free to use a virtual background, and use your own best judgment regarding attire, etc.
 - Be prepared to take notes, whether using a desktop app or a notebook and pen/pencil.
 - Do not become distracted by other desktop windows or electronic devices. Please keep mobile phones in a separate location or ensure they are turned off.
 - Please adjust how your name displays on the Zoom interface to reflect how you would like to be addressed (including for example your preferred pronouns).
 - Keep track of your Zoom meeting links and passwords. It's helpful to store links in a calendar application with each class or meeting entered into the correct day/time.
 - If you encounter any issues with internet connectivity or computer performance, please quit any unnecessary applications or temporarily mute your webcam.
 - Please contact the instructor if you have any issues regarding access to the internet or a reliable computer in order to find a solution in coordination with Campus Technology Services (CTS): <https://www.purchase.edu/offices/cts/>
 - If any difficulties arise, don't hesitate to inform the instructor in order to discuss potential accommodations. We'll figure it out together.

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. These are free 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 website for more information: <https://www.purchase.edu/offices/learning-center/>.

Community Health During COVID-19:

To ensure that each of us has a healthy and safe learning experience, all students are required to remain informed and follow Purchase College Policy and/or any departmental, local, state, or federal laws, rules, or regulations for attending classes on campus and in a remote learning environment. Within courses that involve in-person contact, all students, faculty members, staff, and visitors are required to adhere to the expectations outlined on the College's COVID-19 website (<https://www.purchase.edu/covid-19-updates-and-plans/>). Failure to comply with requirements (e.g. wearing masks, maintaining social distancing where applicable) will result in the request to leave the classroom for that in-person class session. Students may also be referred to the Office of Community Standards (<https://www.purchase.edu/offices/community-standards/>). Do not enter campus buildings if you test positive for or are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19. Contact your faculty and Health Services (<https://www.purchase.edu/offices/health-services/index.php>) if you need to miss class because of COVID-19 symptoms or a positive COVID-19 test result. The conservatory/school will address on a case by case basis student absences due to COVID-19, while awaiting test results, or during quarantine.

Accessibility:

It is my goal that this class be an accessible and welcoming experience for all students, including those with disabilities. You are welcome to talk to me at any point in the semester about course design concerns, but it is always best if we can talk as soon as possible about the need for any modifications. The Office of Disability Resources collaborates directly with students who identify documented disabilities to create accommodation plans, including testing accommodations, in order for students to access course content and validly demonstrate learning. For those students who may require accommodations, please call or email the Office of Disability Resources, (914) 251-6035, odr@purchase.edu, www.purchase.edu/odr.

Counseling:

Help is available at the Counseling Center on campus for difficulties with emotional wellbeing and psychological functioning. If distress is interfering in relationships, academics, work, or daily life, confidential support can be had right away. Contact the Counseling Center at (914) 251-6390 or COU.counseling.center@purchase.edu on M-F, 9 AM - 5 PM. The Counseling Center's website lists after hours emergency resources for mental health crises, sexual assault or interpersonal violence emergencies (Campus Advocacy Services), self-help, and additional coping resources. <https://www.purchase.edu/counseling-center>.

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 (February 1): Semester Overview: Modes and Sites of the Avant-garde

Class format: In-person on campus. Group A (9 AM - 10:25 AM), Group B (10:35 AM - 12 PM).

In-class screening: Miko Revereza.

Read following screening: Jordon Cronk, "Interview: Miko Revereza," *Film Comment*, April 18, 2019.

* **Review Thesis Project Timeline, Film Production Safety Guidelines including COVID-19 (and project approval process), introduction of Conceptual Bibliography**

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

* **Schedule individual meetings for Thesis Project planning and Project #1: "Fine Cut / Redux" to be held before next class: <https://calendly.com/joelnanderson/>**

Week 2 (February 8): Beyond Story / Project Check-Ins

Class format: In-person on campus. Group A (9 AM - 10:25 AM), Group B (10:35 AM - 12 PM).

Read by today: 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.

Watch by today: *No Data Plan* (Miko Revereza, 2019).

Watch at least two of the following by today: *The Body Beautiful* (Ngozi Onwurah, 1991); *Oxhide II* ("Niu Pi II," Jiayin Liu, 2009); *Fainting Spells* (Sky Hopinka, 2018).

Recommended reading: Gwendolyn Audrey Foster, *Women Filmmakers of the African & Asian Diaspora: Decolonizing the Gaze, Locating Subjectivity* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1997), excerpts; 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; Almudena Escobar

López, “Ethnopoetics of Reality: The Work of Sky Hopinka,” *Afterimage: The Journal of Media Arts and Cultural Criticism* 45, no 5 & 7 (September 2017): 27-31.

*** Individual meetings for Thesis Project planning and Project #1: “Fine Cut / Redux” throughout day Monday before class (scheduled prior week).**

** Note: The Film Store, Film Minor Store, and CTS will have a limited amount of equipment rentals throughout the semester. Plan ahead in order to share resources with other students working on their projects. The Film Store has assigned the following production schedule for Film BFA students: Seniors (Nov. 15 - Jan. 24), Juniors (Dec. 6 - Feb. 14), and other majors’ production schedules will impact the Film Minor Store and CTS’s availability.*

Week 3 (February 15): Structuring Vision

Class format: In-person on campus. Group A (9 AM - 10:25 AM), Group B (10:35 AM - 12 PM).

Read by today: 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.

Watch by today: *Leviathan* (Lucien Castaing-Taylor and Véréna Paravel, 2012).

*** Film Festival Submissions Workshop, Project #1: “Fine Cut / Redux” check-in**

*** Discussion Platform: First post due today (9 AM), response post due within two days (Thursday, 9 AM)**

Optional: Cenote (Kaori Oda, 2019) screening in Cinema Studies Screening Series on Thursday, February 17, 7 PM, CMFT 0065

Week 4 (February 22): Thesis Project Workshop

Class format: In-person on campus. Group A (9 AM - 10:25 AM), Group B (10:35 AM - 12 PM).

Read by today: Aiko Masubuchi, “Toward a Common Tenderness: An Interview with Kaori Oda,” *MUBI Notebook*, March 17, 2020.

Watch by today: *Cenote* (Kaori Oda, 2019).

*** Thesis Project Workshop: Prepare updated proposal materials: budget, timeline, and personalized planning documents tailored to formal needs of your project (script, shot list, storyboard, diagram, etc. approved by instructor) as well as Conceptual Bibliography, and an assembly or rough rough cut if ready.**

*** Schedule Experimental Workshop Exhibition planning session outside of class time and set up shared brainstorm document (details to be determined collectively, based on student organizing)**

Week 5 (March 1): Assemblies and Assembly

Class format: In-person on campus. Group A (9 AM - 10:25 AM), Group B (10:35 AM - 12 PM).

Watch by today: *Toward a Common Tenderness* (Kaori Oda, 2017).

Read by today: Laura U. Marks, “The Ethical Presenter: Or How to Have Good Arguments over Dinner,” *The Moving Image: The Journal of the Association of Moving Image Archivists* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 34-47; Interview with Ian White by Siri Peyer and Wolf Schmelter, “Issue 3:

Curating Film,” *OnCurating.org* (2009); Genevieve Yue, “Kitchen Sink Cinema: Artist-Run Film Laboratories,” *Film Comment*, March 30, 2015.

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

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

* **Introduction of Project #3: “First Person”**

* **Schedule individual meetings to address Project #1: “Fine Cut / Redux” feedback, Thesis Project (bring an assembly or rough rough cut), and planning for Project #2: “Curatorial Lab” and Project #3: “First Person” to be held before next class: <https://calendly.com/joelnanderson/> (Set up two sequential 20 minute meetings.)**

Week 6 (March 8): Cinema as Essay

Class format: In-person on campus. Group A (9 AM - 10:25 AM), Group B (10:35 AM - 12 PM).
Read by today: Harun Farocki selections; Nora M. Alter and Timothy Corrigan, *Essays on the Essay Film* (excerpts).

Watch by today: Harun Farocki, Jonas Mekas, the Otolith Group, Jem Cohen, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Su Friedrich.

* **Discussion Platform: First post due today (9 AM), response post due within two days (Thursday, 9 AM)**

* **Individual meetings to address Project #1: “Fine Cut / Redux” feedback, Thesis Project (bring an assembly or rough rough cut), and planning for Project #2: “Curatorial Lab” and Project #3: “First Person” throughout day Monday before class. (Two sequential 20 minute meetings scheduled prior week.)**

Optional: Selection of Tara Najd Ahmadi’s films screening with Harun Farocki’s work in Cinema Studies Screening Series on Thursday, March 10, 7 PM, CMFT 0065

Week 7 (March 15): Tara Najd Ahmadi Guest Filmmaker Visit

Class format: Online, synchronous via Zoom (link provided via email). Groups A and B together 9 AM - 12 PM.

Read by today: Linda Nochlin, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?”; Laura Rascaroli, *How the Essay Film Thinks* (2017) excerpt: “Introduction—Openings; Thinking Cinema.”

Watch by today: *An Art Historian’s Recipe* (Tara Najd Ahmadi, 2022); *Productive Frustration* (Najd Ahmadi, 2016); *A Week with Azar* (Najd Ahmadi, 2018).

Week 8 (March 22): Maker-Programmer-Critic Approaches

Class format: Online, synchronous via Zoom (link provided via email). Groups A and B together 9 AM - 12 PM.

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

* **Experimental Workshop Exhibition planning session (details to be determined collectively, based on student organizing)**

Week 9 (March 29): Rough Cuts

Class format: In-person on campus. Group A (9 AM - 10:25 AM), Group B (10:35 AM - 12 PM).

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

Week 10 (April 5): Rough Cuts / Film Manifestos & Media Organizing

Class format: In-person on campus. Group A (9 AM - 10:25 AM), Group B (10:35 AM - 12 PM).

Read by today: Chi-hui Yang, “DOCUMENTARY POWER: A New Manifesto,” 2018 “Getting Real” conference keynote; Cauleen Smith, “HUMAN_3.0 READING LIST MANIFESTO,” “COVID MANIFESTO.”

Watch by today: 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).

Recommended reading: Allied Media Projects resources; 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.

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

Week 11 (April 12): No class (Spring holiday)

Note that the class schedule may be adjusted to accommodate for the date and format of the Experimental Workshop Exhibition, based on collective discussion and student organizing

Week 12 (April 19): First Person

Class format: In-person on campus. Group A (9 AM - 10:25 AM), Group B (10:35 AM - 12 PM).

*** Watch and critique: Project #3: “First Person”**

*** Schedule individual meetings addressing Thesis Project rough cut and Project #3: “First Person” feedback to be held before next class: <https://calendly.com/joelnanderson/> (Set up two sequential 20 minute meetings.)**

Week 13 (April 26): A Thousand Suns

Class format: In-person on campus. Group A (9 AM - 10:25 AM), Group B (10:35 AM - 12 PM).

Read by today: N. Frank Ukadike, “The Hyena’s Last Laugh: interview with Djibril Diop Mambety,” *Transition* 78 (vol. 8, no. 2, 1999): 136-53; James Williams, “A Thousand Suns: Traversing the Archive and Transforming Documentary in Mati Diop’s *Mille Soleils*,” *Film Quarterly* (Fall 2016): 85-95.

Watch by today: Djibril Diop Mambéty’s *The Journey of the Hyena* (“Touki Bouki,” 1973); *The Little Girl Who Sold the Sun* (“La petite vendeuse de soleil,” 1999).

In-class screening: Mati Diop.

*** Discussion Platform: First post due today (9 AM), response post due within two days (Thursday, 9 AM)**

*** Individual meetings addressing Thesis Project rough cut and Project #3: “First Person” feedback throughout day Monday before class. (Two sequential 20 minute meetings scheduled prior week.)**

Week 14 (May 3): Fine Cuts

Class format: In-person on campus. Group A (9 AM - 10:25 AM), Group B (10:35 AM - 12 PM).

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

Note: Film BFA Senior reviews scheduled May 2-5, Junior reviews scheduled May 6, 9-11

Week 15 (May 10): Final Cuts

Class format: In-person on campus. Group A (9 AM - 10:25 AM), Group B (10:35 AM - 12 PM).

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

Week 16 (May 17): Final Screening and Discussion

Class format: TBD.