

MIAS 200. COURSE ACTION

MOVING IMAGE ARCHIVING: HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, PRACTICE. (4)
(October 13, 2003)

OFFICIAL CATALOG DESCRIPTION.

(Formerly numbered FTV 293 "Film Curatorship) Seminar, four hours.
Introduction to historical development of moving image archives. Critical analysis of archival policies regarding collection development, access, exhibition, cataloging, preservation, and restoration. Letter grading.

PURPOSE. To provide an historical and conceptual overview of the institutional structures of moving image archives. The course places archival policies in their specific political, legal, technological and social contexts in order to critically scrutinize distinct cultural models of archival organization.

CONTENT AND METHOD OF INSTRUCTION. Through lecture, discussion, and screenings, the course introduces the principle models and methodologies of moving image archive practices from the 1938 establishment of the International Federation of Film Archives to the present. It addresses such practices as: collection development of classical, national, regional and non-mainstream materials (such as small gauge formats, independent and amateur productions, and new media); the changing role of technology in preservation and restoration; the ethics of moving-image restoration; cataloging standards and documentation systems; classical and alternative models of archive administration and funding; the cultural impact of public programming; research and publication supported by moving-image archives; access, education, and archival productions. A major topic is also the effect of digital technologies and the manner in which they are dramatically modifying crucial aspects of contemporary archival practice.

REQUIREMENTS. Students are expected to read assigned books and articles, participate in seminar discussion, and write a substantial analytical essay. An outline or prospectus for the essay must be submitted by the end of the sixth week of the quarter.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER COURSES. MIAS 200 is one of six core seminars in the Moving Image Archive Studies Program. As an introduction to the field, it provides an historical overview to the subjects addressed in more detail by the other five core seminars.

READING.

Huston, Penelope. Keepers of the Frame (London: British Film Institute, 1994).

Melville, Annette, and Scott Simmon. Film Preservation 1993: A Study of the Current State of American Film Preservation Report of the Librarian of Congress. 4 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1993).

Additional journal articles as assigned.

MAJOR TOPICS.

1. Basic models of moving image archive organization: cinematheque, preservation archive, museum with film department, film museum, university media center, library with “audio-visual” collections, copyright repository, and studio vs. public collections models.
2. Survey of film and video formats from pre-cinema devices to digital moving image tools; current practices in version identification and authentication, the “original” vs. later versions, multiple versions, the philology of “the original.”
3. Current standards and practices for moving-image preservation: storage, copying, medium stability, non-standard formats, vinegar syndrome, nitrate deterioration, color fading, film vs. video preservation, conservation vs. preservation.
4. Collection development (a), including selection criteria; donations vs. deposits; copyright law and contractual obligation. Case studies include: Motion Picture and Sound Recording Branch of the Library of Congress, UCLA Film and Television Archive, Museum of Modern Art Film Department, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.
5. Collection development (b), selection, preservation, presentation of non-classical Hollywood film; alternative sources for funding; alternative methods for collection development of newsreels, independent features, experimental media, documentaries, non-broadcast video, and amateur cinema.
6. Collection development (c), newly formed, regional, specialized archives. Building, validation, funding of non-national collections and inter-archival initiatives such as South East Asian Pacific and Audiovisual Archives Association (SEEAPAVA), C.L.A.I.M. (Latin America), the Council of North American F.I.A.F. Archives (C.N.A.F.A.), Association of European Cinematheques (A.C.E.), Nordic Grouping.

7. Restoration, historiographic and aesthetic models used to “reconstruct” the original; provenance, title selection and research, quality control, look management, analog versus digital technologies

8. The politics of access: What are the optimal conditions for providing wide access to archive holdings? What are the advantages and disadvantages of providing access to non-archival copies of the original? Scholarly access, commercial use, archival productions.

9. Cataloging/documentation: What bodies of information, and what interfaces, are the most useful tools for providing subject access to large archival collections? Filmographies vs. catalogs; visual databases to visual datasets, networked vs. standalone databases; multiple copies, multiple formats, multiple versions; alternative methods for gathering and disseminating collection information.

10. Programming: What is the cultural mission of public exhibition by moving-image archives? What is the place and impact of “archival” presentations within film and video festivals? How does archive exhibition effect media scholarship?

MIAS 200. SYLLABUS

Moving Image Archiving: History, Philosophy, Practice

Course Syllabus (Winter 2004)

Instructor: Steven Ricci

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The purpose of this course is to analyze the theory, practice and methodology of moving-image archiving. It traces the international development of the philosophy and policies of major moving-image archives from the establishment of the International Federation of Film Archives in 1938 to the present. During this time frame, archive practice has evolved in relation to changes in moving-image culture such as the discontinuation of cellulose nitrate-based film stock, the demise of the film club and repertory circuit, the growth of film and television studies within academia, the mass production and availability of consumer video, and radical changes in media formats. The course’s weekly lectures and discussion locate archival policies in light of these and other historical circumstances. Overall the course seeks to place archival policies within their specific political, legal, technological, and social contexts in order to analyze and evaluate distinct cultural models of archive organization.

The course is organized around lectures and discussions on specific archive practices in areas such as: collection development of classical, national, regional, and non-mainstream materials; the changing role of technology in preservation and

restoration; the ethics of moving-image restoration; grant writing, cataloging standards and documentation systems; classical and alternative models of archive administration and funding; the cultural impact of public programming; research and publication supported by moving-image archives; access, education and archival productions.

Assignments and Grading

1. Attendance at the class meetings and active participation in the seminar discussions are integral to successful class performance. Especially given the relative newness of the professional field of moving image archiving, collective participation in problem solving and exchange of ideas are quite important. (20% of final grade)
2. Each student will present a brief profile of an archival association (see Section five of the syllabus). The purpose of the presentation (ten to twenty minutes) will be to lead a discussion about the organization's structure, constituency and chief mission. Taken together, these discussions will provide an overall map of how the archival field organizes itself. (15% of the final grade)
3. A two page prospectus for the final essay should be submitted for review and discussion no later than the sixth week of the quarter. Students are encouraged to discuss paper topic options with the instructor (see paper topic list) in advance. (15% of the final grade)
4. A fifteen page analytical essay on one aspect of moving-image archiving. The paper is not a report on how individual archives conduct their work. Instead, it examines the implications of the decisions made at every phase of a given archive practice. The paper seeks to answer questions such as: How will a given practice effect long-term preservation goals? What constituencies are served, and in which ways, by specific archive practices? By contrasting different approaches to the same issues, how can one describe the underlying philosophical concepts which helped shape specific policies. (50% of the final grade) Final paper is due by Friday, March 18, 2004.

Learning Outcome

This course is designed to provide a map of the organizational structure of moving image archives. By the end of the quarter, students should be able to:

- distinguish between types of moving image archives
- recognize distinct traditions of archival philosophy
- explain specific archival activities in relation to an archive's history and structure
- articulate the policies that inform archive practices and priorities

-locate specific institutions within the overall archival field

Required Reading

Huston, Penelope. Keepers of the Frame (London: British Film Institute, 1994).

Melville, Annette, and Scott Simmon. Film Preservation 1993: A Study of the Current State of American Film Preservation Report of the Librarian of Congress. 4 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1993).

Additional reading assignments will be made each week.

Recommended reading: (on reserve in Arts Library)

Eastman Kodak The Book of Film Care (second edition, 1992)

Slide, Tony. Nitrate Won't Wait: Film Preservation in the United States (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc.: 1992).

Smither, Roger and Klaue, Wolfgang eds. Newsreels in Film Archives (Wiltshire, England : Flicks Books ; Madison, N.J. : Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996)

Seminar Topics

1. Overview

Course objectives and theoretical framework; historical overview of the moving-image archive movement. An introduction to the different models of archive organization and philosophy including the: cinematheque, preservation archive, museum with film department, film museum, university media center, library with “audio-visual” collections, copyright repository, and studio vs. public collections models. Archive organizational structure versus archival functions.

From the course reader:

Edmondson, Ray. *A Philosophy of Audiovisual Archiving*. Paris: UNESCO, 1998.

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001131/113127eo.pdf>

Routt, William D. “Introduction: A New Source of History: The Creation

of a Depository for Historical Cinematography”

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/screeningthepast/classics/clasjul/matintro.html>

Matuszewski, Boleslas. “A new source of history: the creation of a depository for historical cinematography (Paris 1898).”

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/screeningthepast/classics/clasjul/mat.html>

Bottomore, Stephen. "The Sparkling Surface of the Sea of History: Notes on the Origins of Film Preservation. *This Film is Dangerous*. Brussels: FIAF, 2001.

2. Major Principles and Basic Problems

What is the original? An historical overview of film and video formats from pre-cinema devices to digital moving image tools; current practices in version identification, authentication and provenance, the “original” vs. later versions, multiple versions, the philology of “the original.” What is preservation? Current standards and practices for moving-image preservation: storage, copying, medium stability, non-standard formats, vinegar syndrome, nitrate deterioration, color fading, film vs. video preservation, conservation vs. preservation.

From the course reader:

Bigourdan, J.L. "From the Nitrate Experience to New Film Preservation Strategies." *This Film Is Dangerous*. Brussels: FIAF, 2001: 52-73.

Brownlow, Kevin. Silent Films: What Was the Right Speed? *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*. London: British Film Institute, 1990: 282-290.

Friend, Michael. Film/Digital/Film. *Journal of Film Preservation* 24.50 (March 1995): 36-49.

3. Collection Development

a) Building feature-length narrative film collections produced by the studio system; selection criteria; the implications of donations vs. deposits; private sector vs. public collections. Case studies include: Motion Picture and Sound Recording Branch of the Library of Congress, UCLA Film and Television Archive, Museum of Modern Art Film Department.

b) Selection, preservation, presentation of non-classical Hollywood film; alternative sources for funding; alternative methods for collection development of newsreels, independent features, experimental media, documentaries, non-broadcast video, and amateur cinema. Case studies

include: European Union's *Projecto Lumière*, Ahmanson Foundation's *Films Out of the Mainstream: Preserving Independent Films and Newsreels*, Japanese American National Museum/UCLA's *Executive Order 9066: The Incarceration of Japanese Americans During World War II* exhibition and CD-ROM.

c) The effect of list-making, an evaluation of canonical and anti-canonical approaches

Reading: To be assigned.

4. The Politics of Access

What are the optimal conditions for providing wide access to archive holdings? How have access policies evolved with the rise of the modern moving-image archive? What are the advantages and disadvantages of providing access to non-archival copies of the original? Commercial use, archival productions; the debate over the use of video in film archives.

Reading:

“Manual for Access to Film Collections” (Special Issue) *Journal of Film Preservation* n. 55, December 1997

5. The Archival Field

Non-governmental organizations and federations: International Federation of Film Archives (FIAPF), International Federation of Television Archives (FIAT), International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA),

Foundations: The Film Foundation, National Film Preservation Foundation, National Television and Video Preservation Foundation.

Regional Groupings: South East Asian Pacific and Audiovisual Archives Association, Association of South East Nations, C.L.A.I.M. (Latin America), the Council of North American F.I.A.F. Archives, A.C.E. (Association of European Cinematheques), Gamma Group, Nordic Grouping, Association of Asian Film Archives.

Professional Associations: Association of Moving Image Archivists, Society of American Archivists, American Library Association, Society for Cinema and Media Studies.

6. Grant Writing for Archival Initiatives

Case Study: The National Endowment for the Humanities: *Prelude to War* Preservation Project (copy of grant application will be distributed).

Paper prospectus due.

7. Programming

What is the cultural mission of public programming by moving-image archives? What is the place and impact of “archival” presentations within film and video festivals? How does archive exhibition effect media scholarship? Case studies will focus on exhibitions which prominently feature the preservation and restoration work of film archives including: Cinémémoire, UCLA Film and TV Archive Festival of Preservation, Le Giornate di Cinema Muto a Pordenone, Il Cinema Ritrovato, Taiwan Festival of Preservation, American Movie Classics’ Festival of Preservation, Domitor.

8. Intellectual Property

Copyright law and archival practice; public domain; legal agreements; deposit versus donation; evaluation

Reading: To be assigned.

9. Electronic Media

Special challenges in video preservation and exhibition

10. Information Systems and the Challenge of the Digital

What are the theoretical principles which form the basis of current moving-image collection cataloging? What bodies of information, and what interfaces, are the most useful tools for providing subject access to large archival collections? Topics to consider include: filmographies vs. catalogs; visual databases to visual datasets, networked vs. standalone databases; multiple copies, multiple formats, multiple versions; alternative methods for gathering and disseminating collection information.

From the course reader:

Building a National Strategy for Preservation: Issues in Digital Media Archiving. The Council on Library and Information Resources and the Library of Congress. April 2002.

<http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub106/contents.html>

Besser, Howard. The Next Stage: Moving from Isolated Digital Collections to Interoperable Digital Libraries.

http://firstmonday.dk/issues/issue7_6/besser/index.html

Paper Topics

Archive Profile

- Japanese American National Museum
- Iota Collection
- Sony Pictures Entertainment
- UCLA Film and Television Archive
- Museum of Modern Art, Film Department
- Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences Film Archive
- UCLA Instructional Media Library
- Thousand Oaks Library
- Long Beach Museum of Art
- USC

Access Issues

- copyright
- video vs. film
- frame enlargement
- Journal of Film Preservation manual
- different client interpretations of access

Ethics of Film Restoration

- single case study
- single case prospectus
- version comparisons
- theoretical models?
- digital vs. analog technologies

Collection Development

- Collection prospectus (identify collection, budget, staff requirements)
- Canonical collections (e.g. National Film Registry, BFI 360)
- New Media

Programming Models

- American Cinematheque
- Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- UCLA Film and Television Archive (Festival, or programs)
- Cineteca Espanola
- Cinematheca Portuguesa
- Le giornate del cinema muto a Pordenone
- Il Cinema Ritrovato, Bologna
- CineMemoire, Paris
- Domitor
- American Movie Classics' Festival of Preservation