

MIAS 210. COURSE ACTION.

MOVING IMAGE PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION. (6)
(October 13, 2003)

OFFICIAL CATALOG DESCRIPTION.

Seminar, six hours. Critical analysis of distinct models for the archival preservation and restoration of moving image media. Letter grading.

PURPOSE. To describe the major approaches to contemporary film, video and digital preservation and restoration. The range of possible treatment options, cost models, and decision making processes are discussed in detail as they relate to different media types and institutional settings.

CONTENT AND METHOD OF INSTRUCTION. Through lecture, discussion, and screenings, the course examines and evaluates the archival field's current preservation standards for storage and duplication. Critical preservation problems such as nitrate deterioration, color fading, the vinegar syndrome and irreplaceable formats are extensively discussed. Throughout the seminar case studies of specific restoration projects are explored through critical "before and after" studies with lectures and discussion focusing on the crucial ethical issues embedded within each technical and aesthetic decision facing the restorer. Of special interest to this course is the question of whether it is possible and appropriate to speak of particular schools and/or philosophies of restoration. In addition the seminar addresses a range of key issues such as the identification of the original versus subsequent and multiple versions; the theoretical and practical distinctions between different types of restoration; and the implications of new, digital technologies which promise the ability to "improve" the original.

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

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER COURSES. MIAS 210 is one of six core seminars in the Moving Image Archive Studies Program. In addition to the lectures and classroom screening, the seminar also draws upon interviews with media restorers.

READING.

Read, Paul and Meyer, Mark-Paul. *Restoration of Motion Picture Film* (Butterworth-Heinemann: Oxford, 2000).

Price, Nicholas and Vaccaro, Alessandra eds. *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage* (Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, 1996.)

Bertellini, Giorgio. "Restoration Genealogy and Palimpsests. On Some Historiographical Questions"

Elsaesser, Thomas. *Innocence Restored? Reading and Rereading a "Classic"*

In addition, specific readings will be assigned each for case study.

MAJOR TOPICS.

1. Documenting authorial intent through textual and non-textual resources
2. Provenance; multiple versions and the elusiveness of the "original"
3. Emulation versus migration
4. Remastering versus reconstruction: digital restoration for commercial re-release
5. The historical limits of "look management," the impact of new stocks and technologies on color veracity, sound fidelity, etc.
6. Color restoration. What authorities serve to establish the authenticity of color values in re-editions?
7. Sound improvement. What are the ethical limits of noise reduction technologies?
8. Restoration documentation

SYLLABUS:

Contemporary Moving Image Restoration

MIAS 210: Course Syllabus (Spring 2004) Instructor: Steven Ricci

REVISED April 15, 2004

Seminar location: MacGowan 2310C

Thursday: 6:00 – 9:00pm

Screening: Melnitz 2534, Fridays 2:00 – 6:00pm

Overview:

The purpose of the course is to describe the major approaches to contemporary film, video and digital preservation and restoration. The range of possible treatment options, cost models, and decision making processes are discussed in

detail as they relate to different media types and institutional settings. Through lecture, discussion, and screenings, the course examines and evaluates the archival field's current preservation standards for storage and duplication. Critical preservation problems such as nitrate deterioration, color fading, the vinegar syndrome and irreplaceable formats are extensively discussed.

Throughout the seminar, case studies of specific restoration projects are explored through critical "before and after" studies with lectures, screenings and discussion focusing on the crucial ethical issues embedded within each technical and aesthetic decision facing the restorer. Of special interest to this course is the question of whether it is possible and appropriate to speak of particular schools and/or philosophies of restoration. In addition the seminar addresses a range of key issues such as the identification of the original versus subsequent and multiple versions; the theoretical and practical distinctions between different types of restoration; the role of documentation in restoration design; and the implications of new, digital technologies which promise the ability to "improve" the original.

Assignments and Grading:

1. Attendance at the class meetings/screenings and active participation in the seminar discussions are integral to successful class performance. (20% of final grade)
2. Each student or small group of students will "adopt" a film or television program in need of restoration. They will create a dossier of information on a given title including: cast, credits, production history, technical documentation on the film's production, correspondence (between director, producer, cinematographer, editor)-- in short, any information which could later inform the decisions of a restoration project. In most cases, the titles will be selected from a list of current holdings at the UCLA Film and Television Archive. The dossier is due in the sixth week of the quarter and will be discussed with the archive professionals that are in the process of restoring the work. (40% of final grade)
3. Each student will write a ten to fifteen page analytical essay focusing on one or more restoration case studies. A one page proposal and outline should be submitted for review and discussion no later than the seventh week of the quarter. The essay is not merely a technical description of how a given restoration was achieved. While grounding the treatment in the specific restoration decisions, the analysis should engage the philosophical, methodological and cultural issues that inform these decisions (see Paper Topics below). For example: does the restoration follow models and principles derived from restoration work in the other arts? Does the restoration seek to extend or change the nature of authorship for the work in question? How does advance publicity about the restoration impact the

manner in which audiences read the film or television program? (40% of final grade). **Final paper is due on June 13.**

Seminar Topics:

April 8 (Week One)

Introduction to basic topics and course objectives. Introduction to preservation standards for storage, repair and duplication; distinctions between preservation and restoration; explanation of class mechanics, assignments and grading.

Reading:

Eileen Bowser "Some Principles of Film Restoration," *Griffithiana* (Bologna) no. 38, 39. October 1990. [READER]

McGreevey, Tom and Yeck, Joanne "How Films are Preserved and Restored," *Our Movie Heritage* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997) [READER]

Read, Paul and Meyer, Mark-Paul. *Restoration of Motion Picture Film* (Butterworth-Heinemann: Oxford, 2000). Pages 1-99 [READER]

No screening on April 9

April 15 (Week Two)

Provenance; multiple copies, multiple formats, multiple versions and the elusiveness of the "original"

Reading:

Bertellini, Giorgio. "Restoration Genealogy and Palimpsests. On Some Historiographical Questions," *Film History* Vol.7 Issue 3 Autumn 1995 [TANK]

Martin Koerber, "Notes on the Proliferation of *Metropolis* (1927)" [TANK]

Elsaesser, Thomas. "Innocence Restored? Reading and Rereading a "Classic" in Minden, Michael and Bachman, Holger eds. Fritz Lang's METROPOLIS: Cinematic Visions of Technology and Fear (Camden House, 2000) [TANK]

Paini, Dominique "A Modern Art of Ruins: Notes on Film Restoration" *Journal of Film Preservation* Issue 54, 1997. [TANK]

Recommended reading:

Yee, Martha. "Manifestations and Near Equivalents: Theory, with Special Attention to Moving Image Material." *LRTS* 38 (1994)

Patalas, Enno. "On Wild Film Restoration, or Running a Minor Cinematheque," *Journal of Film Preservation* 56 (June 1998): 28-39.

Screening:

April 16: Friday 2:00pm in 2534 Melnitz

METROPOLIS (1927) Fritz Lang

April 22 (Week Three)

Citation methodology: documenting authorial intent through textual and non-textual resources. Special focus on documentation resources for preservation and restoration.

Reading:

Barthes, Roland, "From Work to Text," Trans. Richard Howard. The Rustle of Language. New York: Hill and Wang, 1986. 76-83 [READER]

Bellour, Raymond, "The Unattainable Text" Trans. Ben Brewster. The Analysis of Film. Ed. Constance Penley, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000. 21-27 [READER]

Steven Ricci and Gregory Lukow, "The Audience Goes Public: Inter-textuality, Genre, and the Responsibilities of Film Literacy." On Film (Spring 1984) [READER]

Routt, William D. "Textual Criticism in the Study of Film," *Screening the Past*, Issue 1, 1997 [READER]

Recommended reading:

Canosa, M., Farinelli, G.L., Mazzanti, Nicola. "Black on white: Notes on Cinematographic Restoration: Documentation," Cinegrafie (Bologna) no. 10, 1997.

Screening:

April 23: Friday 2:00pm in 2534 Melnitz

ROARING TWENTIES (1939) Raoul Walsh

April 29 (Week Four)

The historical limits of “look management,” the impact of new stocks and technologies on color veracity, sound fidelity. Specific issues on nitrate stock titles.

Screening:

April 29: 5:00pm Thursday, in the Bridges Theater (Melnitz 1409)

THE DEVIL IS A WOMAN (1935) Josef Von Sternberg

Recommended reading:

Bigourdan, Jean-Louis, “From the Nitrate Experience to New Preservation Strategies,” Ed. Smither, Roger This Film is Dangerous (International Federation of Film Archives, 2002)

Screening: April 30

Paini, Dominique “Reproduction...Disappearance,” Smither 171-176

April 30: Friday, 2:00pm at Archive Hollywood Offices (1015 N. Cahuenga Blvd)
(meet with UCLA Preservation Staff re: dossiers)

Screening:

May 5: Wednesday at 7:30pm in the Bridges Theater

TOUCH OF EVIL (1958) Orson Welles

May 6 (Week Five)

Reconstruction of History through Newsreel Restoration; newsfilm as evidence.

Reading:

Rosen, Phil “Document and Documentary: On the Persistence of Historical Concepts,” “ in Change Mummified (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001) pp.225-265 [READER]

Doane, Mary Ann “Dead Time, or the Concept of the Event,” in The Birth of Cinematic Time (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002) pp.140-72
[READER]

Screening:

May 7: Friday 2:00pm in 2534

HEARST METROTONE NEWS COLLECTION: MARIAN ANDERSON'S
1939 EASTER SUNDAY LINCOLN MEMORIAL CONCERT (1939)
Reconstructed by the UCLA Film and Television Archive in 2002.

May 13 (Week Six)

Sound improvement. What are the ethical limits of noise reduction technologies?
Special issues on the restoration of independently produced film and video.

Reading:

Verscheure, Jean Pierre, "The Challenge of Sound Restoration from 1927 to
Digital," Film History Vol. 7, Issue 3, Autumn 1995 [TANK]

Screening:

May 13: Thursday, 5:00pm in the Bridges Theater

(Faded and deteriorated reels)

May 19, Wednesday at 5:00pm in the Bridges Theater

SHE WORE A YELLOW RIBBON (1949) John Ford

May 20 (Week Seven)

Discussion of restoration dossiers and paper prospectus is due.

May 27 (Week Eight)

Color restoration. What authorities serve to establish the authenticity of color
values in re-editions?

Reading:

De Oliveira, Joao, "Black and White in Colour" Dangerous pp. 117-123
[READER]

Mazzanti, Nicola, "Raising the Colors" Dangerous pp. 123-28 [TANK]

Acland, Charles R., "Tampering with the Inventory: Colorization and Popular Histories," *Wide Angle* v. 12 n. 2, April 1990 [TANK]

Recommended reading:

Branigan, Edward, "Color and Cinema: Problems in the Writing of History," Film Reader 4 (1979), pp. 16-33.

Screening:

May 28 TBA

June 3 (Week Nine)

Censorship cuts; institutional mediation, external regulation, self-censorship, documenting the original version; obligation of the archivist

Reading:

Recommended reading:

Maltby, Richard "The Genesis of the Production Code" Ed. Muscio, Giuliana Prima della codice: alle porte di Hays (Venice: Edizioni La Biennale di Venezia, 1991) pp. 39-81

Vaughn, Stephen "Film Censorship in America: The Motion Picture Production Code of 1930" in Prima della codice pp.81-93.

Screening:

June 4 TBA

Paper Topics:

Documenting authorial intent: what textual resources help to reconstruct the author's original vision for the work in question? Example: Touch of Evil.

Director's cut vs. third party re-authoring: Possible case studies: Blade Runner, The Nights of Cabiria.

Re-mastering vs. reconstruction: digital restoration for commercial re-release. Possible case studies: Vertigo, Matinee Idol (first ever complete digital restoration of live action feature film).

The historical limits to "look management." What are the consequences of

mapping new restoration processes over previous production technologies? How do new technical solutions impact aesthetic issues such as color veracity, sound fidelity. Examples: : Gone With the Wind, An Evening with Fred Astaire.

Reconstituting the past: the issue of color. What authorities serve to establish "original" color values. What becomes of the audience's historic experience of the inferior colors? Possible case study: Becky Sharp.

Improving the past: the issue of sound. What are the ethical limits for restoration when, for example, noise-reduction technologies can remove the authentic ambient defects of the original sound recordings and playback systems?

Multiple versions and the elusiveness of "the original." Possible case studies: My Darling Clementine, The Big Sleep, Intolerance.

Choose a film or television program which is incomplete. How would you organize the project to restore this copy?