Course Description
Summary of technological and social history of home movies and amateur media, with particular emphasis on small-gauge film formats. Provides basic hands-on training in identification, care and handling, and digitization techniques for small-gauge film and analog video formats. Additional topics include evolving role of amateur recordings in society and in media preservation landscape; copyright, privacy, and ethical issues specific to home movies; metadata, description, and access challenges for noncommercial media collections; and unique aesthetics and constraints of various consumer recording formats.

Course Goals and Objectives
Students in this class will gain technological, social, and historical perspectives on amateur films as they have been made throughout the 20th century. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and assess the physical condition of the most commonly used amateur film and video formats
- Understand basic preservation needs of film and video materials
- Evaluate the legal, ethical, privacy, and interpretive issues unique to amateur media
- Demonstrate familiarity with major collections and individual examples of historical home movies
- Understand how home movies may be preserved and presented in different ways: as part of the historical record, as sources of data and evidence, and as a form of personal record-keeping
- Assess, research, and make recommendations for physical care and research access to specific collections of home movies

Required texts
There is one required textbook for this course:

The following additional texts are recommended, but not required:


These and other assigned readings will be held on the MIT Lab reserve shelf for this course, and/or as e-copies (PDF, DOC, etc.) in the CCLE or course web site. It is your responsibility to read all assigned texts before class every week and demonstrate your familiarity with the readings during class discussions. Failure to do so will result in loss of class participation credit for the week.

Additional or alternate readings may be assigned during the quarter. These will be announced in class at least one week prior to the reading due date; a follow-up email will be circulated to all students enrolled in the class in the event of any changes to assignments or readings, and the course web site and syllabus will be updated to reflect the most current readings and assignments. You should be sure your email address on file with the school is current, and check the CCLE regularly in order to be properly prepared for class.

**Web sites and online resources**

One hundred years of film sizes. [http://www.xs4all.nl/~wichm/filmsize.html](http://www.xs4all.nl/~wichm/filmsize.html)
The Film Preservation Guide. [http://www.filmpreservation.org](http://www.filmpreservation.org)
Timeline of Historical Film Colors. [http://zauberklang.ch/filmcolors/](http://zauberklang.ch/filmcolors/)
# Course Outline

Part 1: Motion Picture Technologies (weeks 1-3)
Part 2: Social Dimensions of Home Movies and Amateur Film (weeks 4-6)
Part 3: Media Archaeology, Research, Ethics, Access, and Reuse (weeks 7-10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS MEETING</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>GUESTS, DUE DATES, NOTES, ETC.</th>
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| Week 1
March 28     | **Motion Picture Technologies, Part 1**
Early home movies (1890-1935)
Defining the amateur
Preservation challenges for motion picture film |
| Week 2
April 4    | **Motion Picture Technologies, Part 2**
Mid-century amateur media (1935-1975)
Refining the amateur
Preservation practices for small-gauge materials |
| Week 3
April 11   | **Motion Picture Technologies, Part 3**
Transition to video and digital media (1975-)
The omnipresent amateur
Balancing preservation and access for home movies |
| Week 4
April 18   | **Home movies/amateur film: Social Dimensions, Part 1**
“Home” movies and “away” movies |
| Week 5
April 25   | **Home movies/amateur film: Social Dimensions, Part 2**
Valorization and canonization
Case studies: Home movies & the NFR |
| Week 6
May 2      | **Home movies/amateur film: Social Dimensions, Part 3**
Documenting difference in home movies
Developing typologies and vocabularies |
| Week 7
May 9      | **Research, Ethics, Access and Reuse, Part 1**
A history of home movie scholarship (1980-present)
The orphan film movement
Case studies: Home movies as scientific data |
| Week 8
May 16     | **Research, Ethics, Access and Reuse, Part 2**
Building institutional collections: Scope, content, format
Supporting new forms of research with access |
| Week 9
May 23     | **Research, Ethics, Access and Reuse, Part 3**
Home movies: part vs. whole
Image ethics and the rights of the subject |
| Week 10
May 30     | NO CLASS – MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY |
| Exam week| Final presentations and screenings of selections from class project collections |

Your short essays are due before class this week!

Jeff Lambert (NFPF)
Lynne Kirste (Academy Film Archive)
Albert Steg (Independent archivist/collector; CHM)
TO BE CONFIRMED
TO BE CONFIRMED
SCHEDULE

March 28
Week 1: Motion Picture Technologies, Part 1

- Review of syllabus
- Distribution of course materials and next week’s readings
- Defining the amateur
- Exploring terms: home movie, amateur film, non-commercial media; film, video, digital, and audio formats; other terms and usage
- A brief history of amateur media, 1890-2010 (Handout: Timeline)
- Why do (you think) people want to make their own movies?
- Why do we/would we want to watch other people’s home movies?
- Hands-on and demos: Film as material object; understanding and working with reversal film
- In-class viewing: “Decomp Carnival” (from Living Room Cinema)

Readings: None for Week 1!

April 4
Week 2: Motion Picture Technologies, Part 2

- Mid-century amateur media (1935-1975)
- Refining the amateur
- Preservation practices for small-gauge materials

Readings:

Mining the Home Movie: Read the Foreword and Introduction, pp. xiii-xix and 1-28.


April 11
Week 3: Motion Picture Technologies, Part 3
• Transitioning to video and digital media (1975-)
• The omnipresent amateur
• Balancing preservation and access for home movies

Readings:


April 18
Week 4: Home movies/amateur film: Social Dimensions, Part 1

• Defining and documenting the personal
• “Home” movies and “away” movies

Readings:

*Mining the Home Movie*: Read Chapter 17, “The Movie Queen - Northeast Historic Film,” pp. 185-190.


April 25
Week 5: Home movies/amateur film: Social Dimensions, Part 2

- Valorization and canonization
- Case studies: Home movies & the NFR

Readings:


May 2
Week 6: Home movies/amateur film: Social Dimensions, Part 3

- Documenting difference in home movies
- Developing typologies and vocabularies

Readings:


May 9
Week 7: Research, Ethics, Access and Reuse, Part 1

- A history of home movie scholarship (1980-present)
- Case studies: Home movies as data

Readings:


**May 16**

**Week 8: Research, Ethics, Access and Reuse, Part 2**

- Building institutional collections: Scope, content, format
- Supporting new forms of research with access

*Readings:*

*Mining the Home Movie: Read any five (or more, if you wish) of the following collection profiles:*

Chapter 2: The Human Studies Film Archive, Smithsonian Institution
Chapter 4: La Filmoteca de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México
Chapter 6: The Imperial War Museum Film and Video Archive
Chapter 8: The Florida Moving Image Archive
Chapter 13: The Nederlands Archive/Museum Institute
Chapter 15: The Library of Congress
Chapter 18: The WPA Film Library
Chapter 20: The Academy Film Archive
Chapter 22: The New Zealand Film Archive/Nga Kaitiaki o Nga
Chapter 24: The Oregon State Historical Society’s Moving Image Archives
Chapter 26: The Stephen Lighthill Collection at the UCLA Film & Television Archive


**May 23**

**Week 9: Research, Ethics, Access and Reuse, Part 3**
• Home movies: part vs. whole
• Image ethics and the rights of the subject

Readings:


Viewing: Watch *Grizzly Man* (Dir. Werner Herzog, 2005) and *Capturing the Friedmans* (Dir. Andrew Jarecki, 2003). Be prepared to discuss each filmmaker’s decision to (not) use specific footage to which he had access during the production process.

May 30
Week 10: NO CLASS (Memorial Day Holiday).

No readings this week; work on completing digitization, upload, and any other outstanding tasks for your home movie collections.

June 6
Exam week: Final presentations and screenings of selections from class project collections

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Your grade for this course will be based on the following:

• **Class preparation and participation** (20%)

• **Short essay on home movies used in other contexts**: Write ~1,000-1,500 words, or about 4-6 double-spaced pages, discussing and critically analyzing the (re)use of home movies/amateur footage in a documentary/narrative feature film, television episode/series, research project, or other context. You may choose from the list provided, or use another example with instructor approval. *This paper may be turned in at any point before class on Week 6.* (20%)

• **Term project**: Working on your own or as part of a small group, you will assess, inventory, process, digitize and research a home movie collection. Final deliverables will include a brief project report with a reflective component, but please be aware that the majority of the time you spend on this project will likely be **doing**, not **writing**. (50%)

• **Proposal**: Your final deliverable for this class will be to identify a conference or publication to which you will apply to present/publish on some aspect of your work this quarter. This could take the form of a poster session, panel presentation, or conference paper; it could also be submission of a version of your final paper as an article for publication in a scholarly journal. The format of your proposal will be dictated by the requirements of the venue; for most conferences, all that’s required by the CFP or poster proposal guidelines is a 250-500 word abstract and brief presenter bio. (10%)
EXTRA CREDIT

We’ll be setting up a collaboration site for the course by week 3, to which all members of the class will have access. You’ll receive one additional point on your final grade for the class (up to a maximum of five points) for each substantive post you make about your home movie collection project, the weekly readings, or additional research you’re doing for this class to the blog portion of the site.