IS 480: Introduction to Media Archiving and Preservation
Winter 2018
Wednesdays, 5:30-9:00 PM
GSEIS 111

Instructor:
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Office hours and location:
GSEIS 201
Thursdays, 10:00-1:00 PM
**or by appointment**

Catalog description
IS 480 – Intro to Media Archiving and Preservation (4 units)
Seminar, four hours. Overview of the history, conceptual foundations, policies, institutions, and professional methods that have shaped collections of audiovisual materials from the early 20th century to the present. Introduction of fundamental archival concepts and key practices including collection development, appraisal, preservation, restoration, arrangement and description, and critical analysis of their specific application to media collections and materials. Discussion of classical and emergent models for media archive administration, including funding, programming, outreach, access and reuse; the changing role of technology in media creation, collection, and preservation; ethics and community standards; the different roles of public, private, and national media archives; and the cultural impact of historical and contemporary audiovisual media.

Course objectives
The aim of this course is to situate the work of collecting, preserving, describing, and providing access to media collections in a historical and theoretical context. We will review and critically evaluate past, present, and potential practices of media management, with particular attention to the ways in which technological change has influenced professional practices related to audiovisual media. Upon successful completion of this course, participants will:

- Be familiar with major concepts and essential vocabulary of media preservation, archiving, and institutions in which audiovisual media are collected and preserved
- Describe the principal models, motivations, and methodologies that media archives have used from the early 20th century to the present
- Understand how archival processes such as appraisal, collection development, arrangement, description, access, and reuse are performed by different kinds of collecting institutions and media producers, and how these practices may differ when applied to audiovisual media and other forms/formats of records and information

Relationship to other courses
This course is the “gateway” or “specialization” elective for the media archival studies track within the MLIS degree program. Along with the four MLIS core courses, this class conveys fundamental knowledge and introduces key texts related to the area of specialization, providing students with a basis for further study and development of a research and professional focus. Class lectures, guest speakers, site visits and written assignments are intended to convey and refine a range of core competencies for those pursuing careers in media archiving, archives with collections that include AV holdings, preservation, and related fields.
Course requirements
Students are expected to complete assigned readings, participate actively in weekly class discussions, prepare several short assignments, and write a substantial analytical essay. Grading is based on the following:

Attendance and participation: 20%
Papers/projects (4 assignments, 20% each): 80%

Texts:
(NB: We will be reading and discussing all of these publications during the quarter, and they are recommended reading for anyone considering work in media preservation, but books are expensive. You do not need to purchase ANY of these books for this class. See weekly reading assignments for additional details.)


Frick, C. (2010). Saving cinema: The politics of preservation. New York: Oxford University Press. (Copy on course reserve shelf in IS Lab; also available as e-copy from UCLA Library, but restricted to 3 concurrent users)

Gracy, K. F. (2007). Film preservation: Competing definitions of value, use, and practice. Chicago: Society of American Archivists. (Copy on course reserve shelf in IS Lab; digital copy is also available free from the Hathi Trust)

Houston, P. (1994). Keepers of the frame: The film archives. British Film Institute. (Copy on course reserve shelf in IS Lab)

Jones, J. (2012). The past is a moving picture: Preserving the twentieth century on film. Gainesville: University Press of Florida. (Copy on course reserve shelf in IS Lab; available as e-copy from UCLA Library)


Ridener, J. (2009). From Polders to postmodernism: A concise history of archival theory. Duluth, Minn.: Litwin Books. (Copy on course reserve shelf in IS Lab)


Online resources:


If the prospect of reading a book a week for just one class this quarter is freaking you out: Read these.


COURSE SCHEDULE

January 10
Week 1: Introduction and overview
“The modern film archive is neither: discuss” / Differentiating between film, video, audio, and digital media / Differentiating between LAMs / Archives and “the archive” / Where is our common ground?

Read the following shorter journal articles:


January 17
Week 2: Histories of film archives and film archiving
Film archiving as a history of charismatic individuals: Barry, Langlois, Lindgren et al. / People vs. institutions / The role(s) of the studios and media producers in preservation / Financial and structural models for media archives

Read your choice of at least one of the following (you may read both if you wish):


Group assignments (optional for the rest of the class):


(Houston) KEEPERS OF THE FRAME (dir. Mark McLaughlin, 1999) (Streaming from Amazon - $1.99)

January 24
Week 3: Preservation, past and present
Materiality and media archives / The crisis in preservation (then) / Emergence of preservation agendas and priorities / Preservation and valorization of film as cultural product

Read your choice of at least one of the following (you may read both if you wish):


Group assignments (optional for the rest of the class):

(Slide) THESE AMAZING SHADOWS (dir. Paul Mariano, Kurt Norton, 2011) (Streaming via iTunes, GooglePlay, Amazon, YouTube, etc. from $2.99)

(Pierce) DAWSON CITY: FROZEN TIME (dir. Bill Morrison, 2017) (Streaming via iTunes, GooglePlay, YouTube, etc. from $3.99)

January 31
Week 4: Preservation, part 2: Practice and priorities
(Re)defining preservation practice / The crisis in preservation (now) / New preservation agendas and priorities / Expanding the canon and the community of preservationists

Read your choice of at least one of the following (you may read both if you wish):


Group assignments (optional for the rest of the class):

(Gracy) Read Fobazi Ettarh’s blog post: https://fobaziettarh.wordpress.com/2017/05/30/vocational-awe/ and watch her keynote address from the Pushing the Margins symposium (~23 min.): http://pushingthemargins.com/symposium/symposium-keynote

(Melville/Simmon) Read chapters 12 & 19 from A Thousand Cuts (Bartok & Joseph, 2016)(posted on CCLE)

February 7
Week 5: Preservation, part 3: Knowledge
How has the essential knowledge of film preservation practice been developed and transmitted to practitioners? / Who needs to know how to perform assessment and preservation of audiovisual media, and how are they learning to do this? / Introducing core competencies / Comparing tools and resources

Read your choice of at least one of the following (you may read both if you wish):


Group assignments (optional for the rest of the class):


February 14
Week 6: Appraisal

*What do archives collect and retain, and why? / Notions of value and worth in archival collections / Critical factors in media appraisal / Reappraisal and deaccessioning*

Read your choice of at least one of the following (you may read both if you wish):


Group assignments (optional for the rest of the class):


(Schwartz) Read Chapter 20 from *A Thousand Cuts* (Bartok & Joseph, 2016)(posted on CCLE)

February 21
Week 7: Description and arrangement

*Epistemology of collections: How do we know what we know about what we have? How do we let others know about it? / Defining key terms: OPAC, union catalog, finding aid, CMS, DAM, tags, subject headings, main entries, etc.*

Read your choice of at least one of the following (you may read both if you wish):


(NB: You need not read these two books cover-to-cover, but do browse them thoroughly enough to get a sense of their style, intellectual organization, context of creation, etc.)

Group assignments (optional for the rest of the class):


February 28

Week 8: Ethics and access

*Why do we do what we do, and what are the consequences? / What constitutes ethical practice in media archives? / “Can” vs. “should” / Laws, policies, and precepts that shape ethical practice*

Read your choice of at least one of the following (you may read both if you wish):


Group assignments (optional for the rest of the class):


March 7
**Week 9: Technological transitions and collections of different kinds**

“The modern film archive is neither: revisited” / Digital is an adjective, not a noun / Implications of technological change for production, distribution, access, and preservation

Read your choice of at least one of the following (you may read both if you wish):

Fossati, G., & Nederlands Filmmuseum. (2009). *From grain to pixel: the archival life of film in transition*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, or

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Science and Technology Council. (2007). *The digital dilemma: strategic issues in archiving and accessing digital motion picture materials*. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and


Group assignments (optional for the rest of the class):


(Digital Dilemma 1&2) SIDE BY SIDE (dir. Christopher Kenneally, 2012)(Streaming on various platforms from $2.99)

**March 14**

**Week 10: Professionalization, theorization, and institutionalization**

Professionalization in librarianship, archives, and other information fields / Core competencies for audiovisual archivists / The growing body of theory and professional literature(s) / New directions and definitions for media archivists

Ridener, J. (2009). *From Polders to postmodernism: a concise history of archival theory*. Duluth, Minn.: Litwin Books, or


Group assignments (optional for the rest of the class):


ASSIGNMENTS

1) Group facilitation of two weekly discussions (10% each) – Due dates variable; assigned in Week 1.

The heavy reading load for this class is not just busywork; these are foundational texts that will be essential for you to know, understand, and refer to in your future work. Being able to critically evaluate foundational texts and relate them to prior/subsequent scholarship is central to this course, as well as to research and professional work in the archives field.

Each week, two groups will be responsible for facilitating our discussion of the assigned readings. Each group will also read (or watch, in some cases) an additional journal article, report, documentary, or other text that relates to the primary text your group has chosen from the week’s assigned readings. As a group, you should discuss amongst yourselves what the primary text and its companion piece have to say to one another, briefly summarize the companion piece (by briefly, I mean 2-3 sentences!) and come up with two discussion questions about the primary text for the class to consider.

Post your summary of the supplementary text and questions to the discussion forum in CCLE no later than 5:30 PM on Tuesday. Please use the following format for the subject line in your post: “Week # discussion – Author (Year) [for primary text] and Author/Title (Year) [for companion piece]” (ex: “Week 2 discussion – Houston (1994) and KEEPERS OF THE FRAME (2017)”).

At a minimum, this assignment requires that you identify broad topics and/or specific points from the readings that are of interest to you (individually or as a group). Come to class prepared to use those topics and points you’ve identified to shape a conversation with the class as a whole. Please note that you may, if you wish, define “discussion question” very broadly. For instance, if topics from the week’s readings are reflected a recent news item, you may wish to point your classmates to the story, or quote from it as a stimulus for discussion. Or, if the readings address major controversies or debates in the community, you might divide the class into “pro” and “con” sides to argue specific points as a way of summarizing and applying theories and concepts from the readings. (Feel free to check with me in advance if you’re inclined to do something like this, but know that my answer will probably be “Sure, sounds great, go ahead!”)

2) Group contribution to AMIA conference program database project (20%)

Working backwards from this year’s conference, each group will be responsible for entering data from at least one year’s worth of AMIA conference sessions and Archival Screening Night programs into an Airtable database. We’ll discuss this project in greater detail during the first class meeting, and check in throughout the quarter to collaboratively discuss and troubleshoot issues as they arise.

3) Individual short paper based on database project (20%) Topic to be submitted for instructor approval by Week 7; final draft due on Wednesday of Exam Week (March 21).

As you work on the database project, and review entries from previous years’ AMIA conference programming, some things will strike you as interesting. You might see trends in content, or old topics being addressed from new perspectives; you might want to trace a particular person’s or institution’s participation in the field over a period of time; you might be curious about certain kinds of representation among speakers, topics, interest groups, screening content, etc. Find some aspect of the conference to explore via the assembled data and external sources, and discuss your findings in a short
paper. The length of your written treatment and the sources you cite are ultimately up to you, but work in the 1,200-2,000 word range is perfectly acceptable for this assignment.

4) Proposal for a conference, symposium, etc. (20%) Due no later than Wednesday of Exam Week (March 21).

Find the CFP for a relevant conference or symposium and craft a proposal that follows their submission guidelines. SMPTE, ARSC, IASA, AMIA, SCMS, NHF Summer Symposium, Orphan Film Symposium, Bastard Film Encounter, and SAA or regional archives associations are all particularly germane to the content of this course, but others are certainly eligible—ask if you’re unsure. You might base this proposal on work you’ve done for this class or another course, other work you’ve done in the field or with student groups, or just a topic you feel is a good fit for the audience and should be part of a future program. If proposing a panel, you should at least indicate who else would potentially be co-presenting, and what aspects of the panel topic they would address. Include the CFP and submission guidelines with your assignment when you turn it in, and include word counts for each section of your proposal where the guidelines indicate a maximum.

GRADING

All assignments must be completed and submitted in order to receive a passing grade for this class. Your grade for this class will be based on a major paper (40%), four shorter written assignments at 10% each (total 40%), attendance and participation in class discussions every week. If you do not show up and do the work for this class, you will not pass; it’s that simple.

If you know you will not be in class due to professional travel, medical necessity, religious holidays, or other urgent need, you should notify the instructor in advance (or as soon as possible after unanticipated absences). Attendance at professional conferences such as AMIA is an acceptable reason for class absence, but should still be cleared with the instructor ahead of time. You are not excused from completing assigned readings for weeks in which you are absent. If you miss a week in which you were scheduled to present readings, you may not be able to make up the weekly discussion assignment.

Late assignments will not be accepted, but revision and resubmission are always an option. Notify the instructor via email, phone, or text message immediately if you have an emergency situation that will prevent you getting your work in on time. Otherwise, you must turn in each assignment when it is due. I will be reading and marking your work with the same care I give to articles I am peer-reviewing for publication, and with the same intent: to make the final version as good as it can possibly be. If you do not receive full marks for any assignment, you are welcome to revise and resubmit it (along with the original assignment) before the end of the term for an improved grade.

High-quality writing and thinking are a requirement for successful graduate study and professional work, as well as for this class. You will be doing a lot of reading among the scholarly literature in this class, which should help provide a sense of the level of writing that’s expected of you at the graduate level. All of your writing for this class—including class-related emails to me and your peers—should be professional in tone and should reflect care and attention to detail, especially with respect to grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Just as grant reviewers should never be the first people to read your application for project funds, and prospective candidates should never be the first to read a position description you have posted, I should never be the first person to read your papers for this class. I strongly recommend making use of the Graduate Writing Center and its services to ensure that your
writing is at a level commensurate with graduate work in this field, and that you also collaborate with your peers to support one another’s work and learn to offer constructive feedback.

**To receive an A in this class:** Attend and actively participate every week. Demonstrate not just a thorough familiarity with the assigned readings, concepts, and methods discussed in this course, but an understanding of how they relate to moving image collections of all kinds. Submit carefully written assignments that reflect above-average effort and original insights, drawing on (and properly citing) existing scholarship and other resources, collections and materials. Behave courteously, professionally, and with respect for your classmates, guest speakers, and the instructor at all times.

**To pass this class:** Attend and participate every week. Complete the readings before class and be prepared to discuss them deeply and voluntarily, not just when called upon. Complete and submit all written assignments. Produce writing of acceptable graduate-level quality, or revise and resubmit assignments that do not initially meet this standard.

**Extra credit**
I will add one point of extra credit to your final grade for this class (up to a maximum of five points) if you join a professional organization (SMPTE, ARSC, IASA, AMIA, and SCMS are all particularly germane to the content of this course, but others are eligible), attend a conference or symposium, submit an article for publication or proposal for a conference paper/presentation, or write posts related in some way to course content for a student group or personal blog during this quarter. If you’re not sure whether something will count for extra credit, feel free to check with me. Please submit your extra credit requests via email no later than Friday of Week 10 (3/16) along with copies of your receipts or confirmation for conference registration or organizational memberships, or links to blog posts.

**CLASS POLICIES**

**Office hours and consultation on class work**
My office hours and location are listed on the first page of this syllabus. I welcome the opportunity to discuss any questions you might have about assignments, grading, or other course- or program-related matters during office hours, or by appointment. The sooner you come to me with any questions or concerns, especially about assignments or class projects, the more likely it is that I will be able to help. (And the less notice you provide me with when scheduling appointments outside of office hours, the less likely it is that I will be able to accommodate you.)

I strongly encourage all students to share their paper topics/ideas, research progress, and early drafts with me throughout the quarter (not just at or after critical due dates). Office hours are an excellent time for this kind of consultation, but submitting rough drafts or early ideas to me via email is fine too. I am always happy to help with brainstorming and pointers to resources or knowledgeable colleagues working in this area of the field—which you may not find on your own, but which can significantly improve your final product. Input you have time to act on will always be more helpful to you than comments received at the last minute or on “final” drafts!

Email is generally the best way to contact me outside of office hours. I do my best to respond to all student communications within 24 hours; however, I check email less frequently (or not at all) after business hours and on weekends. If you need to communicate with me urgently, especially the night before class or a scheduled meeting, please call or send a text message to the phone number provided.
Individual conduct and device use
Attendance in the classroom is not merely physical; it comprises your awareness and attention as well. Your devices should not be used during class time for anything not directly related to class work. Slides and lecture notes for each week will be made available on CCLE, and the classroom computer and display may be used as needed to call up web sites or digital resources for reference during discussion. We will have at least one break in every class meeting; please use those times for checking email, responding to phone messages, tweeting, etc.

Differences of opinion
Alertness to and respect for the nuances of archival ethics, as well as the personal feelings and professional opinions of your colleagues, is expected at all times in the classroom, just as it will be in your professional practice. On the other hand, thoughtful disagreements with the assigned readings or course topics will likely drive some of the most productive, enlightening discussions we have in this class. Take time to formulate your objections clearly and please bear in mind that reasonable people may disagree.

Accommodations
The Center for Accessible Education offers a range of support for those with learning differences or other circumstances; see http://www.cae.ucla.edu/ for additional details on how to request academic accommodations. I work to create an inclusive classroom, and will gladly make accommodations for anyone with documented or demonstrated needs. Please find time in the first week of classes to let me know specifically what you might need from me to ensure your optimal learning and engagement this quarter.

Academic dishonesty
Section 102.01 of the UCLA Code identifies various forms of academic misconduct; it is your responsibility to know what constitutes plagiarism, collusion, and other violations and to ensure that the work of others is properly used and cited in your own writing.
## QUARTERLY SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

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