

# IS 289: Home Movies

## Spring 2019

### SYLLABUS



*Movie watchers, ca. 1965. Photographer unknown.*

#### **Class meetings**

Thursdays, 5:30-9:00 PM  
GSE&IS Room 121

#### **Instructor**

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(or by appointment – phone/Skype also OK!)

#### **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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 no required textbook for this course; however, we will have assigned readings/viewings for each week as indicated.

## Web sites and online resources

One hundred years of film sizes. <http://www.xs4all.nl/~wichm/filmsize.html>

The Film Preservation Guide. <http://www.filmpreservation.org>

The Internet Archive: Home Movies. [https://archive.org/details/home\\_movies](https://archive.org/details/home_movies)

Timeline of Historical Film Colors. <http://zauberklang.ch/filmcolors/>

I also recommend the following texts if you wish to use the occasion of this course to start building a library of materials related to home movies and other amateur media. Copies of all of them will be available on the course reserves shelf in the IS Lab.

*Living Room Cinema: Films from Home Movie Day, vol. 1.* (2007, Center for Home Movies). Available via Netflix (DVD only), and for purchase from Amazon.

Chalfen, R. (1987). *Snapshot Versions of Life*. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press.

Ishizuka, K. L., & Zimmermann, P. R. (2007). *Mining the Home Movie: Excavations in Histories and Memories* (1st ed.). University of California Press.

Kattelle, A. (2000). *Home movies : A history of the American industry, 1897-1979* (1st ed.). Nashua N.H.: Transition Publishing.

Tepperman, C. (2014). *Amateur Cinema*. University of California Press.

Copies of each of the above and the weekly assigned readings will be held on the IS 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/watch all assigned texts before class every week and demonstrate your familiarity with them during class discussions. Failing to do so will impact the quality both of our discussions and of your overall learning in this class.

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. Please be sure your email address on file with the school is current, and check CCLE regularly in order to be properly prepared for class.

## 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: Research, Ethics, Access, and Reuse (weeks 7-10)

CLASS MEETING	TOPIC	GUESTS, DUE DATES, NOTES, ETC.
Week 1 April 4	<b>Motion Picture Technologies, Part 1</b> Early home movies (1890-1935) Defining the amateur Preservation challenges for motion picture film	
Week 2 April 11	<b>Motion Picture Technologies, Part 2</b> Mid-century amateur media (1935-1975) Refining the amateur Preservation practices for small-gauge materials	Yasmin Dessem/Chloe Patton – UCLA Library Preservation (confirmed)
Week 3 April 18	<b>Motion Picture Technologies, Part 3</b> Transition to video and digital media (1975-) The omnipresent amateur Balancing preservation and access for home movies	
Week 4 April 25	PROJECT WORK DAY	
Week 5 May 2	<b>Home movies/amateur film: Social Dimensions, Part 1</b> Defining and documenting the personal “Home” movies and “away” movies	Paolo Davanzo/Lisa Marr – Echo Park Film Center (confirmed)
Week 6 May 9	<b>Home movies/amateur film: Social Dimensions, Part 2</b> Valorization and canonization Case studies: Home movies & the NFR	<b>Short essays due!</b> May Haduong/Sean Savage – Academy Film Archive (confirmed)
Week 7 May 16	<b>Home movies/amateur film: Social Dimensions, Part 3</b> Documenting difference in home movies Developing typologies and vocabularies	Candace Ming – SSHMP (confirmed)
Week 8 May 23	<b>Research, Ethics, Access and Reuse, Part 1</b> A history of home movie scholarship (1980-present) The orphan film movement Case studies: Home movies as scientific data	Lanfanti Presents: Butt Stuff (tentative)
Week 9 May 30	<b>Research, Ethics, Access and Reuse, Part 2</b> Building institutional collections: Scope, content, format Supporting new forms of research with access	Susan Nickerson – Nickerson Research (tentative)
Week 10 June 6	<b>Research, Ethics, Access and Reuse, Part 3</b> Home movies: part vs. whole Image ethics and the rights of the subject	
Exam week June 13	Final projects due	

## SCHEDULE

In each weekly class meeting, we'll divide our time approximately equally between lecture, hands-on demos and activities, and viewing/parsing examples of home movies that relate to the assigned readings and discussion topics.

*A note on expectations:* Everyone in this class will have opportunities this quarter to touch film, use a film camera, thread a projector, splice film, inspect and prep material for digitization, scan film, and transcode digital video files. But you should NOT expect to become expert in any of these processes in just ten weeks. Expertise takes time to accrue; this is especially true for the craft knowledge of film handling and the myriad mysteries of small gauge film and amateur media formats.

Instead of expecting to develop total mastery in the space of a single term, please have the goal of cultivating curiosity, training your eyes, exploring some new areas, and adding to the list of things you'll continue to practice and get better at as your free time and professional opportunities allow.

### April 4

#### 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: Knowing your way around the film bench
  
- In-class viewing: "Small-Gauge Blow-Ups" (Produced by Simon Lund and Carolyn McCartney for Cineric, Inc.) <https://vimeo.com/114492797>

*Readings: None for Week 1!*

### April 11

#### Week 2: Motion Picture Technologies, Part 2

- Mid-century amateur media (1935-1975)
- Refining the amateur
- Preservation practices for small-gauge materials
  
- Hands-on and demos: Understanding, handling, and shooting reversal film
  
- In-class viewing: "Funeral for a Friend" (Liz Coffey, 2007)  
<https://archive.org/details/FuneralForAFriend>

- Guest speakers: Chloe Patton and Yasmin Dessem, UCLA Library Preservation

*Readings:*

*Amateur Cinema: Read the Introduction, pp. 1-13.*

National Film Preservation Foundation. (2004). *The Film Preservation Guide: The Basics for Archives, Libraries, and Museums*. San Francisco: NFPF. (Hard copy on reserve shelf; PDF available online at <http://www.filmpreservation.org/preservation-basics/the-film-preservation-guide>) **Read Chapters 1-3, “Why Preserve Film?” “Understanding Film and How It Decays” and “Film Handling and Inspection,” pp. 1-33.**

Tuttle, H. B. (1966). Some Notes on the Early Reversal Processing of 16mm Film. *Journal of the SMPTE*, 75(12), 1174–1180. <https://doi.org/10.5594/J17935>

Kodachrome reversal. (n.d.). In *Timeline of Historical Film Colors* (Barbara Flueckiger, ed.) Retrieved from <http://zauberklang.ch/filmcolors/timeline-entry/1277/>

**April 18**

**Week 3: Motion Picture Technologies, Part 3**

- Transitioning to video and digital media (1975-)
- The omnipresent amateur
- Balancing preservation and access for home movies
- Hands-on and demos: Anatomy of a film projector
- In-class viewing: “Polavision” (Eames Studio)

*Readings:*

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

Becker, S. (2007). See and Save: Balancing access and preservation for ephemeral moving images. *Spectator - The University of Southern California Journal of Film and Television*, 27(1), 21–28.

Czach, L. (2002). Polavision instant movies: Edwin Land’s quest for a new medium. *The Moving Image*, 2(2), 1-24.

Hocking, S. M., & Jimenez, M. (2015, May 27). Video Preservation - The Basics | The History Project. Retrieved March 28, 2016, from <http://www.experimentalvcenter.org/video-preservation-basics> **(Skim through this; don’t feel you must read from start to finish.)**

**April 25 – Week 4: PROJECT WORK DAY**

**May 2**

**Week 5: Home movies/amateur film: Social Dimensions, Part 1**

- Defining and documenting the personal
- “Home” movies and “away” movies
- Hands-on and demos: Prepping film for digitization
- In-class viewing: Selections from *Free Time and Sunshine*
- Guest speakers: Lisa Marr and Paolo Davanzo, Echo Park Film Center

*Readings:*

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

Compton, M. (2010) Collecting Georgia’s Hometown Movies: Acquisition, Ownership, Preservation, and Access. *The Moving Image*, 10(1), 89-101.

Jones, J. (2003). From Forgotten Film to a Film Archive: The Curious History of “From Stump to Ship.” *Film History*, 15(2), 193–202.

Koltyk, J. A. (1993). Telling narratives through home videos: Hmong refugees and self-documentation of life in the old and new country. *Journal of American Folklore*, 106(422), 435–449.

Steg, A. (2010). The Itinerant Films of Arthur J. Higgins. *The Moving Image*, 10(1), 115-125.

Tepperman, C. (2015). *Amateur Cinema: The Rise of North American Moviemaking, 1923-1960*. Berkeley: University of California Press. **Read Chapter 6: “‘Communicating a New Form of Knowledge’: Amateur Chronicles of Family, Community, and Travel,” pp. 169-192.**

**May 9**

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

- Valorization and canonization
- Case studies: Home movies & the NFR
- Hands-on and demos: Film vs. video media
- In-class viewing: *Think of Me First as a Person*
- Guest speakers: May Hong Haduong and Sean Savage, Academy Film Archive

*Readings:*

*Mining the Home Movie: Read Chapters 9-12, “Something Strong Within: A Visual Essay” “Something Strong Within as Historical Memory” “The Moving Image Archive of the Japanese American National Museum,” and “The Home Movie and the National Film Registry: The Story of Topaz,” pp. 98-141.*

Kattelle, A. D. (2003). The Amateur Cinema League and Its Films. *Film History*, 15(2), 238–251.

Keppler, N. (2016). What Happens to Films Selected for Preservation by the Library of Congress? Online: <http://mentalfloss.com/us/go/75176>

## May 16

### Week 7: Home movies/amateur film: Social Dimensions, Part 3

- Documenting difference in home movies
- Developing typologies and vocabularies
- Hands-on and demos: Shot-level description
- In-class viewing: Selections from the AMDB <https://www.amateurcinema.org/index.php/amdb> and South Side Home Movie Project Digital Archive: <https://sshmp.uchicago.edu/content/visit-digital-archive>
- Guest speaker: Candace Ming, Project Manager/Archivist, SSHMP

#### Readings:

Chalfen, R. (1987). *Snapshot Versions of Life*. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press. **Read Chapters 1-2, “Kodak Culture and Home Mode Communication” and “Social Organization, Kodak Culture, and Amateur Photography,” pp. 4-48.**

Center for Home Movies. (2010). *Digitization and Access Summit: Final Report*. (Hard copy on reserve shelf; PDF available online at <http://www.centerforhomemovies.org/homemoviesummit.html>) **Read section 2, “Cataloging and Description,” pp. 9-49.**

## May 23

### Week 8: Research, Ethics, Access and Reuse, Part 1

- A history of home movie scholarship (1980-present)
- Case studies: Home movies as data and evidence
- Hands-on and demos: Digitizing film
- In-class viewing: *Natural History of Psychotic Illness in Childhood*
- Guest speakers: Antonella Bonfanti (Canyon Cinema) and Jeff Lambert (National Film Preservation Foundation)

#### Readings:

Chalfen, R. (2002). Snapshots “r” us: the evidentiary problematic of home media. *Visual Studies*, 17(2), 141–149.

Massie, H. N. (1979). The early natural history of childhood psychosis: Ten cases studied by analysis of family home movies of the infancies of the children. *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry*, 17(1), 29–45.

McManus, I. C., & Hartigan, A. (2007). Declining left-handedness in Victorian England seen in the films of Mitchell and Kenyon. *Current Biology*, 17(18), R793–R794.

Osterling, J., & Dawson, G. (1994). Early recognition of children with autism: A study of first birthday home videotapes. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 24(3), 247–257.

Nicholson, H. N. (2001). Seeing how it was?: Childhood geographies and memories in home movies. *Area*, 33(2), 128–140.

Saint-Georges, C., Cassel, R. S., Cohen, D., Chetouani, M., Laznik, M.-C., Maestro, S., & Muratori, F. (July). What studies of family home movies can teach us about autistic infants: A literature review. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 4(3), 355–366.

## May 30

### Week 9: Research, Ethics, Access and Reuse, Part 2

- Building institutional collections: Scope, content, format
- Supporting new forms of research with access to collections and exemplars
- In-class viewing: Selected Nickerson Research Projects
- Guest speaker: Susan Nickerson, Nickerson Research

#### Readings:

*Mining the Home Movie*: **Read any two (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 Netherlands 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

Holloway, C. F. (2014). Making a case for the donor interview: Giving a voice to the Doug Betts silent home movie collection. *Oral History Forum*, 26.

## June 6

### Week 10: Research, Ethics, Access and Reuse, Part 3

- Home movies: part vs. whole
- Image ethics and the rights of the subject

*Readings:*

Katz, J. S., & Katz, J. M. (1988). Ethics and the perception of ethics in autobiographical film. In *Image Ethics: The Moral Rights of Subjects in Photographs, Film, and Television* (pp. 119–134). New York: Oxford.

Swanson, D. (2005). Home Viewing: Pornography and Amateur Film Collections, A Case Study. *The Moving Image*, 5(2), 136–140. <http://doi.org/10.1353/mov.2005.0037>

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

**June 13**

**Exam week: Final papers/projects due.**

**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 (20%):** 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 of your choosing. *This paper may be turned in at any point before class on Week 6.*
- **Term project (50%):** Each members of the class will contribute at least 10 hours of work at the UCLA Library Preservation Department to inspecting, documenting, researching, and rehousing home movie material from the Thelner Hoover collection. Students will have access to the collection on Monday and Wednesday afternoons (12:00-5:00 PM), or by appointment, and should arrange their working hours in advance with Preservation staff to ensure availability of work space and materials. *Discuss additional term project options with the instructor no later than Week 2 if you are not able to commit to time on campus during weekday working hours.*
- **Call for papers/Screening series/Event plan (10%):** Formulate an idea for a symposium, a curated screening series, a collection development effort, a digitization day, or some other special event related to home movies. You should to discuss your ideas with me early in the quarter to figure out what form it makes sense for your final deliverable to take; for instance, you might draft a call for papers for a symposium; write program notes or a grant application for a screening series of documentaries that include home movie footage as a central element; prepare an event budget/schedule and educational materials for a public outreach effort for a collection that includes amateur film materials; etc.

To pass this class:

- Attend class meetings regularly, and communicate with me in a timely and appropriate way when you need to be elsewhere during scheduled class time.
- 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 work of acceptable graduate-level quality, or revise and resubmit assignments that do not initially meet this standard.

To earn an A in this class:

- Attend and *actively* participate every week (this might include virtual forms of participation, such as posting to the online discussion forums, as well as verbal acts like speaking up in class).
- Demonstrate familiarity with and reflection on the assigned readings, and show evidence of further, self-motivated reading and research on these topics and others of interest to you.
- Submit carefully written and edited assignments that reflect above-average effort and original insights, drawing on (and properly citing) existing scholarship as well as relevant resources, collections, and materials.