IS 289: Home Movies
Spring 2019
SYLLABUS

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

Instructor
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Office location: GSE&IS 201
Office hours: Wednesdays 2:00-5:00 PM
(or by appt. – phone/Skype is always 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 20th century. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

• Identify and assess physical condition for most commonly used amateur film and video formats
• Differentiate the critical affordances of a range of different amateur media formats
• Understand basic preservation needs of film and video materials
• Evaluate the legal, ethical, privacy, and interpretive issues unique to specific examples and collections of amateur media
• Demonstrate familiarity with major archive collections of amateur film and video and prominent examples of historic 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, research access, and ethical uses of home movie collections, in private or institutional contexts
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](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://zauberklänge.ch/filmcolors/](http://zauberklänge.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 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. Doing the reading/viewing each week will greatly 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, such as when we have a guest speaker scheduled. I will make every effort to announce new readings in class at least one week prior, and will circulate follow-up email to all students enrolled in the class in the event of any changes to assignments or readings as well. Please be sure your email address on file with the school is current, and that you check CCLE regularly in order to be fully prepared each week!
# 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        | Motion Picture Technologies, Part 1  
April 4       | Early home movies (1890-1935) 
Defining the amateur 
Preservation challenges for motion picture film | |
| Week 2        | Motion Picture Technologies, Part 2  
April 11      | Mid-century amateur media (1935-1975) 
Refining the amateur 
Preservation practices for small-gauge materials | Yasmin Dessem/Chloe Patton – UCLA Library Preservation |
| Week 3        | Motion Picture Technologies, Part 3  
April 18      | Transition to video and digital media (1975-) 
The omnipresent amateur 
Balancing preservation and access for home movies | |
| Week 4        | PROJECT WORK DAY | |
| Week 5        | Home movies/amateur film: Social Dimensions, Part 1  
May 2         | Defining and documenting the personal 
“Home” movies and “away” movies | Paolo Davanzo/Lisa Marr – Echo Park Film Center |
| Week 6        | Home movies/amateur film: Social Dimensions, Part 2  
May 9         | Valorization and canonization 
Case studies: Home movies & the NFR | Short essays due! 
May Haduong/Sean Savage – Academy Film Archive |
| Week 7        | Home movies/amateur film: Social Dimensions, Part 3  
May 16        | Documenting difference in home movies 
Developing typologies and vocabularies | Candace Ming – South Side Home Movie Project |
| Week 8        | Research, Ethics, Access and Reuse, Part 1  
May 23        | A history of home movie scholarship (1980-present) 
The orphan film movement 
Case studies: Home movies as scientific data | Jeff Lambert/Antonella Bonfanti – Lamfanti Presents: Butt Stuff! |
| Week 9        | Research, Ethics, Access and Reuse, Part 2  
May 30        | Building institutional collections: Scope, content, format 
Supporting new forms of research with access | Susan Nickerson – Nickerson Research |
| Week 10       | Research, Ethics, Access and Reuse, Part 3  
June 6        | Home movies: part vs. whole 
Image ethics and the rights of the subject | |
| Exam week     | 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/discussing examples of home movies that relate to the assigned readings. Everyone in the class will have the opportunity this quarter to touch different kinds of 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 fiddly craft of film-handling, and the myriad mysteries of small gauge film and amateur media formats. Instead of expecting to develop 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 practice and get better at as free time and professional opportunities permit.

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


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

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


**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.


**April 25 – Week 4: PROJECT WORK DAY** (No class meeting today.)

**May 2**

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

**GUESTS:** Paolo Davanzo/Lisa Marr, Echo Park Film Center

- 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

Readings:

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


May 9
Week 6: Home movies/amateur film: Social Dimensions, Part 2

SHORT ESSAYS ARE DUE BY END OF CLASS TIME THIS WEEK

GUESTS: May Hong Haduong/Sean Savage, Academy Film Archive

• 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

Readings:


May 16
Week 7: Home movies/amateur film: Social Dimensions, Part 3

GUEST: Candace Ming – South Side Home Movie Project

- 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](https://www.amateurcinema.org/index.php/amdb) (and maybe some butt stuff, courtesy of our guest speakers)

*Readings:*


May 23

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

GUEST: Jeff Lambert/Antonella Bonfanti – Lamfanti Presents: Butt Stuff!

- 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*

*Readings:*


**May 30**

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

**GUEST:** Susan Nickerson, Nickerson Research

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

**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 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


**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:**


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 member 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/digitization day, or some other special event related to home movies. You should discuss your ideas with me early in the quarter to figure out what form it makes sense for your final deliverable for this assignment to take; for instance, you might draft a call for papers for a symposium; write program notes or the narrative portion of a grant application for a screening series of notable documentaries that include home movie footage; an event budget/schedule and educational materials for a public outreach effort focused on amateur film or video 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 on time.
• 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.