

University of Toronto, Mississauga

Department of Visual Studies

FAH392H5 – Video Art

Fall, 2017

Professor: Dr. Matthew Ryan Smith

Lecture: Wednesday, 9:00am - 11:00am

Room: Deerfield Hall 2070

Professor: Dr. Matthew Ryan Smith

Office: CCT Building, Room CCT3022

E-mail: matthewryan.smith@utoronto.ca

Office Hour: Wednesdays, 2:00pm – 3:00pm



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Course Description

This course focuses on video art produced after 1960, exploring its place in the history of the moving image in Western visual culture. While we will consider dominant modes of video production (feminist, home movies, autobiography, political activism, etc.) and projection, we will also concentrate on the way in which visual artists and videomakers have used the medium to analyze, oppose, critique, or satirize mainstream culture industries including television, American film, and popular culture. Artists and producers discussed in this course range from experimental videomakers John Baldassari and Stan Brakhage, Conceptual videomakers Martha Rosler and Joyce Wieland, and autobiographical artists Bas Jan Ader and Lisa Steele. Other forms of video media will be investigated in order to provide further context to class discussions, including but not limited to, contemporary music videos, social networking, television commercials, and home video. This course will also navigate both the changes in moving image technology in the 20th century (from film to video, from theatre to iPad, from television to Netflix), and the creative use of this technology by artists. Please note that this is *not* a cinema history course, but a narrow examination of contemporary video art production in art historical discourse. *Please note that some of the content presented in this course may be uncomfortable for some viewers.*

Screenings

Approximately half the class time will be devoted to video screenings. These videos are to be considered primary texts and not simply entertainment. Please note that you are expected to pay close attention to the videos during screenings, and you will be questioned on screening material. Please refrain from any behaviour during screenings that might detract from anyone's viewing of the videos, including talking to your peers, writing e-mails, or checking cell phones.

Recommended Preparation: FAH288H5, FAH289H5, FAH388H5

Required Course Readings: Available on Blackboard.

- All required readings will be available as PDFs on the Blackboard site for the course. Exhibition listings, images, and other support material will also be posted to

Blackboard on an ongoing basis. Please check Blackboard and your UTM e-mail frequently.

Recommended: (available for purchase at the UTM Bookstore):

Simon and Schuster Handbook for Writers, Fourth Canadian Edition, available for purchase from Pearson's website:

<http://vig.pearsoned.ca/catalog/academic/product/0,1144,0131272551,00.html>

Course Assignments and Evaluation Schedule:

Assignment	Due Date	Grade Weight
Participation*	Ongoing	15%
Exhibition Review	September 27 th	20%
Analytical Journal	October 25 th	25%
Research Essay	November 29 th	40%

**NOTE ON PARTICIPATION: Students are expected to regularly visit exhibitions featuring video art in Mississauga, Oakville, and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and contribute to group discussions held at the beginning of class. Recommended exhibitions featuring video art will be posted to the Blackboard site on an ongoing basis. Feel free to post your own notices as well.*

Absence Policy

Penalties for Lateness

Late Assignments

Term work must be submitted by the assigned date. A penalty of 5% per day of lateness up to and including work submitted on the last day of the term will be applied by the Instructor. Work will not be accepted beyond one week after the due date (unless granted an extension due to special considerations).

Procedures and Rules

Missed Term Work, Tests and Extensions

- Extensions or deferred tests (including the final exam) can only be granted because of dire circumstances (severe illness, death of a loved one, etc.). We cannot make allowances because of work schedules, pre-arranged holidays, and so on.
- Student absences must be declared on ROSI. Supporting documentation is required (e.g. U of T medical certificate, death certificate, etc.).
- Students who missed a test due to circumstances beyond their control (e.g. illness, or an accident), can request that the Department grant them special consideration.

All requests for make-up tests and for extended time to submit term work beyond the last day of classes, must be submitted **within 48 hours from the date of the missed test or assignment**. Requests must be submitted on a special form obtained from the DVS Office or www.utm.utoronto.ca/dvs and submitted to the Undergraduate Counsellor (CC3051). If you submit medical documentation make sure it contains the statement "*This student was unable to write the test (or submit term work by the last day of classes, if applicable) on (date) for medical reasons*". You **MUST** see your physician **on the day of the missed test or the day later** or your request will be denied. A statement merely acknowledging a report of illness made by the student to the physician is NOT acceptable. For further information on this procedure visit www.utm.utoronto.ca/dvs.

Should an illness prevent you from submitting your form to the office in person within 48 hours, emailing your documents will be accepted. This is on the understanding that the original copy will be submitted within one week from the date of the missed test or assignment. Late submissions will NOT be considered.

In case of emergencies (medical or other) contact the Undergraduate Counsellor on 905 828 3899 or email s.sullivan@utoronto.ca within 24hrs of the due date of an assignment or test.

No penalty will be assigned if your request for special consideration, described above, was successful.

DVS Grammar and Spelling Standard for Written Assignments:

We expect students enrolled in university courses to have mastered basic skills in spelling and grammar. All papers must exhibit proper spelling (including proper names, places, and words in foreign languages) and grammar. Refined grammatical points over which there is disagreement even amongst experts are not at issue. Poor writing will be penalized. The **UTM Visual Studies Grammar Workshops**, which will appear on your DVS course Blackboard page, has online workshops and quizzes you can complete to improve your skills.

DVS Double Enrolment Policy

The Department of Visual Studies does not permit students to double enrol in courses that have any components meeting at the same time. You may be enrolled in conflicting classes at the beginning of term, until the last day to add or change a section. After that date, you will be removed from one of the conflicting courses.

Statement on Academic Offences

For information on academic integrity and academic offences, including plagiarism, please refer to: <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagsep.html> and http://www.utoronto.ca/academic_integrity/

University Statement on Academic Integrity

University Statement on Academic Integrity Academic is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously.

The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the process for addressing academic offences. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

1. Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
2. Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
3. Making up sources or facts.
4. Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.

On tests and exams:

1. Using or possessing unauthorized aids.
2. Looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test.
3. Misrepresenting your identity.

In academic work:

1. Falsifying institutional documents or grades.
2. Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources (see <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/academic-integrity/resources/students>).

Equity Statement

The University of Toronto is committed to equity and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. As a course instructor, I will neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course and wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns you may contact the UTM Equity and Diversity officer at edo.utm@utoronto.ca or the University of Toronto Mississauga Students' Union Vice President Equity at vpequity@utmsu.ca.

Academic Rights

You, as a student at UTM, have the right to:

- Receive a syllabus by the first day of class.

- Rely upon a syllabus once a course is started. An instructor may only change marks' assignments by following the University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy provision 1.3.
- Refuse to use turnitin.com (you must be offered an alternative form of submission).
- Have access to your instructor for consultation during a course or follow up with the department chair if the instructor is unavailable.
- Ask the person who marked your term work for a re-evaluation if you feel it was not fairly graded. You have up to one month from the date of return of the item to inquire about the mark. If you are not satisfied with a re-evaluation, you may appeal to the instructor in charge of the course if the instructor did not mark the work. If your work is remarked, you must accept the resulting mark. You may only appeal a mark beyond the instructor if the term work was worth at least 20% of the course mark.
- Receive at least one significant mark (15% for H courses, 25% for Y courses) before the last day you can drop a course for H courses, and the last day of classes in the first week of January for Y courses taught in the Fall/Winter terms.
- Submit handwritten essays so long as they are neatly written.
- Have no assignment worth 100% of your final grade.
- Not have a term test worth 25% or more in the last two weeks of class.
- Retain intellectual property rights to your research.
- Receive all your assignments once graded.
- View your final exams. To see a final exam, you must submit an online Exam Reproduction Request within 6 months of the exam. There is a small non-refundable fee.
- Privacy of your final grades.
- Arrange for representation from Downtown Legal Services (DLS), a representative from the UTM Students' Union (UTMSU), and/or other forms of support if you are charged with an academic offence.

Blackboard

This course will use Blackboard, the online Learning Management System of UTM <https://portal.utoronto.ca/>. In order to access the portal, you will log in using your UTOR id and password. With Blackboard you will be able to: view important announcements, received course information (including syllabus), locate instructor and TA contact information and communicate with us, access course assignments, participate in group discussion, and view your grades. Communication through Blackboard requires a U of T email address. If you have not activated your university email account, please do so immediately, so that you will not miss any important messages or information.

Weekly Course Work

You should plan on devoting an absolute minimum of three (3) hours of study outside of lecture and tutorials, which will consist of:

- Read all of the assigned readings (note that you are asked to *read* the assigned readings and thus be able to quickly and efficiently summarize them; this is all I ask of you).
- Taking notes and preparing questions based on readings but related to course material.

- Studying images.
 - Visiting critical exhibitions.
 - Discussing aspects of curatorial practice with friends, colleagues, and peers.
 - Conducting your own research.
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Lecture & Reading Schedule

September 6 – Course Introduction

September 13 – Video Art: An Early History

- Horsfield, Kate. “Busting the Tube: A Brief History of Video Art,” in *Video Data Bank* (2006), p. 1-9.
- Antin, David. “Video: The Distinctive Features of the Medium,” in *Video Culture: A Critical Investigation* (Layton, Utah: G.M. Smith, Peregrine Smith Books, in association with Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1986), 147-166.
- Video screening: Bruce Nauman – *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner around the Perimeter of a Square* (1967)
- Recommended viewing: John Baldessari – *I Am Making Art* (1968), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ALWVqxySbRU>

***Opening Reception: “Habits of Care,” with performances by Paul Maheke and Laura Yuile (Wednesday, September 13, 5–8pm, Blackwood Gallery, UTM). Event is optional.

September 20 – Guest Presentation: Video and Performance Artist Faye Mullen

- Wagner, Anne. “Performance, Video, and the Rhetoric of Presence,” in *October 91* (Winter, 2000): 59-80.
- John, Conomos. “The Self-Portrait and the Film and Video Essay,” in *Imaging Identity: Media, Memory, and Portraiture in the Digital Age* (Canberra: Australia National University, 2016), 85-100.
- Recommended viewing: familiar yourself with several of Faye Mullen’s works on her Vimeo site: <https://vimeo.com/user5806386>

September 27 – Video Art and Television

- Barry, Judith. “This is Not a Paradox,” in *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*. Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer, eds. (New York: Aperture, 1990), 249-257.
- Kaprow, Allen. “Video: Old Wine, New Bottle,” in *Artforum* 12.10 (1974): 46-49.
- Dara Birnbaum, “Talking Back to the Media,” in *Resolution: A Critique of Video Art*, ed. Patti Podesta (Los Angeles: Los Angeles: Contemporary Exhibitions, 1986).
- Film screening: Chris Burden – *Through the Night Softly* (1973)
- Recommended viewing: familiarize yourself with Keith Sonnet’s body of work, <http://www.keithsonnier.net/media.html>
- DUE: EXHIBITION REVIEW ASSIGNMENT

October 4 – Feminist Critique

- Mulvey, Laura. “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” in *Film Theory and Criticism, Introductory Readings*, 5th ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 833-844.
- Nelmes, Jill. “Gender and Film,” in *Introduction to Film Studies*, 4th edition (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 221-248.
- Recommended viewing: Joan Jonas – *Vertical Roll* (1972)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jpgstpzBDJ7s>

October 11 – FALL READING WEEK (CLASS CANCELLED)

- Bourriaud, Nicholas. *Postproduction*, 2nd edition (New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2002), introduction.
- Morse, Margaret. “Video Installation Art: The Body, the Image, and the Space-in-Between,” in *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, eds. D. Hall, & S. Fifer (Metuchen, N.J.: Aperture in association with the Bay Area Video Coalition), p. 153-167).
- Ross, Christine. “Video Art at the Turn of the Millennium,” in *Art Journal* 60 (Spring, 2001): 28-33.
- Recommended viewing: Ryan Trecartin – *Roamie View: History Enhancement (Re’Search Wait’S)* (2009-2010), <https://vimeo.com/24988447>

October 18 – Narcissism and Autobiographical Video Art

- Renov, Michael. “Video Confessions,” *Resolutions: Contemporary Video Practices*, eds. Michael Renov and Erika Suderburg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996) p. 78-97.
- Smith, Matthew Ryan. “Relational Manoeuvres in Autobiographical Video Art,” in *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly* (Winter, 2015).
- Video screening: Lisa Steele – *Birthday Suit with Scars and Defects* (1974)
https://vk.com/video41083325_168319377
- Recommended viewing: Vito Acconci – *Centers* (1971)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIZOIoklszI>

October 25 – Political Activism and Video Art

- Sturken, Marita. “The Politics of Video Memory: Electronic Erasures and Inscriptions,” in *Resolutions: Contemporary Video Practices*, eds. Michael Renov and Erika Suderburg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996) p. 1-12.
- Klee, Paul. “The Politics of Ambiguity,” in *Spin[Free]joza (Shop Windows and Balloons)*. SMART Project Space, Amsterdam, pp. 17-24.
- Dezeuze, Anna. “Thriving on Adversity: The Art of Precariousness,” in *Mute Magazine* (September 2006), <http://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/thriving-adversity-art-precariousness>
- Recommended viewing: The Yes Men – *The Yes Men Fix the World* (2009),
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OazUh0Ym8rc&t=2041s>
- DUE: VIDEO JOURNAL RESPONSE

November 1 – Indigenous Video Art

- Pearson, Wendy Gay and Susan Knabe, “Globalizing Indigenous Film and Media,” *Reverse Shots: Indigenous Film and Media in an International Context*, eds. Wendy Gay Pearson and Susan Knabe (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2015).
- Hopkins, Candice, “Making Things Our Own: The Indigenous Aesthetic in Digital Storytelling,” *Leonardo* 39.4 (2006): 341-344.
- Marcia Langton, “Aboriginal Art and Film: The Politics of Representation,” *Rouge* 6 (2005), <http://www.rouge.com.au/6/aboriginal.html>
- Video screening: Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gómez-Peña, *Couple in the Cage* (1997)

November 8 – Re-Enactment and Appropriation

- Lessig, Lawrence, “The Failures of Fair Use and the Future of Free Culture,” in *Cut: Film as Found Object in Contemporary Video*. [curated by] Stefano Basilico. Milwaukee, WI: Milwaukee Art Museum, 2004. p. 47-53.
- Blackson, Robert, “Once More... With Feeling,” in *Art Journal* 66.1 (Spring, 2007): 28-40.
- Smith, Matthew Ryan, “Performative Appropriation of Video Art on YouTube, Vimeo, and Dailymotion,” in *Journal of Curatorial Studies* 4.1 (2015): 181-184.
- In-Class Screening: Nam June Paik - *Zen for Film* (1985)
- Recommended viewing: Unknown, “Untitled Inspired by Lisa Steele,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9NwNcN4o3M>

November 15 – Video Futures: Surveillance and Social Media

- Michel Foucault, “Panopticism,” in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (NY: Vintage Books, 1995), 207-213.
- Andrea Mubi Brighenti, “Artveillance: At the Crossroads of Art and Surveillance,” in *Surveillance and Society*, Special Issue on Surveillance, Performance and New Media Art, ed. John McGrath and Robert Sweeny 7.2, 175-186.
- Optional reading: James Bridle, “How Britain Exported Next-Generation Surveillance,” in *Matters* (18 December, 2013), <https://medium.com/matter/how-britain-exported-next-generation-surveillance-d15b5801b79e>
- Video screening: Jill Magid – “Art of Surveillance,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eh0XjogPQk>
- *Optional assignment: find an interesting example of how video games relate to contemporary art. Please post a brief (just a few words) description of your find on the discussion board on Blackboard. The strongest examples will be discussed in class (hint: you may be asked to briefly speak about the game if chosen!).*

November 22 – Guest Speaker – Digital Video Artist Clive Holden

- Christine Ross, “Experimental Video in Canada and the Question of Identity,” Anne Whitelaw, Brian Foss and Sandra Paikowsky, ed. *The Visual Arts in Canada: The Twentieth Century* (Oxford University Press 2010): 393-411, https://www.mcgill.ca/ahcs/files/ahcs/experimental_video_art_in_canada.pdf
- Sky Gooden, “Clive Holden Grounds the Digital in Aura,” in MOMUS (27 October, 2016), <http://momus.ca/clive-holden-grounds-the-digital-in-aura/>

November 29 – Final Class

- Course review, evaluation, and discussion.
- DUE: RESEARCH ESSAY ASSIGNMENT

Additional References

Roy Armes, On Video, New York: Routledge, 1988.

Barbara Abrash & Catherine Egan, eds., Mediating History: The MAP Guide to Independent Video, New York: New York University Press, 1992.

Bad Object-Choices, eds., How Do I Look? Queer Film and Video, Seattle: Bay Press, 1991.

Peter X. Feng, ed., Screening Asian Americans, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002.

Peter X. Feng, Identities in Motion: Asian American Film & Video, Durham: Duke University Press, 2002.

Coco Fusco, English is Broken Here: Notes on Cultural Fusion in The Americas, New York: The New Press, 1995.

---, The Bodies That Were Not Ours and Other Writings, New York: Routledge, 2001.

Hall, Doug and Sally Jo Fifer, eds., Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art, New York/San Francisco: Aperture/BAVC, 1990.

Harry Gamboa, Jr. and Chon Noriega, Urban Exile: Collected Writings of Harry Gamboa, Jr., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.

Roger Garcia, ed., Out of The Shadows: Asians in American Cinema, Locarno: Olivares/Locarno Film Festival, 2001.

Martha Gever, John Greyson, Pratibha Parmar, eds., Queer Looks: Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Film and Video, New York: Routledge, 1993.

Darrell Hamamoto & Sandra Liu, eds., Countervisions: Asian American Film Criticism, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000.

Thomas Harding, The Video Activist Handbook, London & Chicago: Pluto Press, 1997.

Kate Horsfield and Lucas Hilderbrand, Feedback: The Video Data Bank Catalog of Video Art and Artist Interviews, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006.

Amelia Jones, ed., The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader, New York: Routledge, 2003.

Alexandra Juhasz, AIDS TV: Identity, Community, and Alternative Video, Durham: Duke University Press, 1995.

---, ed., Women of Vision: Histories in Feminist Film and Video, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

Russell Leong, ed., Moving The Image: Independent Asian Pacific American Media Arts, Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Center and Visual Communications, 1991.

Laura U. Marks, The Skin of The Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses, Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.

---, Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.

Jose Munoz, Disidentification: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

Ira Schneider and Berl Korot, Video Art: An Anthology, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976.

Ella Shohat & Robert Stam, Unthinking Eurocentrism, New York: Routledge Press, 1994.

Bill Viola, Reasons for Knocking at an Empty House: Writings 1973-1994, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995