ARTS-UG 1604

Indigenous Cinemas of the Americas:
Performing Self-representation Through Media

Classes: Fridays 12:30-3:15pm, 1 Washington Place, Room 601.

Instructor: Amalia Cordova, amalia.cordova@nyu.edu, (212) 998-8685.
Office hours: Fridays, 4-5pm, 53 Washington Sq. South, Rm. 409, or by appointment.

Course Description: This course focuses on the practices of film, video, and digital expressions emerging in the past decades from indigenous communities and independent Native artists in the Americas. Notions of imperfect, Third and Fourth cinema, indigenous self-representation, collective authorship, Indigenous people’s representation in mainstream films and other forms of exhibition such as museums, installation and photography will be explored.

Students will research specific authors or media projects, and how institutions present this work through exhibitions, events, festivals, and publications. The course features guest lecturers and requires class and off-site viewing of films and videos that are otherwise unavailable on the market.

Course Objectives: This course will provide students with an introduction to both the history and theory of indigenous cinema. Students will gain not only an understanding of the motivating factors that led to the emergence of this cinema and become acquainted with both its major movements and representative filmmakers, but also be able to recognize several of the aesthetic and narrative practices in these films. In addition, we will revisit the concepts of Fourth cinema and imperfect cinema, examining at the significance of these concepts in contemporary cultural and political debates. A key goal of this course is to introduce and gain familiarity with the critical tools that might help us situate indigenous audiovisual practices against our experiences with Hollywood and European cinemas.

Course policies:
Active participation is strongly encouraged. Attendance to all class lectures and screenings is mandatory. Absences and tardiness will be penalized. If you unable to come to class due to illness or some extenuating circumstance, contact me by e-mail as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements may be made. If you must leave early due to illness or for any other cause, it is your responsibility to inform me as to the reason. All work must be handed in on time except in the case of serious illness, medical emergency, or unforeseen circumstances. Incompletes will not be granted unless there are extraordinary circumstances. Please note that proposals for final projects will require an in-class presentation and sign-off from the professor. Assignments will be submitted in both paper and electronic form.

Films shown during class are a key part of class. Turn off cell phones and all other portable electronic devices during class time and screenings.
Violations of academic integrity will not be tolerated. As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website http://www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html.

Required reading - Articles (provided):
Cordova, Amalia, “Towards an Indigenous Film Festival Circuit,” Film Festival Yearbook 4: Film Festivals and Activism, St. Andrews, 2012.
Wortham, Erica, Between the state and Indigenous autonomy: Unpacking video Indígena in Mexico, American Anthropologist, 106 (2), 2004.

Books (at Shakespeare & Co):
Kilpatrick, Jacquelyn, Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film, University of Nebraska Press, 1999.
**Websites:**


Conversations with the Earth: [http://www.conversationsearth.org/](http://www.conversationsearth.org/)


The Brown Pages: [http://www.brownpages.co.nz/](http://www.brownpages.co.nz/)


IsunaTV: [http://www.isuma.tv/](http://www.isuma.tv/)


Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian: [www.nativenetworks.si.edu](http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu).


**Recommended readings:**


Worth, Sol, and Adair, John, *Through Navajo Eyes: An Exploration in Film and Communication and Anthropology*, University of New Mexico Press, 1997.

**Requirements:**

- Class attendance and participation: 20%
- One 3-page response paper on a film/filmmaker or an event review: **25% due October 11.**
- Proposals for final research project **due Nov. 8 for class workshop session.**
- Reflection paper (5-6 pages) on a media project/director, film or screening attended: **25% due Nov. 22**
- Final Research Project and class presentation: **30%, due December 13. No exceptions.**
- Active participation in the public exhibition of our final projects.
- A site visit to invitational screenings at the National Museum of the American Indian and the American Museum of Natural History’s Margaret Mead Film and Video Festival.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

Class 1 - Sept. 6, 2013: **Native Americans on Film: silent and contested spaces**

Class 2 - Sept. 13: **Experimental ethnographies**

*Sept. 18- Attend screening of Ojo de Agua, at NMAI/NYU.*

Class 3 - Sept. 20: **Video Mexico Indígena**
**Guest speakers:** filmmakers Roberto Olivares, Sergio Julian (Mixtec) and Jeff Arak.
Readings: Cordova and Zamorano, “Mapping Mexican Media”: [http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/rose/mexico.htm](http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/rose/mexico.htm); Wilson and Stewart, *Global Indigenous Media: Cultures, Poetics and Politics*, chapters 1 (Salazar & Cordova) & 9 (Smith); *Recommended*: Wortham, E., “Between the state and Indigenous autonomy: Unpacking video Indígena in Mexico.”
Films: Shorts by Ojo de Agua Comunicación; *Life on Death Beach* (2012) by Jeff Arak.
Class 4-Sept. 27: **Latin America: forms of resistance and collective voice**
Reading: Wilson and Stewart, Global Indigenous Media: Cultures, Poetics and Politics, chapters 4 (Halkin) and 8 (Murillo);
Films: *Indigenous Peoples: This Is How We Think* (2000, 8 min., Bolivia) by CEFREC-CAIB; *Newen* (2004, 4 min. Chile), by JAAS; *Video in the Villages presents Itself* (2008, 14 min., Brazil) by Vincent Carelli and Mari Correa; *The Land Belongs to Those who Work it* (2006, 11 min., Mexico) produced by the Chiapas Media Project/Promedios.

Class 5- Oct. 4/5: **Video in the Villages 25 Years** (Offsite session)
**Attend a screening of Video Nas Aldeias, at NMAI/NYU.**
Films: *Marangmotxingo Mirang/From the Ikpeng Children to the World* (2002, 35 min., Brazil) by Kumaré Txicão (Ikpeng), Karané Txicão (Ikpeng), and Natuyu Yuwipo Txicão (Ikpeng). *Pirinop* (Brazil), by Kumaré Txicão (Ikpeng), Karané Txicão (Ikpeng) [clips].

Class 6- Oct. 11: **Native Narratives in North American Cinema**
***First film/event response paper due***

Class 7- Oct. 18: **Festival Observational** (Offsite session)
**Attend a screening at the Margaret Mead Film & Video Festival (Oct. 17-20) and prepare reviews. Class meets at the American Museum of Natural History unless otherwise indicated.**

Class 8- Oct. 25: **A First Nations’ First: Atanarjuat**
Reading: Wilson and Stewart, *Global Indigenous Media: Cultures, Poetics and Politics*, chapters 3 (Cache Collective); Zach Kunuk Interview at [http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/rose/kunuk_z_interview.htm#open](http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/rose/kunuk_z_interview.htm#open).

Class 9- Nov. 1: **Inuit Knowledge: from preservation to projecting the future**
Films: *Qulliq* (1992, 12 min., CAN) by Susan Avigaq (Inuit), Madeline Ivalu (Inuit), Mathilda Hanniliqq (Inuit), Martha Maktar (Inuit), Marie-Hélène Cousineau.
*Qapirangajuq: Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change* (2010, 54 min., CAN) by Zacharias Kunuk (Inuit) and Ian Mauro.
*First response papers returned and discussed, site visits discussed.*
Class 10- Nov. 8: **Indigenous performance and exhibition spaces**
Reading: Gonzalez, J., Subject to Display, Reframing Race in Contemporary Installation Art, Introduction; Rick Hill, “In Search of an Indigenous Place: Museums and Indigenous Culture” The Native Universe and Museums in the Twenty-first Century, pp.96-117.
Films: 4-Wheel War Pony (2008, 8 min. US) by Rustin Craig (White Mountain Apache/Navaajo); Emendatio [clips], video-performance of James Luna (Luiseño).
***Workshop session: final research project proposals due and are presented in class.*** Come prepared to commit to a project for your final work.

Class 11- Nov. 15: **Spaces of Circulation: Festivals and Distribution**

Class 12- Nov. 22: **Pioneering Women's Documentaries**
Recommended: Lewis, Randolph, Alanis Obamsawin: The Vision of a Native Filmmaker, Preface, ch.1 (pp.1-35), ch. 4 (pp. 88-121).
Films: A Video Book (1994, 10 min., US) by Beverly Singer (Tewa/Navaajo);
Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance, (1993, 119 min. Canada) by Alanis Obomsawin (Abenaki);
Cousins (2010, 17 min. US) by Sally Kewayosh (Ojibwe/Cree).
***Second film/screening reflection paper due.

**Nov. 29- No class, “Thanksgiving” Break.**

Class 13– Dec. 6: **Final Exhibition planning session.**
***Bring your final work for internal class review.*** We will help you with any exhibition issues that may come up. Exact dates of exhibition TBD.

**Guest Speaker** (TBC): radio producer Tiokasin Ghosthorse.

Class 15– Dec. 13: **FINAL PRESENTATIONS AND CLASS EVALUATION.**
***Final papers/projects due.
***Our CLASS EXHIBITION will be mounted the week of Monday, December 16 – Friday, December 20, exact dates and locations forthcoming. We celebrate!