Indigenous Media Arts: Who Can Tell Whose Story?

Classes: Thursdays 6:20pm - 9pm.
Location: 40 West Fourth Street, Tisch LC 7 (Please note this room is not at Gallatin).

Instructor: Amalia Cordova, amalia.cordova@nyu.edu, (212) 998-8685.
Office hours: Fridays, 2-4pm, 53 Washington Sq. South, Rm. 409, or by appointment.

Course Description: How do Indigenous and community-based filmmakers challenge the politics of representation? Who has the right to tell whose stories? What is the role of curators and exhibition spaces in engaging with and presenting these voices and visions? This course will study the ways that independent and Indigenous artist collectives in the Americas have turned to media arts to dispute ethnographic and Hollywood imagery, and create their own audiovisual media “from within.” We will explore notions of “imperfect” cinema, visual sovereignty and “video indígena” (Indigenous video) through specific authors and by developing our own media projects. We will also discuss the roles of the cultural institutions that present this work through exhibitions and festivals, including events taking place right in New York City.

Course Objectives:
This course will provide students with an introduction to the driving forces behind and the debates within Indigenous media art practices. Students will gain an understanding of the motivating factors that led to the emergence of this mode of audiovisual sovereignty, and become acquainted with its major movements and representative filmmakers. We will discuss the aesthetic and narrative threads of these works, re-framing the concepts of Fourth cinema and imperfect cinema, and 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. Silence and refrain from using mobile 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):**


**Books:**

- Kilpatrick, Jacquelyn, *Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film*, University of Nebraska Press, 1999.

**Websites:**

Beyond Buckskin blog: [http://www.beyondbuckskin.com/](http://www.beyondbuckskin.com/)


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


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

Native appropriations website: [http://nativeappropriations.com/](http://nativeappropriations.com/)


**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 Oct. 8.**
- Proposals for final research project **due Nov. 5** for class workshop session.
- Reflection paper (5-6 pages) on a media project/director, film or screening attended: **25% also due Nov. 5.**
- Final Research Project and class presentation: **30%, due December 10. 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. 3, 2015: **“Reel Injuns”**

**In-class screening:** *How Tasty was my Little Frenchman* (1971, 84 min., Brazil) by Nelson Pereira dos Santos [clips]; *Reel Injun*, (2009, 85 min., Canada) by Neil Diamond (Cree).

Class 2 – Sept. 10: **Native Narratives**
Read: Kilpatrick, Jacquelyn, *Celluloid Indians* ch. 4 (pp. 65-100) and ch.6 (pp 178-232); Singer, B., *Wiping the War Paint Off the Lens: Native American Film and Video*, Introduction, ch. 1 & 2; Shohat & Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the media*, pp.1-54.


Class 3 – Sept. 17: **Experimental ethnographies**

**In-class screening:** *Through Navajo Eyes* (1966) [various authors, clips]; *The Laughing Alligator* (1979, 28 min., US) by Juan Downey; *Hopit* (1981, 14 min., US.) by Victor Masayesva, Jr. (Hopi).

Class 4 – Sept. 24: **Latin America: resistance and collective voice**
Read: Wilson and Stewart, *Global Indigenous Media: Cultures, Poetics and Politics*, ch. 1 (Salazar & Cordova), 7 (Murillo), 8 (Halkin) & 9 (Smith).

**In-class screening:** *Newen* (2004, 4 min. Chile), by JAAS (Mapuche); *Llanthupi Munakuy* (2001, 47. min, Bolivia) by Marcelina Cardenas (Quechua); *Día Dos/Day 2* (23 min., 2004, Mexico) Dante Cerano (Purepecha); *Children of the Jaguar* (2012, 29 min., Ecuador) by E. Gualinga (Kichwa).
Class 5 – Oct. 1: *Atanarjuat*
**In-class screening:** *Atanarjuat/The Fast Runner* (2001, 172 min., Canada) by Zacharias Kunuk (Inuit)

Class 6 – Oct. 8: *Video in the Villages*
**In-class screening:** *Video in the Villages presents Itself* (2008, 14 min., Brazil) by Vincent Carelli and Mari Correa; *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); *O Mestre e O Divino* (2013, 85 min., Brazil) by Tiago Campos featuring Divino Tserewahu (Xavante).

**DUE:** *** First film/event response paper***5 pages, on a media project/artist.

Class 7 – Oct. 15: *Indigenous performance and exhibition spaces*
**In-class screening:** *Emendatio*, video-performance of James Luna (Luiseño); *Those With Voice*, by Jeff Arak.
*First response papers returned and discussed.

Class 8 – Oct. 22: *Festival Observational* (Offsite session)
Read: Tuhíwai, L., Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples, Ch. 1&2.
**Offsite screening:** Attend a screening at the Margaret Mead Film & Video Festival (Thursday–Sunday, October 22–25) and prepare reviews. Review: [http://www.amnh.org/explore/margaret-mead-film-festival](http://www.amnh.org/explore/margaret-mead-film-festival)
*Class meets at the American Museum of Natural History unless otherwise indicated.

Class 9 – Oct. 29: *Spaces of Circulation: Festivals and Distribution*
**Viewing:** Trailers and clips from indigenous festivals.
***Second film/screening reflection draft posted for discussion*** (Mead Festival ethnography).

Class 10 – Nov. 5: *Digital Dignity*
***Second film/screening reflection paper due*** (Mead Festival ethnography).
*First pass at Final Project ideas, presented and discussed. Bring a 1-paragraph description.
Class 11 – Nov. 12: Exhibition planning session.
*** Bring your final project in its current state for internal class review. Come prepared to commit to a project for your final work. We will help you with any exhibition issues that may come up.

Class 12 – Nov. 19: Indigenous Media-making in New York - a guest lecture
Readings TBD.
Guest Speaker: Angelo Baca (Dine/Hopi), filmmaker and Ph.D candidate in Anthropology, NYU.

Nov. 26 - No class, “Thanksgiving” Break.

Class 13– Dec. 3: Wallmapu Rising: Indigenous Showcase at NYU
Special screenings of Indigenous films from Rapa Nui (Easter Island) and Wallmapu (Mapuche Territory) with artist/filmmaker Francisco Huichaqueo (Mapuche).
View: http://huichaqueo.cl/

Class 14 – Dec. 10: Final Exhibition planning session and class evaluation
***FINAL PRESENTATIONS. Final papers/projects due. Walk through and exhibition space assignments.

Our PUBLIC EXHIBITION will be mounted the week of Monday, December 14 –Friday, December 20, exact dates and locations forthcoming. We celebrate!