

NEW FORMS: ARCHIVES & REPERTOIRES

Arts 730 / 386

Mondays, 1:50 – 5:30 pm, KP672

Instructor: Mariam Ghani

Office hours: Mondays, 12:45 – 1:30 pm

Email: mghani@qc.cuny.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

New Forms: Archives & Repertoires is a graduate-level seminar in theory and practice. We will be looking at and thinking through how artists mine, perform, and construct archives. Students will be required to complete weekly readings, to lead and participate in classroom discussion of those readings, to produce one creative or critical text in response to readings and class presentations, and to produce one project that either constructs a new archive or derives from an existing one. You will be given wide latitude for independent exploration in your coursework, but you will also be responsible for bringing a great deal of thought and preparation to the classroom each week.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Required and recommended reading for each week is indicated in the schedule in an abbreviated form. I have compiled a PDF course reader for you that contains all the reading for the semester, and lists all the reading in long form in the table of contents. I may occasionally change the schedule of the reading to reflect the flow of class discussion, or add another recommended reading. If I do, I will distribute the new schedule and/or reading in class, by email, or on Blackboard. If the reading is distributed in class and you are not present, it is your responsibility to obtain a copy. Further resources for your projects are also listed in the course reader.

Each of you will be responsible for leading the discussion of one reading during the semester (possibly in collaboration with another student depending on enrollment numbers). If you are the discussion leader, or one of the leaders, for the week, you should not only read the text closely, but also do some research on its original context. When and where was it first written, by whom, and for what audience? How does that context inflect the writing?

You are required to produce one text in response to the readings and artworks discussed in class. This text should be typed, 3-5 pages long, 12-point font, 1.5 line height. Please note that “response” does not mean “summary.” Find something generative in a text, and unpack it; or find the links and/or gaps between different texts; or connect the readings to the artworks in a new way. You should be taking notes on the reading on an ongoing basis to prepare for classroom discussions; go back to those notes to prepare your own text. Parenthetical citation (MLA rules) and a works cited list is required. If you want to use footnotes for a specific reason, or if you want to produce a creative rather than critical text, please discuss the form of your text with me before beginning to write.

You should also be reading/listening to/looking at the news on an ongoing basis – whether on Facebook, Twitter, Feedly, radio, a particular news site, etc. etc. - and keeping a file of stories and images that catch your eye. Bring one of these stories or images into class each week and be prepared to explain its meaning or context to the rest of the class.

Occasionally, I may change the schedule of assigned readings to reflect the flow of discussion in the

classroom. If you do not attend class, it is your responsibility to find out if such a change was made.

You are also required to produce one project, which should either construct a new archive (factual or fictitious) or be derived from an existing archive. The project may take on any number of forms or content, but you must submit a written proposal for the project to me at mid-term, which we will then discuss individually, before beginning work on your project. You may collaborate on your project (either with someone in the class, or with someone outside it) but if your collaborator is also in the class, each of you will have to submit a written evaluation of the other's contributions to the project, so that I can grade your work fairly.

ASSESSMENT & GRADING

| | |
|----------------------------|------------|
| Project | 50% |
| Writing | 20% |
| Class participation | 30% |

I assess writing based on legibility, clarity of ideas, and demonstrated understanding of the material to which you are responding, with extra points for style. I grade syntax and structure according to the Strunk & White (*The Elements of Style*) rules.

I assess work on projects based on quality of ideas, artistic integrity of work, willingness to experiment, relationship to course themes, ability to explain your thought process, and success of execution.

I assess participation based on your attendance, first of all (you can't participate in critique if you don't show up; always show up, even if your own work isn't finished). Second, your preparation for and participation in class discussions, your work as discussion leader, and your effective balance of generosity of spirit, critical inquiry, and creative problem-solving in critiques.

Work handed in late without an official excuse (i.e. note from the doctor or administration) will automatically be docked from A to A- after three days, A- to B+ after five days, B+ to B after a week, and so on.

This course is graded on an MFA scale:

- A = 4.0 Student has demonstrated consistent **outstanding** performance in all course requirements—above and beyond expectations.
- A- = 3.7 Consistently **outstanding** performance but slight room for improvement in one aspect of the course (class participation, being on time).
- B+ = 3.3 Consistently **above average** performance in all course requirements.
- B = 3.0 Consistent **satisfactory** performance at the expected level in all course requirements. Baseline “good grade” for graduate students.
- B- = 2.7 **Satisfactory** performance in all but one of the course requirements (absence or chronic tardiness, insufficient participation, late assignments).
- C+ = 2.3 **Warning** grade. As a midterm grade, this indicates that the student needs to improve

performance significantly or is in danger of failing the class. Student should meet with professor to find out how to improve.

C = 2.0 **Lowest passing grade** for graduate students. There is no C minus.

F = 0 **Failure.** The student has failed to meet the minimum standards for the course.

Unexcused absences, latenesses, early departures or cuts will directly affect your grade. Students are expected to attend all classes. **Three unexcused absences will result in a failing grade.**

I will not change any grades unless you hand in substantially revised work. I am happy to meet with you to suggest revisions, but I will not, under any circumstances, argue with you about your grade.

If you have to take an Incomplete in the course for medical or family reasons, please email or call me to work out a schedule for meetings and assignment submission in the winter/spring; I will be traveling quite a lot so it would be best to schedule in advance.

COURSE POLICIES + PHILOSOPHY

All students must adhere to college-wide policies regarding plagiarism, academic integrity, computer and network use, health and safety, and students with disabilities.

A note about academic integrity: please remember that all work must be your own. If it is not, the source should be cited and documented appropriately. We will discuss fair use, appropriation, and the role/presentation of sources in research-based practices as part of our coursework.

During the course of this semester you may be given readings or shown artworks that include nudity, expressions of sexuality, strong language, religious imagery, or other material that you may find personally difficult or offensive. If you anticipate that any particular material will present a problem for you, please let me know at the beginning of the semester, and I will try to notify you before you encounter such material.

Education is cooperation. In this classroom we are all responsible for each other. All of you will be asked to both teach and learn from each other. This is also a course where you will have the scope to pursue independent research and develop your ideas over time. You can request additional feedback from me or from your peers at any stage in the process, or you can bring ideas and/or work in for critique only at pre-scheduled moments. Please think of this course as a flexible space that can adjust as we get to know each other's strengths and needs.

COURSE SCHEDULE

*Please remember that the course schedule may change. If the schedule is changed, a new version will be distributed in class or via email. If you are not in class, it is your responsibility to make sure you have the latest version of the schedule.

Monday 8/31

WEEK 1: Introductions & expectations

Syllabus, course format, project, field trips, discussion schedule

Reading due 9/10: Foucault, Agamben, "Field Notes"

Recommended (strongly, if you haven't read it yet – everyone else we will read references it): Derrida

Also recommended: longer excerpt from Agamben

Monday 9/7

NO CLASS – LABOR DAY

Thursday 9/10 (Monday class schedule)

WEEK 2: FIELD TRIP: PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

Archival Impulse: Collecting and Archiving Moving Image in Asia

Symposium at MoMA, co-organized by Asia Art Archive in America & Collaborative Cataloging Japan.

Public panels 10 am-12:45 pm, Barthos Theater; closed-door workshop 2-5 pm, Classroom B.

Reading due 9/21: Foster, Sekula ("Reading an Archive")

Recommended: Enwezor, Sekula ("The Body and the Archive")

Monday 9/14

NO CLASS – College Closed

Monday 9/21

WEEK 3: ARCHIVE/ARKHE

Reading discussion: Foucault, Agamben, Derrida, Sekula

Look: *Archive Fever*, *Deep Storage* exhibitions; "Spectral Archives" talk

Reading due 9/28: Pad.ma, Taylor, Cvetkovich (video: <https://pad.ma/DYU/player>)

Recommended: Benjamin, "Trusting Clifford Owens"

Monday 9/28

WEEK 4: REPERTOIRE/RESISTANCE

Reading discussion: Taylor, Pad.ma, Cvetkovich

Look: Pad.ma, AIF, CAMP, Ulrike Muller, Clifford Owens, H.I.J.O.S., Bouchra Khalili, Akram Zaatari

Thought experiment due 10/5: What informal archives or repertoires have you already accumulated or encountered in your lives? How would you represent or perform these within an art framework? You can write down your thoughts, bring in images, or present a rough performance.

Monday 10/5

WEEK 5 – Guest lecture TBA; Mariam out of town

Present thought experiments

Reading due 10/19: Downey, Atlas Group (Recommended: Zaatari)

Email MG a 2-line abstract for your text project

Monday 10/12

NO CLASS – Columbus Day

start working on your text

Monday 10/19

WEEK 6 – FACTS/FICTIONS

Reading discussion: Foster, Downey, Atlas Group

Look: *Dissonant Archives*, Walid Raad, Zineb Sedira, Adelita Husni-Bey, Emily Jacir

Due 10/26: 3-5 page critical or creative text; prepare to present it (or perform it) informally in class

Monday 10/26

WEEK 7: PRESENTATIONS

Critical/creative text due

Texts presented in class

Look: Suzanne Lacy's *Performing the Archive*; Lawrence Abu Hamdan; Jeanine Olsen

Reading due 11/2: Dittborn, Merewether, Soulellis, Index of the Disappeared

Monday 11/2

WEEK 8: CONSTRUCTIONS/DECONSTRUCTIONS

Reading discussion: Dittborn, Merewether, Soulellis, Index

Look: Eugenio Dittborn, Carla Herrera-Prats, Carlos Motta, Abraham Cruzvillegas, Kristen Gallagher, Paul Chan, Maryam Jafri, Naeem Mohaiemen, Index of the Disappeared

Due 11/9: project proposals (1 page max)

Monday 11/9

WEEK 9: MEETINGS

Project proposals due

Individual meetings

Due 11/16: revised proposals

Reading due 11/16: "Warm Data," "Digital Effects" (Recommended: "Save As")

Monday 11/16

WEEK 10: DATABASE/INTERFACE

Revised proposals due; research methods

Reading discussion: warm/cold data, analog/digital, database forms, content/form, collection navigation

Projects due for in-progress critique starting 11/23

Monday 11/23

WEEK 11: CRITS 1

In-progress critiques group 1

Monday 11/30

WEEK 12: CRITS 2

In-progress critiques group 2

Monday 12/7: CRITS 3

WEEK 13 – last class meeting

In-progress critiques group 3

Monday 12/14 *class may or may not meet

Monday 12/21

FINAL PROJECTS DUE