

# INTERMEDIATE VIDEO: CONTRAPUNTAL & CONTESTED NARRATIVES (FV 4109)

## **Meeting time and places:**

Thursday, 1:40 pm – 5:20 pm

VAPA Kinoteca, for critiques & screenings / VAPA POD, or D204 Production Studio, for tech workshops and exercises

## **Faculty: Mariam Ghani**

Pronouns: she/her

Email: [mariamghani@bennington.edu](mailto:mariamghani@bennington.edu)

Office hours: Wed 11 am – 12 pm, VAPA B207

Or remote by appointment

## **Technical Instructor: John Crowe**

Pronouns: he/him

Email: [johncrowe@bennington.edu](mailto:johncrowe@bennington.edu)

Office hours: Wed 2-4 pm in VAPA P112 (The Cave)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Intermediate Video builds on the concepts and technical skills introduced in Intro to Video, and has a different theme each term. This semester of Intermediate Video will be focused on the following thematic, conceptual and formal questions: How do we approach storytelling with the consciousness that history is understood differently by victors and vanquished, images read differently in centers and peripheries, words have different weights in different languages, and even our founding myths and fairy tales exist in multiple variations? In particular, how can we work with narratives around places and histories that are particularly contested? Edward Said wrote in *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives* (1986) that “we can narrate ourselves against another people’s pattern, but since it is not ours ... we emerge as its effects, its errata, its counternarratives. Whenever we try to narrate ourselves, we appear as dislocations in their discourse.” How do we narrate against the grain? What truth claims can art make in post-war and post-colonial contexts where, as one Atlas Group work denotes, “the truth will be known when the last witness is dead”? How do we reposition the margins as a site of resistance or, as Kevin Young wrote in *The Grey Album: On the Blackness of Blackness*, “read for the shadows” in between the lines of official history? We will read some of the key texts that established these ideas, and look at possible narrative strategies, including counterpoint, polyphony, unreliable narration, destabilized points of view and audition, and multiple-channel work.

prerequisite: Introduction to Video

4 credits; 1 semester; may be repeated with permission; maximum enrollment: 14

in-person only

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this term, students will:

- Build technical media production skills with advanced Cave equipment through in-class workshops and weekly exercises;
- Further develop editing skills and become familiar with more complex post-production workflows;
- Complete readings and screenings on the topic of contrapuntal and contested narratives, and write brief reading responses;
- Develop critical analysis tools and aesthetic vocabulary for moving image video art and cinema through screenings, discussions, writing, and group critique;
- Propose and produce significant moving image projects of their own devising.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Supplies - required

Notebook or note-taking app

### Supplies - recommended

personal headphones

a 32-128 GB USB flash drive (can be borrowed short-term through Cheqroom)

a Mac or ExFAT formatted portable USB/USB-C drive, 500 GB+

## EQUIPMENT CHECKOUT & EDIT LAB ACCESS

Enrollment in this course grants you access to most of the equipment loaned out from the Cave (VAPA P112), once we have covered how to use that equipment in our technical workshops. If you miss a technical workshop, you will not be able to check out the relevant equipment until you schedule a make-up session or study the equivalent online materials. **Please review the online [Cave Hours and Policy](#), which also includes the form that you need to fill out EVERY TERM in order to use the Cheqroom equipment reservation system.**

**Please check all equipment BEFORE leaving the Cave. If a piece of equipment is found damaged upon its return, the last renter is held responsible – which may be you, if you don't catch existing damage when you check it out.**

**Report any technical problems you may encounter with Cave equipment to John Crowe as soon as you encounter them**, and bring malfunctioning equipment into the Cave to be fixed. The sooner your report problems, the sooner they are fixed! Also, please report any lost or stolen items from the kit to John Crowe as soon as they are lost or stolen. You can also use the #vapa-cave channel on the [Visual Arts Slack](#) to send messages to the Cave staff.

**You will have 24/7 key access to the new Video Studio (D204) and new Video Annex Lab** (outside of class hours) as soon as you are added to the Campus Security key list. You no longer need to reserve lab workstations in advance, but you do need to book the Video Studio in advance using Scheduler. **Please [read and bookmark the online Video and Animation Handbook](#), which will always contain links to the most current class schedule and the online Scheduler that you need to use to reserve workstations in advance, as well as instructions on how to access both.** It also includes links to pre-recorded tech demos and written materials that can be helpful to review if you missed something during an in-class tech workshop. [Monitored lab hours](#) (across the POD and Annex, with monitors based in the POD) will be weekdays starting at 6 pm and weekends starting at 3 pm, if you need help while working or run into issues, and John can also be reached via the #vapa-cave channel on the [Visual Arts Slack](#).

**If you are in temporary quarantine and have a project due, you can access lab computers remotely.** This is not an ideal solution so please do not use this unless you really need to. If this comes up and you are not yet set up in Splashtop Remote, please let me/John/IT know.

If you are going to be working with longer-form videos or more complicated effects that require a lot of processing power and time, you may want to invest in your own external drive. And a small, cheap 32-128 GB flash drive is great to have just for backups of your Premiere projects, moving files from station to station, and final exports. You can also check out thumb drives like these temporarily from the Cave to facilitate in-class presentations or installations.

**If you run into problems while using the lab, please report them to John immediately.** Again, the sooner you report problems, the sooner they are fixed.

## SHARED SPACES + SHARED COMPUTERS/MEMORY CARDS

Part of our Commitment to Shared Responsibility on campus is taking joint responsibility for maintaining the safety of the spaces we all use in common. The Kinoteca and the Edit Lab are both spaces that we all need to help out with, by **cleaning anything we use in the lab or projection booth before and after we touch it.** Cleaning supplies will be provided for this purpose. Please let John, Liza, me or a lab monitor know if the cleaning supplies are running low, so that they can be restocked as soon as possible.

**You are responsible for backing up all your working and final files. Lost, corrupted, or overwritten files are not a valid excuse for late projects.** Files are not guaranteed to remain on the networked server, the LaCie drives connected to lab computers, or on camera memory cards. The server and LaCies are wiped at the end of every semester and the cards are usually wiped by the next person to use them. **Always copy all your files off any shared memory card BEFORE handing it over.** If you have an external drive, save to it early and often, and **be sure to back up your most important files, especially your Premiere project files** (save them in at least two places – they’re tiny so you can just email them to yourself, or drop them in Google Drive, at the end of every session). If at all possible, keep ALL files for each project until after the end of the semester. You can, for example, use your Bennington Google Drive storage for this purpose – just make sure to keep your folder structures intact when you move/copy them.

TIP: Work directly from the local drive – use external drives and as backup and transfer only! This will speed up your work session considerably, while avoiding disastrous link glitches and total project meltdowns.

## SYLLABUS, WEEKLY MATERIALS, WRITTEN RESPONSES

This syllabus is a [Google Doc](#) linked from the course page on Populi. **Please note that the course schedule is not completely fixed.** While the major milestones - assignment due dates and tech workshops - will not change, other elements of the course may be adjusted in response to the pace and dynamics of our interactions as a class. **Please check the syllabus every week for changes BEFORE you start your homework for the week, especially if you were not in class the previous week.**

Weekly materials - required or recommended reading, and required or recommended viewing links - will be posted to Populi. Please note that some reading/viewing links can only be opened on campus (for example ProQuest links, Docuseek links, or e-reserve library links) unless you log in with Bennington/Crossett credentials first.

Short written responses are required for some weekly materials. These should be submitted through the Populi Assignments tab, which lists the dates on which they are due. When I say short, I mean short - minimum 1 paragraph, absolute maximum 2 paragraphs. Find something in the weekly materials that sticks with you, and write about why it interests you, or why you disagree with it, or how it resonates with your own work or ideas. These written responses serve as a springboard for classroom discussion, so they are due before class, and are considered late if handed in after class. And even if a written response is not required that week, please do take notes on the weekly materials and come to class prepared for discussion.

During the first week of class we will divide up the readings for the semester and each of you will be assigned to co-lead discussion for one week. Discussion leaders for the week can

determine how they wish to divide up the weekly materials - for example, each person can focus on one text/work, or you can prepare all the materials together. You should prepare a series of prompts for discussion – questions about the text itself, larger questions that were raised by the text, thoughts about how the text connects to other texts we have read or works we have looked at, and so on. Sometimes it is useful to look up the original context (both time and place) in which the text was published or the work premiered, or do a little research into the maker's biography, when preparing to lead a discussion – it can give you extra insight. Sometimes it is also useful, though obviously not required, to look at the recommended material for that week, which can give you additional context for the ideas in the required material. Feel free to deploy creative methods to provoke discussion.

However you generally track the news, please consider keeping a file of stories and images that catch your eye as being relevant to our class themes. We will occasionally start class by discussing what we've seen and heard out in the world that week. You can also use Populi to share relevant items.

If you are absent from class, please check Populi/the syllabus the next day, because I will usually update it with links to material we looked at and listened to in class.

## EXERCISES VS. PROJECTS

You will be required to complete several in-class technical exercises, some individually and some in small groups. You are also required to complete two short projects assigned by me, and one longer final project of your own design. Before starting work on your final project, you will submit a proposal for the project, which we will then discuss in an individual meeting.

Your projects are due for critique on the days indicated in the course schedule. **When a project is due for critique, it should be uploaded to the [class Google Drive folder](#) at least an hour before class start time on the due date and preferably by midnight the night before class.** Please put your name in the filename of your video when you upload it (ex: MariamGhani\_Proj1.mp4), double-check that it plays back from Google Drive, and bring a backup copy on a drive if possible. Preferred export setting in Premiere: H.264 high quality, same settings as sequence (unless your sequence is less than 1080p resolution for some specific reason). If you want to present an installation instead of a single-channel work, please give me a heads-up beforehand. **Technical exercises should be uploaded to the class Google Drive folder by the morning after the day of the in-class exercise, unless otherwise indicated in the syllabus.**

Please be clear: Exercises are not projects and projects are not exercises. As much as you may enjoy making an exercise with your group, it will be graded primarily on technical proficiency, and will not be critiqued. They are ways for you to build your technical skills, and for me to track your technical progress – while also getting you used to the collaboration essential to film/video production. Please save your conceptual and critical energies for your projects. Projects are evaluated primarily based on concept and form, and presented for peer critique. You may revise your projects after critiques and replace the versions you previously uploaded to the Google Drive folder, but you are not required to do so. **The final versions of all your projects must be in the folder by December 20th** in order for me to review them before preparing final grades and evaluations.

Some of you may work or may have worked with cameraless and obsolete tech processes of video making in the past. To facilitate everyone in the class learning the full range of skills and equipment covered in this course, I am requiring that you work with the Cave cameras for your second and final projects. If you have an exceptional reason to work without a camera or on your own camera, please come to me with a proposal that includes what you want to do and what equipment you will use, and I will consider an exception. I cannot guarantee I'll grant the request.

## ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

Video is a demanding medium. Our equipment is also a shared resource, and has to be treated carefully. So, **if you miss a technical workshop during which equipment is introduced, you will not be able to check that equipment out until you review the recorded version and/or ask John Crowe for a make-up demo.** This is not punitive, but rather meant to ensure that everyone is able to use the equipment correctly, minimizing the chances of accidental damage to our shared resources.

This class is also a place where you can bring brand-new works, creative experiments, and as-yet-incomplete ideas to your peers, and develop them in a supportive environment. As such, it is largely dependent on your participation and generosity with each other to create that environment. If you don't show up for each other, and give each other honest but constructive critiques, you won't have the exchange of ideas that is fundamental to making projects better. All of which means: **please show up for critique days, even if your own work isn't finished** or you're not presenting that week. It's disrespectful to your peers to expect them to give your projects focused attention, if you don't show up for them. Missing a critique will substantially affect your participation grade.

However: I will not penalize anyone for situations where synchronous participation is made burdensome by factors out of their own control (including but not limited to illness, quarantine, and family emergencies). **All I ask is that you communicate the relevant details to me as soon as you can, and that you propose and fulfill a clear plan to demonstrate your engagement with the materials you missed.** While I will make every attempt to accommodate different learning styles and needs with a mix of screenings, readings, discussion, hands-on workshops, in-class exercises, individual meetings, and self-directed projects, we will be moving fairly quickly through some advanced techniques and complex ideas. Please make sure to reach out to me if you are unable to attend class, are feeling overwhelmed, and/or need to work through some materials more slowly.

### **What do I mean when I say critique? That's actually up to you.**

Before the first critique of the semester we will talk together about what format(s) we would like critiques to follow in this course. Here are some resources to use when thinking about this question: a Judith Leeman text on [forms and patterns of critique](#), Caroline Woolard's [critique menu](#), the [Room of Silence](#) video made by RISD students.

## ASSESSMENT & GRADING

<b>In-class exercises</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Written responses + proposal</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Assignments 1-2</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Final project</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Class participation*</b>	<b>20%</b>

\*\*includes participation in discussions and tech workshops, discussion leadership, preparation for class and use of time in class, and effective balance of generosity of spirit, critical inquiry, and creative problem-solving in critiques; please see notes above re: equivalents for asynchronous participation

All of your work in this course will be assessed for the following criteria: quality of ideas, quality of work executed and ability to articulate and explain your thought processes; understanding of any historical and theoretical material presented, and ability to relate that material to an overall understanding of the medium and other aspects of your own practice; willingness to explore and take genuine risks in your work as an artist; and the amount of time, effort, and thought given to coursework.



Your projects and exercises will be evaluated along three axes: concept/content, form, and technique. Exercises will be evaluated with an emphasis on form and technique, while projects will be evaluated with an emphasis on concept and form. A project that displays excellence in all three areas should meet the following criteria:

- 1) The project has an original, clearly communicated concept or an innovative, effective approach to an assigned or appropriated idea.
- 2) The project has the form most suited to its concept and content and vice versa.
- 3) The project has a well-defined structure and unified formal strategies.
- 4) The artist demonstrates an understanding of the medium and mastery of the techniques and tools employed.

If you collaborate with another student in the course on a project, I will ask each of you to write a paragraph describing your own and your partner's contributions to the project, so that I can assess whether the work was equitably distributed. If you collaborate with a student from outside the course, I will ask you to submit a brief statement describing your role and your collaborator's roles in production and post-production.

**I will not change any grades** unless you hand in a substantially revised assignment. You can hand in a revised version of any assignment at any point, up to and including the final class of the semester. I am happy to meet with you to suggest revisions, but I will not, under any circumstances, argue with you about your grade.

GRADE	QUALITY	EXPLORATION	WORK	DISCUSSIONS	ATTENDANCE
<b>A</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	Insightful, generous, energetic	Excellent form & content, consistently experimenting	Always prepared for class, makes intelligent & considered contributions	Always present (or equivalent), work in on time
<b>B</b>	<b>Good</b>	Inquisitive, engaged	Good form & content, takes some risks	Usually prepared for class, able to make interesting contributions	Always present (or equivalent), work in on time
<b>C</b>	<b>Average</b>	Just sufficient	Holds together, but unconvincing	Not always prepared, only able to make obligatory contributions	Misses some classes without making them up, work sometimes late
<b>D</b>	<b>Poor</b>	Limited, formulaic	Work thrown together just before class	Only makes very limited contributions	Excessive absences without equivalents, work late & incomplete
<b>F</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Virtually none	Virtually none	Makes almost no contribution	Absent most of the time, no equivalents

## COURSE POLICIES + PHILOSOPHY

### ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS + BASIC NEEDS

Bennington College provides reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities when requested and necessary to ensure equal access. If you believe you are entitled to an accommodation, please speak with Katy Evans, the Academic Services and Accommodations Advisor, about your disability-related needs. If approved, you will receive a memo detailing your specific accommodations. Please share this memo with me, so we can set up a meeting to discuss how best to implement the accommodations. **Please note that I will not be aware of your needs if you do not share the memo with me.** The sooner we meet to discuss your needs, the better. If you are experiencing new and/or newly significant challenges, please talk to me, reach out to your faculty advisor, visit Academic Services, or connect with resources available through health and psychological services.

We also understand that basic needs (food, housing, and wellness) have a direct impact on the academic performance, health, development and success of our students. If you have a personal circumstance or need that will affect your learning or performance in this course, please let me or your faculty advisor know so that we can help find resources to support you during the term.

### TECH NEEDS

**If you are consistently experiencing technological barriers to accessing course content,** please let me know so that I can work with you to find alternative solutions. **If you anticipate having specific tech needs for this class** – especially your final project -- that may be a particular challenge, **please reach out to me and John as soon as possible** so that we have some extra time to work with you to find creative ways to meet those challenges.

### ETHICS + INCLUSIVITY

All students must adhere to college-wide policies regarding original work, academic integrity, and computer and network use. Academic and artistic integrity can be confusing in the age of appropriation, but please remember that if work is not your own, the source should be cited and documented appropriately. The general college policy can be found here: <https://www.bennington.edu/faculty/faculty-handbook/academic-policies-and-procedures/academic-and-artistic-ethics-policy>. We can have more in-depth discussions of fair use, appropriation, and the role/presentation of sources as part of our coursework.

Bennington College is committed to fostering the intellectual growth of all students, and to creating a learning environment where human cultural diversity is valued and respected. We are also looking at, thinking about, and making work that takes strong and sometimes provocative positions on difficult issues. For example, during the course of this semester we may look at artworks that include nudity, expressions of sexuality, strong language, violence, religious imagery, political controversy, contested histories, or other material that you may find personally difficult or offensive. This can be a difficult balancing act and if at any point you feel that the environment of the course has become less than respectful, welcoming and inclusive, please come to me to share your concerns. You can also reach out to the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion if you feel that you can't talk to me for any reason.

We may also look at some videos that include formal effects (for example, strobe effects), that can cause problems for people with photosensitivity or seizure disorders. **If you anticipate that any particular material will present a problem for you for any reason, please let me know** (in office hours, by email, or via Slack DM) **at the beginning of the semester, and I will do my very best to notify you before such material is shown.** Every now and then something sneaks up on me too – if I haven't seen a film in several years, for example, and have forgotten that a particular scene or element was included. In that case, please feel free to leave class for as long as you need to, stop watching/participating until the film/discussion is over, or interrupt us if you feel it's important that we stop. **If you plan to present work of your own that may include difficult material, please let the class know beforehand** and give us some context for discussion. Try not to surprise us (even if you want a cold read).

**Education is cooperation.** In this classroom we are all responsible for each other, and all of us will be asked to both teach and learn from each other. In order to do that, we must respect each other's perspectives and contributions. You should feel free to bring your own thoughts and interests into the classroom, while understanding that others in the room may have very different thoughts and interests. Please think of this course as a flexible space that can adjust as we get to know each other's strengths and needs. And please remember that the space of the course is not static or closed: it should also be responsive to the urgencies and emergencies of the larger world.

The Raqs Media Collective wrote in "How to Be an Artist by Night" (2009) that being an artist is no different from learning to become an artist, because as artists we are constantly remaking ourselves and our horizons, rediscovering what we want to do, to think about, and to inscribe on the attention of the world. The most important thing you will learn in the video program is not how to use a specific camera, because those keep changing, or a specific piece of software, because those change too, but how to think through and with technologies that change constantly; how to think like an artist, as Raqs wrote, constantly preparing for the unknown.

# COURSE SCHEDULE

\*You need to check Populi/this document every week for the most up-to-date version of assignments and readings. If you are not in class, it is **your responsibility** to make sure you know whether changes have been made to the schedule.

---

THURS 9/8

CLASS 1 - CANNIBALISM

KINOTECA

**Due this week: Read the syllabus**

**Introductions and expectations**

**Discussion:** [anthropofagia](#), media jujitsu, [détournement](#) - strategies for critical appropriation

**Watched in class:** Don Featherstone, [Babakiueria](#) (1986, 29:20); Jackie Salloum, [Planet of the Arabs](#) (2005, 08:55); Jorge Furtado, [Isle of Flowers](#) (1989, 13:09)

**In-class exercise/Premiere refresher:** [Camp Kuleshov](#) editorial challenge

Further exploration: Oswald de Andrade, [Anthropophagic manifesto \(1928\)](#); Guy Debord & Gil J. Wolman, [A user's guide to détournement](#) (1956); Situationist International, [Détournement as negation and prelude](#) (1959); Guy Debord, [The Society of the Spectacle](#) (1974, 1:27:42, NSFW) ([English overdub version](#)); Nelson Pereira Dos Santos, [How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman](#) (1971, 1:20:09, NSFW); Jayce Salloum & Elia Suleiman, [Introduction to the End of an Argument](#) (1990, 40:41); Sierra Pettengill, [The Reagan Show](#) (2017) on Amazon Prime and [Riotsville, USA](#) (2022) in theaters September 16th

---

THURS 9/15

CLASS 2 - COUNTERPOINT

KINO

**Reading due (no response):** Shohat/Stam, ["Media Jujitsu"](#) \*\*while reading, please find a clip of one of the films mentioned but not screened in class, and watch that as well - I've linked to some above\*\*

Recommended reading: Trinh T. Minh-Ha, ["Mechanical eye, electronic ear and the lure of authenticity"](#) (1983); Edward Said, [Culture and Imperialism](#) (1994 edition, read chapter 1)

**SEPC elections**

**Screened in class:** Shirin Neshat, [Rapture](#) (1999) and [Turbulent](#) (1998); Omer Fast, [The Casting](#) (2007) - [Front channels](#), [Back channels](#), [Installation view from Whitney Biennial with artist explanation](#) (3:29); Films Division and reimagining India post-independence: S.N.S. Sastry, [I Am 20](#) (1967), Pramod Pati, [Explorer](#) (1968), S.N.S. Sastry, [On The Move](#) (1970), and S. Sukhdev, [India '67](#) (1967).

**Tech workshop 1 (second half, in D204): GH4 cameras & prime lenses**

**In-class exercise:** shoot the same subject with different lenses and depth of field settings, making sure to have adequate lighting for your smallest aperture. **Footage can be uploaded directly from camera to Google Drive at the end of class, or compiled into a sequence and re-exported.**

Further exploration: trailer for Shirin Neshat's 2009 feature film [Women Without Men](#); Art21 [Fiction episode](#) featuring Omer Fast from 38:34 - 53:31 (discussing later works *5000 Feet is the Best* and *Everything That Rises Must Converge*); [5000 Feet is the Best](#) (2011); more on/of S. Sukhdev on [Indiaincine.ma](#); Mani Kaul, [Arrival](#) (1980); Tyeb Mehta, [Koodal](#) (1970)

---

THURS 9/22

CLASS 3 - TALKING BACK

KINOTECA

**Reading & response due:** bell hooks, ["Talking Back"](#) (1990)

Recommended reading: Gloria Anzaldúa, ["How to Tame a Wild Tongue"](#) (1987); Dara Birnbaum, ["Talking Back to the Media"](#) (1984?)

**Review of prime lens exercise** and discussion of lens [sweet spots](#) (for primes, roughly two full stops from your maximum aperture) and camera native ISO (the ISO at which your camera achieves its best signal-to-noise ratio, not to be confused with base ISO, the lowest possible ISO setting). Here's a detailed rundown of how to find your [lens sweet spot](#), and a very detailed [ISO explainer](#). Also discussed: how different lenses make different compositions possible, and produce different emotional effects. Short video [here](#), long video [here](#) (the whole Shot List series is worth watching if you want to dig deeper into how the technical side of filmmaking plays into aesthetic choices).

**Screening/discussion - talking back to/through/in spaces from which you've been excluded / critical fabulation and shadow histories, part 1:** Adrian Piper, [Cornered, Part 1](#) (1988); Ja'tovia Gary, excerpts from *Giverny I - Négrresse Impériale* and *The Giverny Document* on [her Vimeo](#); Wael Shawky, excerpt from [Cabaret Crusades part 2](#) (2012, TRT 1:00:57); Sky Hopinka, [When you're lost in the rain](#) (2018, 5:05); Marlon Riggs, excerpt from [Tongues Untied](#) (1990, 54:43); Otolith Group, [Otolith III](#) (6 min excerpt, 2009), [The Radiant](#) (11 min excerpt, 2012)

Further exploration: Kathleen Collins, [Losing Ground](#) (1982 feature, on Criterion Channel); Sky Hopinka, [Anti-Objects. or Space Without Path or Boundary](#) (13:05, 2017); Arthur Jafa, [Love is the Message. the Message is Death](#) (2015, 7:04); Trinh T. Minh-ha, [Surname Viet Given Name Nam](#) (1989, 1:48:27); CAMP, [Al Jaar Qabla Al Daar \(The Neighbor Before the House\)](#) (2012, 1:00:00); Otolith Group, [Otolith II](#) (8:33 excerpt, 2007); Teshome Gabriel, [Third Cinema in the Third World: The Aesthetics of Liberation](#) (also in Crosssett)

---

THURS 9/29

CLASS 4 - READING FOR SHADOWS D204

**Reading due (no response):** Kevin Young, [The Grey Album \(2012, excerpt\)](#), The Otolith Group, ["Black Audio Film Collective"](#) (2007)

Viewing due - critical fabulation and shadow histories, part 2: Walid Raad/The Atlas Group, *Miraculous Beginnings* and *No, Illness is neither here nor there* and *I only wish that I could weep*; Black Audio Film Collective (John Akomfrah; Reece Auguiste; Edward George; Lina Gopaul; Avril Johnson; David Lawson; Trevor Mathison), *Handsworth Songs* (59:00, 1986) - link in 4 parts: [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#), [Part 4](#) NOTE the first set of videos is about the Lebanese civil war, in a very oblique way; the second set is about the 1985 riots in London and Birmingham's Handsworth district, in reaction to the repressive policing of black communities, and includes some direct footage and interviews as well as analytical framing and more abstract passages.

Recommended reading: Saidiya Hartman, "[Venus in Two Acts](#)" (2008); Stuart Hall, "[Unsettling the heritage: reimagining the nation-state](#)" (1999); Walter Benjamin, "[Theses on the Philosophy of History](#)" (1940)

### **Tech workshop 2: Sound AND Tech workshop 3: Studio lighting**

**In-class exercise: Two-person dialogue scene shot with classic coverage** (3 cameras, lav & boom mics, key/fill/back/background lights)

**Extra credit out-of-class exercise:** Import the [group footage from class](#) into a new project, and follow [this tutorial](#) to create multicam clips with audio sync for each take from one of the two setups we filmed. (Some of the cameras appear not to have been running audio, which means you may have to do some manual syncing.) Then experiment with cutting between the wide shot and closeups and the different takes until you have a full cut of the scene with a rhythm that feels natural. Note that it sometimes feels better to hold on the person listening, rather than constantly cut to the person speaking! Find your best audio source for each line, and disable the others. Add some room tone to smooth things out if you need to cut different sources together. If you really want to go nuts you can also experiment with mixing in [additional ambient sound or Foley effects](#) to build a fuller sound world. **Re-export as an mp4 and upload to Google Drive by 10/13. Don't work on this till your project is finished, but I do recommend looking at the footage before you shoot anything else - you can always learn something from whatever mistakes may have been made.**

Further exploration: Lighting with a gaffer from [Reverse Film School](#)

---

THURS 10/6      CLASS 5 - PROJECT #1 CRITS      KINOTECA

**Due for critique: Project #1: Appropriation (3-7 minutes)**

Make a video using appropriated footage. The footage must be in the public domain, available under an appropriate Creative Commons license, or you must be able to argue for your use of the clips under the legal [doctrine of fair use](#), as a parody, critique, or meaningful transformation of the original. I would like you to think about this assignment as an opportunity to either: “talk back” to or call out the material you are using; to place multiple sources in counterpoint with each other through montage or juxtaposition; or to détourne the original source until it acquires a different meaning. You can add audio, graphics, [sound effects](#), and titles/subtitles/captions. You can also shoot new footage, but the majority of the footage should be appropriated and the new footage must have a clear relationship to the appropriated footage.

**Your video must be uploaded to the class/group Google Drive folder at least one hour before class starts, preferably by midnight the night before class. Please put your name in the filename!**

---

THURS 10/13    CLASS 6 - DESTABILIZATION    D204

**Reading & response due:** [Amitav Ghosh, “Writing the Unimaginable” \(2016\)](#)

Recommended reading: Siegfried Kracauer, [excerpt from Ch. 3. “The Establishment of Physical Existence.”](#) in *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* (1960); Fred Moten & Stefano Harney, [“Politics Surrounded.”](#) from *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (2013); Adam Piron, [“Pure Legend: Dispatch from an Incomplete Search for the DeMille Indians”](#)

Recommended viewing/reading: My Sight is Lined With Visions - [The Vault and accompanying essays](#)

**Screening/discussion:** excerpt from Sara Dosa, [The Seer and the Unseen](#) (2019, 1 hr 20 mins, USA/Iceland); Fox Maxy’s feature in progress [Watertight](#) (8 min teaser, USA) at Cousin Collective; [Colectivo Los Ingrávidos, Coyolxauhqui](#) (2017, 9:46, Mexico) - essay about it [here](#): [wicked problems](#), [hyperobjects](#), unevenly distributed apocalypses and imagining other forms of existence; sensible cinema and non-human viewpoints

**Tech workshop 4: Camera supports**, from stable-based supports (tripods, jibs), to body-based supports (Steadicam and shoulder mount), to mobile object-based supports (dollies, drones).

**In class exercise:** Create a scene that incorporates three different kinds of camera movement. **Footage can be uploaded directly from camera to Google Drive at the end of class, or compiled into a sequence and re-exported.**

Further exploration: [a breakdown](#) of the different kinds of camera movement, with examples (Studio Binder, 26:40); [Harvard Sensory Ethnography Lab](#); trailer for [Leviathan](#), one of the better-known films to come out of SEL

---

THURS 10/20    CLASS 7 - QUEERING THE CANON    KINO

**Reading & response due:** [Ann Cvetkovich, “The Queer Art of the Counter-Archive” \(2011\)](#)



Recommended reading: Dudley Andrew, [“Adaptation”](#) (1984); Helen Hok-Se Leung, [“Unsung Heroes: Reading Transgender Subjectivities in Hong Kong Action Cinema”](#) (2013); Jasbir Puar, [“Queer Times, Queer Assemblages”](#) (2005)

**Screening/discussion:** Andrew Ondrejcek, [The Actress](#) (2021, 8 mins); first 15 mins from Isaac Julien’s [Looking for Langston](#) (1988, 44:41 - full film at link); lightning tour of the [New Queer Cinema](#) of the late 80s/early 90s including trailers for Derek Jarman’s [Caravaggio](#) (1986) and [Edward II](#) (1991) and Gregg Araki’s [The Living End](#) (1992) and [Totally F\\*\\*\\*ed Up](#) (1993) and two clips from Cheryl Dunye’s [The Watermelon Woman](#) (1996); first 15 mins from Sally Potter’s [Orlando](#) (1992 - full film at Crossett link)

**Tech workshop 5: Intermediate editing, compositing, and color grading with Premiere; sound editing and composition in Audition vs. ProTools**

### Mid-term SEPC discussion

Further exploration: more [Andrew Ondrejcek](#); more [Isabel Sandoval](#); more [Isaac Julien](#); full film of [The Watermelon Woman](#) (available [on Showtime](#) among others); Derek Jarman, [Jubilee](#) (1:47:00, 1978) and [Blue](#) (1:15:57, 1993); Su Friedrich, [Damned if You Don’t](#) (1987), B. Ruby Rich’s [original essay on New Queer Cinema](#); Ulrike Ottinger [on Criterion](#); Pratibha Parmar’s [Khush](#) (1991); Todd Haynes, [Poison](#) (1991) and the trailer for his 2002 take on Douglas Sirk, [Far from Heaven](#); Zach Blas, [Contra-Internet](#) (2014-18)

---

THURS 10/27 CLASS 8 - POLYPHONY

KINO

**Reading & response due: Okwui Enwezor, [“The Artist as Producer in Times of Crisis”](#) (2011); Michel Foucault, [“Of Other Spaces”](#) (1984)**

Recommended reading: Homi Bhabha, [introduction to The Location of Culture](#) (1994); Kamau Braithwaite, [“Nation Language”](#) (1993)

**Screening/discussion:** heterotopias, multi-channel work, collective & collaborative modes of production; Julian Rosefeldt, [Manifesto](#) (2015, 13-channel film installation) - watched [install doc video](#) and [first half of Manifesto 13](#); Sophie Calle, [Take Care of Yourself installation doc](#) (2007) and [interview w/her about it](#); Rashaad Newsome, first half of [Shade Compositions](#) (2009 version); Candice Breitz, [Love Story](#) (2016) - watched [trailer](#); Postcommodity, [Going to Water](#) (2021, 4:40 install doc, 9-channel) and [Elders First](#) (2021, 4:31 install doc, multi-screen); Andrew Norman Wilson, [Z = |Z/Z•Z-1 mod 2|-1: The Old Victrola](#) (2020)

**Tech workshop 6: Compositing with AfterEffects; AE/Premiere roundtrips**

**In class exercise: make a title sequence for a film that doesn’t exist (yet)**

Further exploration: [AfterEffects tutorials](#); Lorna Simpson, [31](#) (2002, 31-channel installation, 8 min excerpt from 20 min TRT); Camille Henrot, [Grosse Fatigue](#) (2013, 13 mins, NSFW)

---

THURS 11/3 NO CLASS - PLAN DAY

---

THURS 11/10    CLASS 9 - PROJECT #2 CRITS 1    KINOTECA

**Project #2: Adaptation (5-10 minutes) due for critique**

Select an existing text to act as a stepping-off point for a video. You can interpret “text” fairly broadly – from a single line from a poem, song, play or film, to a paragraph or page or chapter of prose, to an instantly recognizable painting or photograph. You can also interpret “adaptation” fairly broadly – think about the way some literary “sequels” have been written to point out problematic aspects of original texts, or the way entire television series are spun off from single characters in source material. You can also play multiple texts against each other. The original text(s) must not appear in any form in the final video, but we should be able to identify the reference or allusion.

**Your video must be uploaded to the class/group Google Drive folder at least one hour before class starts, preferably by midnight the night before class. Please put your name in the filename!**

---

THURS 11/17    CLASS 10 - INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS    REMOTE

**Due: Pre-production packet for final project: 1-paragraph proposal, plus 3-5 visual and/or audio references for your formal approach. Posted to Populi by Wednesday night.**

This is your project to shape as you wish, open to any approach to video art. The only limits are that the duration not exceed 20 minutes, and that you submit a written project proposal to me that details the form, the content/concept, and why that form best expresses that content/concept. For narrative projects, I recommend submitting a longer narrative treatment with a story outline before our meeting, and planning to submit a full script and storyboard/shot list by December 1st. If there is a research component, a list of sources is helpful. You can also include audiovisual references (images, links) if those will help you explain the intended idea, form, or tone/mood.

**Individual meetings to discuss proposals, sign up for a slot via Google Doc on Populi**

---

THURS 11/24    NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING

---

THURS 12/1    CLASS 11 - PRODUCTION WORKSHOP #2    D204

**Reading due (no response): Georges Perec, “[The Infra-Ordinary](#)” (1973)**

**Full-class group exercise, production roles will rotate three times, sign-up for roles will be posted on Populi.**

---

THURS 12/8                      CLASS 12 - FINAL PROJECT CRITS 1                      KINO

**Due this week for critique: final projects (rough cuts can also be presented for feedback)**

---

THURS 12/15                      CLASS 13 - FINAL PROJECT CRITS 2                      KINO

**Due this week for critique: final projects**