Screen Cultures and Curatorial Studies Course Descriptions for 2019-20:

**SCCS 812: Critical and Theoretical Approaches to Screen Cultures and Curatorial Studies**

This course examines the key critical and theoretical tenets of screen cultures and curatorial studies. The course shall have both historical and contemporary components in order to situate the student within various fields of debate.

We shall not only study film, media and curatorial studies theory in the course, but ask the question “what is theory”? What is its use value, what can theory do, and as importantly, not do? To undertake these questions, we will examine historical and contemporary forms of theory, approaching them not so much as “answers” but as tools that are generative: a form of intellectual creation the allows for the possibility to re-frame assumptions about how film, media, and curation function and circulate with dominant and counter public spheres. We will also ask questions about the relationship between theory as a tool and the art/film/media/exhibition object that it mobilized to advance a given theory. We will take a fairly eclectic approach in terms of case studies, looking at video art, “long” cinema, imaginary curation, experimental media, ethnographic media, advertising, art cinemas, digital media, and documentary.

Selected theoretical approaches include psychoanalytic, Marxist, aesthetic, post-colonial, historiographical, feminist, queer, cultural, and ideological approaches to film, media, and curatorial studies, and screen cultures more generally.

*Instructor: Scott MacKenzie*

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**SCCS 814: Histories and Methodologies of Screen Cultures and Curatorial Studies**

This course will provide a sampling of the various roles that a carefully designed methodology can play in production, criticism, and curatorial practices, with a view to expanding the possibilities in students’ research and research-creation projects. The goal is to assist the student in developing innovative but rigorous approaches in their research.

We will develop responses to some fundamental questions regarding method. While familiar and clearly defined methodologies have indisputably proven their worth, are there other approaches which might contribute to research results? Is it always best practice to have a single, clearly defined methodology? Is it ever appropriate to entertain several different, and perhaps even competing methodologies in a single project? Can too much attention to controlling methodologies restrict research outcomes?

This course will explore emerging and to some extent experimental methodological approaches: the merging and hybridization of academic and artistic methods (research-
creation); how changing views on the role and status of the author can effect method; how the careful use of constraints can paradoxically liberate research results; the relationship between the manifesto, and manifesto-like articulations, effect artistic and critical production, etc.

Instructor: Gary Kibbins

SCCS 820: Media Production

This course is designed for students with active creative practices. The course will facilitate structured peer feedback opportunities for students as they complete a self-directed project in the medium of their choice. Each student will be expected to take a single project from concept to completion during the semester. The project should be new at the start of the course, and should build on the student’s existing body of work. While students will be self-directed in the technical production of their projects, they will be accountable to the class for an introduction to their creative practice and background, a clear presentation of their production plan, well-prepared in-progress updates, a polished final presentation, and high-quality final documentation. Traditional studio-critique models will be consciously interrogated; students will be asked to reflect on the purpose and benefits of critique, and strive to develop a common language in order to communicate as creative peers with diverse practices and approaches.

There are no official pre-requisites for this class at this time. However, it is recommended that students have one of the following:

- a portfolio of creative work;
- a CV with evidence of creative practice;
- a transcript with at least one course in any area of creative practice (writing, filmmaking, studio art, drama, music, digital media, dance, etc).

If none of those are available, students who wish to take this course are advised to attend an extra-curricular workshop in media production basics before taking the class.

Instructor: Emily Pelstring

SCCS 828: Critical Curatorial Studies Seminar

This graduate seminar course addresses the histories, theories and issues of curatorial practice as a tool of cultural agency and considers evolving paradigms of “the curatorial.” Through critical analysis and engagement with readings and defined case studies, the class will investigate the forces and frameworks that shape the creation and presentation of exhibitions, programs and screenings, ranging across such topics as display formats, material and digital forms of narrative building, local and global circuits of reception, audience-making, resources/markets, festivals, institutional types and collections.

Addressing both conceptual frameworks and the political economy of curatorial practice, students will consider the roles of belief systems/values, policy, politics, funding agencies and philanthropists as these impact cultural expression and exchange.
The meaning and usage of the word “curate” has evolved dramatically in recent years, both inside and outside the art world. This course explores the following core questions. What is the role of a curator? How do we best understand curatorial methodologies for the display of objects, experiences and information, and fully exercise their potential in different contexts? And, how do curators negotiate the aesthetic, social, political, physical and economic factors that shape and communicate creative cultural content?

The aim of the seminar is to provide an in-depth understanding of curating today from a range of diverse perspectives. In examining curatorial practices and the material and virtual spaces they activate, students will develop critical visual literacy, as well as the advanced writing, analytical and presentation skills necessary for participation in current discourses and public-facing animation of artistic production.

_Instructor: Alicia Boutilier_

**SCCS 830: Curating in Context**

This production-oriented graduate course explores the development of exhibitions, programs, screenings and collections, with emphasis on drawing out and cultivating their relationship to context. Students will develop advanced understanding of curatorial methods, applied standards and innovative experimentation through projects fusing autonomous creative research, articulation and collaboration. The course offers a modular framework to support and enable students to encounter and experience practical strategies for the successful realization of artistic programs in visual and media arts, an approach applicable to both contemporary and historical works.

Taking advantage of the context of the Agnes Etherington Art Centre’s specialist staff, collections, facilities and artistic networks, students will undertake a guided team-driven project to explore and experience curatorial practice through developing an exhibition, screening, festival program or public-facing extra-mural or online artistic project. The course objective is to provide hands-on experience within an institutional context, while engaging in critical issues of curatorial practice under the instruction of a professional curator.

This course considers the ways in which curators develop, manage and engage with artists, audiences, collections, pragmatic mobilization of resources, aesthetic integrity and expressive potentials, while responding to diverse institutional and non-institutional contexts and histories, as well as geo-political and social conditions. What are the drivers that inform and shape the work of curators today? Through what strategies of curatorial practice can the context of presentation be mobilized?

_Instructor: Sunny Kerr_