Spring, 2015 ENG 6426: Visual Texts & Technology
“The Citizen Curator”
Professor Barry Mauer
CNH 207, 6:00PM - 8:50 PM Tuesdays
Office Hours: T 3:00-6:00 p.m., TR 10:00 a.m.-1:15 p.m., and by appointment
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Visual T&T Course description
This course will focus on citizen curating, which offers opportunities to non-professional curators who are interested in the art of creating exhibits from archived materials. We will curate both on-site and digital/online exhibitions. The course will have three purposes:

1. To explore the history and theories of curating
2. To engage in hands-on curating work, creating exhibits both online and offline
3. To work with partner institutions, including the Public History Center and the RICHES project, to learn and teach the principles of curating to others.

Our exhibits will be made from archival materials in African American Legacy: The Carol Mundy Collection: 1720-2010, which is held by the University of Central Florida library. This collection contains thousands of items relating to African American history including books, manuscripts, sheet music, pamphlets, journals, newspapers, broadsides, posters, photographs and ephemera, which all speak to the black experience. Included is an array of racist ephemera including derogatory postcards, advertisements, product packaging, magazine and newspaper illustrations and other related materials. Carol Mundy, herself African-American and a non-academic, will participate in training students to work with this fascinating and difficult material.

The seminar will involve collaboration with the John C. Hitt Library, UCF’s Public History Center, the Regional Center for Collecting the History, Experiences, and Stories of Central Florida (RICHES), and other partnering entities. Students enrolled in the seminar will have the option to work as interns in the John C. Hitt Library, the Public History Center, and the RICHES program. During their internships, students will develop their skills in archiving, preservation, digitizing, tagging, and curating, and will create curated exhibits, both in public spaces and online.

Curators need to make informed decisions about their work and to be aware of their choices. To this end, we will learn the ideas and works of exemplary curators, such as Lucy Lippard, Walter Hopps, Henri Langlois, Pontus Hultén, Harald Szeeman, Jean-François Lyotard, and others. We will also present the works of theorists and writers, such as Walter Benjamin, Jorge Luis Borges, Georges Bataille, Michel Leiris, André Breton, and Gregory Ulmer, whose ideas enrich our understanding of curating with new media. From these curators and theorists, students will develop their own curating practices.

The Citizen Curator project identifies three major types of curated exhibits: Educational, Rhetorical, and Experimental. In our projects, we will practice primarily Rhetorical and Experimental modes, though we will study Educational modes as well.

1. Educational Exhibits – These exhibits seek to inform and educate the public. For example, the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. educates the public about the events of the holocaust, but does not present clear arguments about its causes.
2. **Rhetorical Exhibits** – These exhibits present a thesis and use curated materials as support. For example, photographer Sebastião Salgado’s exhibits argue that the flow of global capital creates refugee crises, and his images amount to evidence for his claims.

3. **Experimental Exhibits** – These exhibits seek new ways of composing with archival materials, but may have rhetorical or educational aims as well. Experimental exhibits may focus on issues related to the ethics of curating, such as witnessing, working with difficult material such as racist artifacts, or on intellectual property rights and censorship. Experimental exhibits may present different forms of curating, making use of sampling and collage, presenting multiple perspectives on the same materials (i.e. from a social scientist’s perspective, a legal perspective, a philosopher’s perspective, etc.), or employ avant-garde genres such as Walter Benjamin’s *Arcades Project*, Georges Bataille’s *Heterogeny*, or Gregory Ulmer’s *Mystery*.

The seminar addresses several problems related to curating:

1. **Multiple and overlooked perspectives**: Student curators can provide unique perspectives on archival materials otherwise missed by trained professionals. Robert Ray recommends we “gamble more recklessly: by ignoring disciplinary boundaries, by listening to ‘outsiders’ or even dilettantes, by suspecting experts and, in particular, by adapting for research the methods of the twentieth century’s avant-garde arts and non-traditional sciences.” By involving outsiders and by experimenting with curatorial practices, we intend to bring multiple unique or under-represented perspectives to archival materials, and to bring these perspectives into the lives of more people. For example, in teaching students to curate racist ephemera, we plan to introduce various “frames” for understanding the material, including justice frames such as the resilience of black culture in the face of oppression, the ways ruling elites promoted racism to deflect from class oppression, the ways young people have been initiated into racial identities, the ways in which mainstream eliminationist rhetoric—dehumanizing African-Americans through speech and images—made crimes against them appear justified, and arguments for reparations. We will also introduce aesthetic frames, such as postmodernism, negritude, and “version” culture. Additionally, we introduce different disciplinary frames: among them historical, technological, discursive, and philosophical. Students may combine frames, add others, or create their own frames based on their research.

2. **Archival illiteracy**: Many ordinary citizens, including many students, do not know how to use archives, including digital archives, effectively. The Citizen Curator project will train students and other citizens to access and use archival materials. Training will follow the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) “Standards for Literacy” as well as the “ACRL Standards for Technological Literacy.”

3. **Adapting to new technologies**: Technological and social changes have shifted the focus of communicative practice from speech and writing to curating. Many archives are multimedia and contain documented sounds, images, and written texts. These documents can be fragmented, manipulated, juxtaposed, and synthesized in endless configurations. Also, digital platforms can be adapted to include public participation in ongoing discussions about key issues of public significance. Training people to manage public forums and to curate electronic texts helps them adapt to the technological shift.

4. **Inaccessible documents**: Many archives, such as libraries and museums, have only a
small portion of their holdings accessible to the public at any one time. The Citizen Curator project will help make more materials from the archives available to the public.

5. **Emergent crises:** As public crises emerge, such as those affecting climate, public health, and the economy, we need a citizenry that can access many types of digital archives and participate in discussions that address these problems. Therefore, the Citizen Curator project will train students to deal effectively with emergent problems by teaching them to provide critical materials to the public and to provide forums for the public to discuss emerging crises.

**Deliverables**
The midterm paper (20% of course grade) will outline strategies for approaching the curated exhibits. Annotated bibliographies (20% of course grade) will enable us to cover more scholarly ground. Final projects will include group work on a curated exhibit (40% of course grade) that will have an onsite and an online presence. Final projects also require papers that contribute to a Guidebook for Citizen Curators (20% of course grade). For the papers, students may choose to work in teams, each writing a chapter (12-15 pages) of a longer manuscript. Here are the major topics for the guidebook:

a. How ordinary people can take ownership of their historical, cultural, and intellectual legacies,
b. How to think critically about the ways in which information and misinformation has shaped our views of the past and present,
c. How to think rhetorically about effective communication with diverse audiences,
d. How to work with various genres of curating, including educational, rhetorical, and experimental genres,
e. How to involve broader communities of archivists, educators, experts, and organizers in curating.

This booklet, once compiled and edited, will be available free of charge to attendees at our public presentations, as well as through the Center for Public History. In addition, it will be available online as a downloadable file.

**Grading**
Midterm paper 100 points
Annotated bibliographies (2) 100 points (See [http://guides.ucf.edu/tandt](http://guides.ucf.edu/tandt) for examples)
Curated exhibits 200 points (see [http://riches.cah.ucf.edu](http://riches.cah.ucf.edu) for examples)
Final papers (for Guidebook) 100 points
Total 500 points

**Extra Credit**
Attend Ulmer Presentation (1/26) 5 points
Present at THAT Camp (2/28) 5 points
Field Trip to Public History Center (3/7) 5 points
*Slavery by Another Name* at the PHC (3/20) 5 points

A  = 465-500  B  = 415-434  C  = 365-389  D  = 315-334
A- = 450-465  B- = 400-414  C- = 350-364  D- = 300-314
B+ = 435-449  C+ = 385-399  D+ = 335-349  F  = Below 300
Course Objectives

1. To train students to work in critical studies of visual texts and in the production of visual texts.
2. To identify the aesthetic features of visual texts.
3. To identify the methods of composition practiced by the producers of visual texts.
4. To experiment with methods of visual texts production.
5. To write persuasively about the “how” and “why” of such experiments, particularly your own. Each act of composition involves developing the “rules of the game,” a set of constraints about what is and isn’t allowed. You will learn to explain and justify the rules of the game for your own compositions.
6. To learn how to read and incorporate elements from difficult works, including avant-garde texts, theories that account for visual texts’ methods and meanings, and written accounts of complex historical events in your own writing.
7. To create a bridge between criticism and practice, as numerous authors and artists like Breton tried to do. In other words, criticism is not separate from the concerns of artists; it has its own compositional principles and is open to invention. Occupy criticism!
8. To learn about the recent movements in context by exploring the transformational ideas and events of the past 180 years, including the triumph of science over religion, the invention of photography, audio recording, and the cinema, the rise of modern cities, the emergence of trains and automobiles, the arrival of mechanized warfare, the theories of Marx and Freud, Feminism and Structuralism, and the rise of Taylorist economies, which include liberal democracies and fascist and communist states. This historical context supplied the problems that our artists and authors addressed, provided them with means for addressing those problems, and allowed them access to markets that had not previously been available.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 Tuesday, January 13: Course Introduction
• Visit Burak Ogreten and John Venecek in Special Collections in the John C. Hitt Library – 6:30 p.m.
Lecture and discussion of course themes. Internship overview. View videos
  1. The Carol Mundy Collection Exhibit at Greater Liberty Baptist Church: [http://youtu.be/G9PCfPfKvH0](http://youtu.be/G9PCfPfKvH0)
  3. *Bamboozled*: [http://youtu.be/C45g3YP7J0k](http://youtu.be/C45g3YP7J0k)
  4. Louis Armstrong: “I’ll Be Glad When You’re Dead”: [http://youtu.be/aUcUhLg_0](http://youtu.be/aUcUhLg_0) and [http://youtu.be/1bVMCzDmcFY](http://youtu.be/1bVMCzDmcFY)
  6. *Malcolm X*: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kE84dHISN0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kE84dHISN0)

Week 2 Tuesday, January 20: Framing Race in America
• Skype with Carol Mundy
  1. Coates, Ta-Nehisi: “The Case for Reparations” (go to website for article) [http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2014/05/the-case-for-reparations/361631/](http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2014/05/the-case-for-reparations/361631/)
  2. Cobb, Jelani: “What We Talk About When We Talk About Reparations” (6 pages)
  3. Levitz, Eric: “How the Conversation about Reparations Reveals the Right’s Twisted Morality” (6 pages)
  4. Grigsby, Susan: “How the Racists of the South Have Ruled this Nation from the Very Beginning” (10 pages)
  5. Velez, Denise Oliver: “The ‘Other’ U.S. Slave Trade” (9 pages)
  6. Joyce, Frank: “Now Is the Time For a New Abolition Movement” (11 pages)
  9. Ulmer, Gregory: “Derrida in Miami (Miautre)” (12 pages)

For Annotated Bibliography: Race, Propaganda, and Resistance
  1. Williams, David: *A People’s History of the Civil War* (129 pages)
  2. Loewen, James: “The South” from *Lies Across America* (147 pages)
Monday, January 26: Professor Gregory Ulmer speaks on Electracy at UCF. Details TBA

"Electracy" is to digital technology what literacy is to alphabet writing: an apparatus (social machine) correlating communications technologies with Institution and identity formation. Ulmer explains how electracy is being invented and applied. The method of invention—heuristics, generating the experimental genre of konsult—is demonstrated with the project "Murphy's Well-Being," Ulmer’s collaboration with the Florida Research Ensemble for the virtual consultancy, the EmerAgency. The Target of the konsult is the Cabot-Koppers Superfund site in Gainesville, Florida, one of fifty-two such sites in the state. The FRE has developed electracy consulting previously through electronic monuments (child-abuse deaths, Sandy Hook shooting in Newtown). A book-length konsult on the Miami River (FL)—Miami Virtue—is available at http://smallcities.tru.ca/index.php/cura/issue/view/

Week 3 Tuesday, January 27: Eliminationism and The Invention of Race

1. Garcia-Rojas, Claudia: “The Long History of Presumed White Innocence and Black Guilt” (3 pages)
2. Oliver Velez, Denise: “Remembering the Rosewood Massacre” (7 pages)
3. Davis, Fania: This Country Needs a Truth and Reconciliation Process on Violence Against African Americans—Right Now (5 pages)
5. Kroll, Andy: “Meet the Fortune 500 Companies Funding the Political Resegregation of America” (2 pages)
6. Allen, Theodore W.: “Summary of the Argument of The Invention of the White Race” (53 pages)
7. Neiwert, David: Eliminationism in America (go to website for article or read pdf) http://dneiwert.blogspot.com/2006/12/eliminationism-in-amERICA-i.html (Part 1 [pages 1-6], parts 6 and 7 [pages 49-81] (37 pages)
8. Lipsitz, George: The Possessive Investment in Whiteness (to page 23)
Week 4 Tuesday, February 3: Framing The Carol Mundy Collection

- Guest: Lynn Cazmir-Paz

1. Mooney, Chris: “How Our Brains Perceive Race” (15 pages)
3. Jarrett, Michael: “Preface” and “Cadenza: Jazz as a Model for Writing” from Drifting on a Read: Jazz as a Model for Writing (27 pages)
4. Mauer, Barry: “Three Takes on ‘Black and Blue’” (3 pages) – also, listen to the songs in the folder marked “Black and Blue”
5. Casmier-Paz, Lynn: “Heritage, not Hate? Collecting Black Memorabilia” (16 pages)
8. Baumedec, Maia de la: France Confronts an Ignoble Chapter (4 pages)

Curated Websites about African-American History
2. The King Center Archives: http://www.thekingcenter.org/archive

For Annotated Bibliography: Hybridity and Syncretism
1. Giddins, Gary: “Louis Armstrong: The Once and Future King” (18 pages)
3. Lipsitz, George: “Chapter 8: “It’s All Wrong, but It’s All Right’: Creative Misunderstanding in Intercultural Communication.” Excerpt from Dangerous Crossroads (12 pages)
5. Mauer, Barry: Notes on Mitchell's Picture Theory (7 pages)
Week 5 Tuesday, February 10: Epistemology of the Image

- Join Connie Lester’s class @ 7:00.
  1. Lippmann, Walter: “The World Outside and the Pictures in our Heads” (20 pages)
  2. Marlin, Randal: “Jacques Ellul” (10 pages)
  3. Althusser, Louis: “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” (38 pages)
  4. Mauer, Barry: “Notes on Althusser” (1 page)
  5. Jappe, Anselm: Guy Debord (to page 31)
  7. Mauer, Barry: “Handout on Inferences” (1 page)

For Annotated Bibliography: Borders and Contacts

  1. Anzaldúa, Gloria: Excerpts from Borderlands La frontera (39 pages)
  2. Giroux, Amy Larner: Kaleidoscopic Community History-Theories of Database Historical History Making (142 pages)

Week 6 Tuesday, February 17: Public Memory

  1. Loewen, James: Introduction to Lies Across America (35 pages)
  2. Doss, Erika: “Death, Art and Memory in The Public Sphere: The Visual and Material Culture of Grief in Contemporary America” (21 pages)
  4. Gopnik, Adam: “Stones And Bones: Visiting the 9/11 Memorial and Museum.” (8 pages)
  6. Uhrmacher, P. Bruce And Barri Tinkler: “Engaging Learners and the Community Through the Study of Monuments” (13 pages)
  7. Levine, Michael: “Mediated Memories: The Politics of the Past” (18 pages)
  8. Stille, Alexandre: “Are We Losing Our Memory? Or The Museum of Obsolete Technology” and “Conclusion: Writing and the Creation of the Past.” The Future of The Past (40 pages)
  9. Arnold-de Simine, Silke: Mediating Memory in the Museum: Trauma, Empathy, Nostalgia (67 pages)

For Annotated Bibliography: Public Memory

  1. Doss, Erika “Shame: Duluth’s Lynching Memorial and Issues of National Morality” from Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America (60 pages)
Week 7 Tuesday, February 24: Theories of Archiving and Curating for Education

- **Guest: April Anderson**


For Annotated Bibliography: Objects and Collections

1. Stallabrass, Julian: “Sebastião Salgado and Fine Art Photojournalism” (51 pages)
3. Pearce, Susan: *Interpreting Objects and Collections* (selected essays) (196 pages)

**Saturday, February 28th: THAT Camp Florida:** See [http://thatcamp.org/about](http://thatcamp.org/about)
Week 8 Tuesday, March 3: Theories of Curating

- **Guest: Rosalind Beiler**
  3. Wikipedia: “Folksonomy” (7 pages)
     g. Site Structure and Good URLs: [http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/designing/5.php](http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/designing/5.php)
  5. Smith Bautista, Susana. Excerpts from *Museums in the Digital Age.* Chapters 1, 2, 9, and Conclusion. (41 pages)

**Saturday, March 7: Field Trip to Public History Center in Sanford (2:00-4:00 p.m.)**

301 W. 7th Street
Sanford, FL 32771
(407) 936-1679

Week 9 Tuesday, March 10: No Class – Spring Break

Week 10 Tuesday, March 17: Designing Exhibits

1. Roppola, Tiina: *Designing for the Museum Visitor Experience* (pages 1-56)

**Friday, March 20th:** *Slavery by Another Name* Event at the Public History Center in Sanford. Details to be announced.
Week 11 Tuesday, March 24: Experimental Curating

For Annotated Bibliography: Experimental Curating by Mauer

Week 12 Tuesday, March 31: Further Experiments
- **Paper 1 due**
  1. Lipton, Eunice: “History of an Encounter: Alias Olympia” (pages 282-290 of *Text Book*) (9 pages)
  2. Ray, Robert: “How to Start an Avant-Garde” (9 pages)
  3. Feldman, Julia Pelta. “Perpetual Fluxfest: Distinguishing Artists’ Records from Artworks in the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Archives” (4 pages)

Annotated Bibliography Readings: The Encyclopedia as Archive and Exhibit
1. Benjamin, Walter: “N: Theoretics of Knowledge, Theories of Progress”
2. Bataille, Georges: *Encyclopædia Acephalica*
3. Pitzl, Gerald R.: *Encyclopedia of Human Geography*
4. Parr, Adrian: *The Deleuze Dictionary*
5. Ray, Robert: *The ABCs of Classical Hollywood* (I will lend you my personal copy)
Week 13 Tuesday, April 7: Curating and Activism
1. Message, Kylie: *Museums and Social Activism: Engaged Protest* (to page 73)
2. *After-All* (to page 37)
3. Bishop, Claire: *Participation* (pages 161-195) (35 pages)

Annotated Bibliography Readings: Curating and Activism
1. Banks Adam: *Race, Rhetoric, and Technology - Searching for Common Ground* (162 pages)
2. Chandler, Annmarie and Norie Neumark: *Precursors to Art and Activism on the Internet* (Intro to Chapter 5 and Chapter 19) (151 pages)
3. Schleuning, Neala: *Artpolitik Social Anarchist Aesthetics in an Age of Fragmentation* (chapters 1,3,5,7,8) (169 pages)

Week 14 Tuesday, April 14: Writing about Objects
1. Carrier, David: *Writing about Visual Art* (to page 56)
4. Peterson, James: "Is a Cognitive Approach to the Avant-Garde Cinema Perverse?" (20 pages)
5. Mauer, Barry: Notes on Peterson (1 page)

Week 15 Tuesday, April 21: Workshop
Week 16 Tuesday, April 28: Study Day. No Classes
Week 17 Tuesday May 5: Finals Week. Projects Due by 5:00.

Among these standards are the following:

**ACRL Standards for Literacy**
A. The information literate student determines the nature and extent of the information needed.
B. The information literate student accesses needed information effectively and efficiently.
C. The information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.
D. The information literate student, individually or as a member of a group, uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.
E. The information literate student understands many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally.

**ACRL Standards for Technological Literacy**
A. The technologically literate student will understand the scope, core concept of technology and the relationships among technologies.
B. The technologically literate student will develop an understanding of outside effects on technology and how technology affects society.
C. The technologically literate student will understand attributes of design, understand basic engineering design, and problem solving.
D. The technologically literate students will develop abilities to apply design processes, maintain technological products and systems, and develop abilities to assess the impact of products and systems.