



Smolbny

BEYOND BORDERS

*DIARY FILM, AUTO\ETHNOGRAPHY,  
AND POETIC FILM WRITING*

Masha Godovannaya



# COURSE DESCRIPTION (IN SHORT)

This course is a semi-practical seminar dedicated to film diary/diary film: its history, theory, and practice. Here, diary filmmaking is intertwined with two other distant but yet related concepts, methods, and aesthetic forms. The first concept is a queer commentary, where, as Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner formulate, practice, theory, and lived experiences of “being in the world with others” are amalgamated and inseparable from one another. The second concept is the concept of “refunctioned auto\ethnography,” proposed by Craig Gingrich-Philbrook that explores the aesthetic and epistemic potentialities of the auto\ethnographic method (a method that uses personal experience (“auto”) to imagine and provide possible interpretations (“graphy”) of cultural texts, experiences, beliefs, and practices (“ethno”)).

During the course, we will watch, analyze, and discuss films and videos that fall under the different categories of “film diaries,” “diary films,” “film essays/commentaries” and “[auto\]ethnographic films.” We will read the texts of the above-mentioned authors and others who are interested in epistemic, ethical, and aesthetic potentialities of [cinematic] auto\ethnography and [queer] storytelling. Moreover, we will make our own diary films and short videos trying to put together bits and pieces, scraps, and traces of our everyday into a refunctioned cinematic poetic form.



# COURSE STRUCTURE

The course consists of two weekly meetings. Monday sessions are dedicated to lecture presentation, in-class screening and discussions of readings. Wednesday sessions are seminars dedicated to practical exercises as well as screenings and discussions of students' works.

## COURSE TOPICS

Film Diaries/diary film: history

Overview of film practical aspects 1 (filming)

Diary films and feminist film-writing

[Auto\]ethnography and ethnographic film

Refunctioned auto\ethnography and experimental ethnography

Queer commentary

Film poetry

Overview of film practical aspects 2 (montage)

Hybrid film writing



# COURSE INFO

**Semester:** Spring 2024

**Subject:** FILM

**Course Level:** 200

**Schedule:** Mon & Wed, 17.50 – 19.10 (Berlin)

**Language:** English

**Course Web Page:** <https://www.smolny.org/2023/11/13/diary-film-autoethnography-and-poetic-film-writing/>

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THANK YOU!



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