

Course Description

Course number and section: CULT 406-A_101

Course Topic: **Cancon Ephemerality**

Instructor: **Daniel Keyes**

Course Description:

We live in an age of digital abundance where cloud-based storage appears infinite and accessible compared to print media, yet our ability to curate, navigate, and preserve memory and heritage is subjected to quick loss epitomized by the aggravating Error 404 appearing on a web-browsers that announces the failure to retrieve a digital object. This course surveys the access and preservation challenges facing Canadian born-digital screen culture that includes films, television, interactive documentary and other related paratexts like orphaned databases. This course surveys the project of digital nationalism through a post-colonial perspective that questions how the past and present are curated, saved, and in many cases abandoned. It explores a range of digital texts from national institutions like the NFB and CBC and corporate attempts to promote Canadian screen culture like the Canadian Media Fund's YouTube account Made/Nous to academic projects like Archive/Counter Archive that seek to give voice to those historically excluded from the project of nationalism. Additionally, it will explore personal and rogue archives and collections may circumvent copyright. It investigates the ethics of digital death: the right-to-be-forgotten balanced against the urge to save everything for some distant future user. Students will learn about the history of audiovisual archiving in Canada while engaging with theories and practices of digital archiving. Students will play with orphaned media like VHS copies of commercial feature length Canadian film that they will transfer into digital files for collective screenings. Additionally, students will engage in digital detection using tools like internet archive.org's waybackmachine to explore how a website, database, interactive game, film or television program blinks out of existence or persists as a degraded digital fragment.

Other: This course is cross listed between English and Cultural Studies so although on Workday your specific section may appear small, the class size includes another section.

