

Glendale College

Course Outline of Record Report

Course ID 010622
Created - September 2023

FTVM108 : Documentary Film Aesthetics

General Information

Author:	• Geraldine Ulrey
Course Code (CB01) :	FTVM108
Course Title (CB02) :	Documentary Film Aesthetics
Department:	FTVM
Proposal Start:	Fall 2024
TOP Code (CB03) :	(0612.10) Film History and Criticism
CIP Code:	(50.0601) Film/Cinema/Media Studies.
SAM Code (CB09) :	Non-Occupational
Distance Education Approved:	No
Will this course be taught asynchronously?:	No
Course Control Number (CB00) :	CCC000640661
Curriculum Committee Approval Date:	09/27/2023
Board of Trustees Approval Date:	11/21/2023
Last Cyclical Review Date:	09/27/2023
Course Description and Course Note:	FTVM 108 explores how the style, look, and structure of documentary films affect considerations of ethics, point of view, and persuasion. Topics of study include the voice of documentary, documentary modes, the influence of social media, cultural and national representation in documentary, and the evolution of digital technology in the context of nonfiction. Students will watch a wide variety of documentaries that examine the concept of "truth" on film and the filmmaker's ability to distort or clarify our perception of reality. We will pay particular attention to the historical, cultural, environmental, political and economic influences that shaped the documentary form.
Justification:	New Course
Academic Career:	• Credit

Academic Senate Discipline

Primary Discipline:	• Mass Communication
Alternate Discipline:	No value
Alternate Discipline:	No value

Course Development

Basic Skill Status (CB08)

Course is not a basic skills course.

Allow Students to Gain Credit by Exam/Challenge

Course Special Class Status (CB13)

Course is not a special class.

Pre-Collegiate Level (CB21)

Not applicable.

Grading Basis

- Grade with Pass / No-Pass Option

Course Support Course Status (CB26)

Course is not a support course

Transferability & Gen. Ed. Options

General Education Status (CB25)

Not Applicable

Transferability

Transferable to both UC and CSU

Transferability Status

Approved

IGETC Area	Area	Status	Approval Date	Comparable Course
3A-Arts	Arts Courses	Pending	No value	No Comparable Course defined.

CSU GE-Breadth Area	Area	Status	Approval Date	Comparable Course
C1-Arts	Arts: (Arts, Cinema, Dance, Music, Theater)	Approved	09/03/2024	No Comparable Course defined.

Units and Hours

Summary

Minimum Credit Units (CB07)	3
Maximum Credit Units (CB06)	3
Total Course In-Class (Contact) Hours	54
Total Course Out-of-Class Hours	108
Total Student Learning Hours	162

Credit / Non-Credit Options

Course Type (CB04)

Credit - Degree Applicable

Noncredit Course Category (CB22)

Credit Course.

Noncredit Special Characteristics

No Value

Course Classification Code (CB11)

Credit Course.

 Variable Credit Course**Funding Agency Category (CB23)**

Not Applicable.

Cooperative Work Experience Education

 Status (CB10)**Weekly Student Hours**

	In Class	Out of Class
Lecture Hours	3	6
Laboratory Hours	0	0
Studio Hours	0	0

Course Student Hours**Course Duration (Weeks)** 18**Hours per unit divisor** 54**Course In-Class (Contact) Hours**

Lecture 54

Laboratory 0

Studio 0

Total 54**Course Out-of-Class Hours**

Lecture 108

Laboratory 0

Studio 0

Total 108**Time Commitment Notes for Students**

No value

Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, Anti-requisites and Advisories**Advisory**

ENGL101 - Introduction to College Reading and Composition

Objectives

- Read, analyze, and evaluate a variety of primarily non-fiction readings for content, context, and rhetorical merit with consideration of tone, audience, and purpose.
- Apply a variety of rhetorical strategies in writing unified, well-organized essays directed by a well-reasoned thesis statement with persuasive support.
- Develop varied and flexible strategies for generating, drafting, and revising essays.
- Analyze stylistic choices in their own writing and the writing of others.
- Write timed, in-class essays exhibiting acceptable college-level control of mechanics, organization, development, and coherence.
- Integrate the ideas of others through paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting without plagiarism.
- Find, evaluate, analyze, and interpret primary and secondary sources, incorporating them into written essays using appropriate documentation format.
- Proofread and edit essays for presentation so they exhibit no disruptive errors in English grammar, usage, or punctuation.

OR

Advisory

ESL151 - Reading And Composition V

Objectives

- Read and critically analyze various academic readings.

- Summarize readings.
- Organize fully-developed essays in both expository and argumentative modes.
- Compose a 500 to 550-word essay which: summarizes and cites appropriately a reading passage; includes a clear thesis statement; uses evidence to support the thesis; shows clear organization into an introduction, body, and conclusion.
- Revise writing to eliminate errors in syntax, and grammatical constructions.
- Employ basic library research techniques.
- Compose one research paper (1,000 words) or two short research papers (500-700 words each) with citations.

Entry Standards

Entry Standards

No value

Specifications

Methods of Instruction

Methods of Instruction Collaborative Learning

Methods of Instruction Demonstrations

Methods of Instruction Discussion

Methods of Instruction Guest Speakers

Methods of Instruction Lecture

Methods of Instruction Multimedia

Methods of Instruction Presentations

Out of Class Assignments

- Weekly journal assignments, so the student may comment and critique the weekly screenings
- Research paper

- Participation in class discussions
- Final examination
- Video presentation of film and/or multimedia clips
- Write a treatment for a short documentary film, specifying the modes/approaches and stylistic choices used to support the subject

Methods of Evaluation

Rationale

Exam/Quiz/Test	Demonstrate mastery of documentary film aesthetics, techniques and craft presented in curriculum.
Activity (answering journal prompt, group activity)	Weekly journal assignments, so the student may comment and critique the weekly screening
Writing Assignment	Analyze a documentary film assigned in class in context of aesthetics, ethics, point of view, and persuasion
Presentation (group or individual)	Video presentation of film and/or multimedia clips revealing stylistic elements of a documentary movement and linking the cinematic stylistic elements to cultural and/or historical context
Project/Portfolio	Create multi-media or video presentation report demonstrating mastery of the use of documentary specific techniques, craft or concepts as it relates to a documentary movement.
Report	Create response paper or presentation to assigned films.
Evaluation	Read and critique a peer's paper or reports.

Textbook Rationale

Classic Text. Will wait for any recommendations from library for alternatives, if available. - Geri

Textbooks

Author	Title	Publisher	Date	ISBN
Betsy A. McLane.	A New History of Documentary Film. 3rd Edition	Bloomsbury Academic	2023	9781501385155
Bill Nichols.	Introduction to Documentary 3rd Edition	Indiana University Press	2017	9780253026859
Bill Nichols.	Speaking Truths With Film: Evidence, Ethics and Politics in Documentary	UCLA Press	2016	780520964587

Other Instructional Materials (i.e. OER, handouts)

No Value

Materials Fee

No value

Learning Outcomes and Objectives

Course Objectives

Trace the evolution of documentary film practice and theory.

Develop a critical awareness of problems surrounding documentary film with a focus on ethics, filmmaker bias, and propaganda.

Demonstrate a proficiency in discussing nonfiction cinema, using specific examples to support a position/thesis.

Prepare analytical essays that use film specific language to evaluate works screened in class.

Analyze a documentary film in context of aesthetics, ethics, point of view, and persuasion of a documentary film.

Place a documentary within its cultural and social context.

Identify major cinematic movements and the contributions of noted documentarians filmmakers within cultural or social contexts.

SLOs

Successfully analyze a documentary film in context of aesthetics, ethics, point of view, and persuasion of a documentary film.

Expected Outcome Performance: 70.0

Place a documentary within its cultural and social context

Expected Outcome Performance: 70.0

Identify major cinematic movements and the contributions of noted documentarians filmmakers within cultural or social contexts.

Expected Outcome Performance: 70.0

Additional SLO Information

Does this proposal include revisions that might improve student attainment of course learning outcomes?

No

Is this proposal submitted in response to learning outcomes assessment data?

No

If yes was selected in either of the above questions for learning outcomes, explain and attach evidence of discussions about learning outcomes.

No Value

SLO Evidence

No Value

Course Content**Lecture Content****Definition and Origin of the Documentary Tradition (6 hours)**

- Definition and Origin of the Documentary Tradition
- How can we define a documentary film?
- Ethical Issues in Documentary
 - Representation in Documentary
 - Ethics of Representing Others
- Aesthetics of the Documentary; the camera, editing, sound, any stylistic tools used to present the subject
- New technology's impact on the documentary tradition (lighter/affordable cameras, small crews, portable sound equipment, camcorders, digital cameras, smart phones, etc.)
- Early Nonfiction Cinema: Silent Era- Muybridge, Lumiere Brothers, Thomas Edison
- Where did early filmmakers see the new medium going?
- The 6 Modes of Documentary Film (reflexive, poetic, observational, performative, participatory, expository, confessional)
- Institutional Frameworks
- Analyze a short documentary treatment, identifying the modes, stylistic choices and narrative processes covered in the preproduction/exploratory phase.
- Representative titles such as:
 - *The Animal Locomotion* series dir. Eadweard Muybridge
 - Lumiere Brothers short films

The Explorer (3 hours)

- The rise of the ethnographic film, and the documentarian's urge to capture vanishing cultures.
- Flaherty's contract with Paramount, and problems of the explorer-as-documentarist
- Representative titles such as:
 - *Nanook of the North* dir. Robert Flaherty
 - *Land Without Bread (Las Hurdes)* dir. Luis Buñuel

The Reporter (3 hours)

- The rise of Futurism in Europe; dynamism and the rhythm of machines
- Manipulating the idea of "truth" on-screen; examining sequences of staged action in Soviet propaganda films.
- The founding of the Kino-Pravda manifesto and the concept of "Film-Truth"
- Dziga Vertov and his theories on the reportorial documentary
- The newsreel tradition and re-enactments integrated into the documentary form
- Representative titles such as:
 - *Man With a Movie Camera* dir. Dziga Vertov

The Painter (3 hours)

- Painters infiltrating the film scene in Europe, rise of the cine-clubs
- City Symphony films: filmmaking approached as a pictorial art using light as the medium. The artist's use of rhythm, patterns, and progression on film.
- Representative titles such as:
 - *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* dir. Walther Rut
 - *Ballet Mechanique* dir. Fernand Leger
 - *The Rain* dir. Joris Ivens

The Advocate (6 hours)

- The Social Advocate
 - Documentary film movement in the UK (led by John Greirson). Committed to blending propaganda, information, and education with a more poetic aesthetic.

- Use of experimental soundtracks, subjects speak directly to the camera, politicizing the documentary form
- Representative titles such as:
 - *Coal Face* dir. Alberto Cavalcanti
 - *Night Mail* dir. Henry Watt and Basil Wright
- The Political Advocate
 - Rise of Propaganda Films in Germany
 - The films of Leni Riefenstahl; harnessing the power of film to promote a political ideology
 - Representative titles such as:
 - *Triumph of the Will* dir. Leni Riefenstahl
 - *Olympia* dir. Leni Riefenstahl
 - The WPA Films under FDR
 - New Deal onscreen, the unexpected box office success of WPA docs
 - Representative titles such as:
 - *The Plow that Broke the Plains* dir. Pare Lorentz
 - *The River* dir. Pare Lore

The Bugler (3 hours)

- The bugle-call film, and the use of documentaries as a weapon of war.
- Analyzing the similarities and differences between the war documentaries of Germany, the USSR and the USA.
- How did each country use the medium of film to promote their specific political agendas?
- Representative titles such as:
 - *Why We Fight* (excerpts from the series) dir. Frank Capra
 - *Let There Be Light* dir. John Huston

The Prosecutor (3 hours)

- The post-war documentaries that chronicled war crimes and the aftermath.
- The use of documentary films to make sense of the post-war environment
- Representative titles such as:
 - *Nuremberg* dir. Pare Lorentz
 - *Night and Fog* dir. Alain Resnais

The Poet (3 hours)

- The role of the documentarian post WW2 and the loss of sponsorship.
- Popularity of the documentary-like fiction film and the neorealist movement
- The poet's approach to documentary; a newfound sense of wonder as a reaction to years of wartime violence.
- A modern poetic approach to the documentary (Frick and Reggio)
- Representative titles such as:
 - *Open City/Roma Citta Aperta* dir. Roberto Rossellini
 - *Glass* dir. Bert Haanstra
 - *Koyannisquatsi* dir. Godfrey Reggio
 - *Samsara* dir. Ron Fricke

The Chronicler (3 hours)

- The documentarian's role as a chronicler of history and events, rise of the "compilation film"
- Representative titles such as:
 - *7 Up* (excerpts) dir. Michael Apter
 - clips from Ken Burns documentaries

The Promoter (3 hours)

- Postwar rising influence of corporate sponsorship in documentary filmmaking
- Aviation, automobile and science films produced by Shell Oil Films Unit
- The Effect of McCarthyism on documentary filmmakers
- Representative titles such as:
 - *Louisiana Story* dir. Robert Flaherty (sponsored by Standard Oil)

The Observer (6 hours)

- The Free Cinema movement in London (circa 1956); the idea of the filmmaker as an observer
- Theory of direct cinema
- Synchronous sound developments
- Rejecting the previous role of the documentarian and a promoter
- Focusing on subjects that were ignored or hidden from society
- Representative titles such as:
 - *On the Bowery* dir. Lionel Rogosin

- *Salesman* dir. The Maysles
- *Grey Gardens* dir. The Maysles
- *Titticut Follies* dir. Fredrick Wiseman
- *High School* dir. Fredrick Wiseman

The Catalyst (3 hours)

- *Cinema verité* and the use of “talking heads” in documentaries
- Giving status to the interview
- Filmmaker as a provocateur
- Representative titles such as:
 - *The Sorrow and the Pity* dir. Marcel Ophuls
 - *You Are on Indian Land* dir. Mort Ransen
 - *The Thin Blue Line* dir. Errol Morris

The Performer (3 hours)

- The filmmaker as the subject; documentarian as a celebrity onscreen
- Subjective vs. objective narration
- Representative titles such as:
 - *Roger and Me* dir. Michael Moore
 - *Bowling for Columbine* dir. Michael Moore
 - *Grizzly Man* dir. Werner Herzog

The Environmentalist (3 hours)

- Subjective vs. objective narration
- Expository approach; speaking for a subject that cannot speak for itself (animals, nature)
- Representative titles such as:
 - *An Inconvenient Truth* dir.
 - *Blackfish* dir. Gabriela Cowperthwaite
 - *March of the Penguins* dir. Luc Jacquet

Social Media, Influencers and Documentary (3 hours)

- The rise of reality TV
 - Deepfakes in documentary
 - Virtual reality and documentary
 - Discuss documentaries that explore social media's influence on identity and activism.
 - Representative titles such as:
 - *The Great Hack* dir. Karim Amer and Jehane Noujaim
 - *Coded Bias* dir. Shalini Kantayya
- Documentarians on Camera
 - The Documentarian as a celebrity onscreen
 - Representative titles such as:
 - *Roger and Me* dir. Michael Moore
 - *Bowling for Columbine* dir. Michael Moore
 - *Grizzly Man* dir. Werner Herzog

Total: 54 Hours