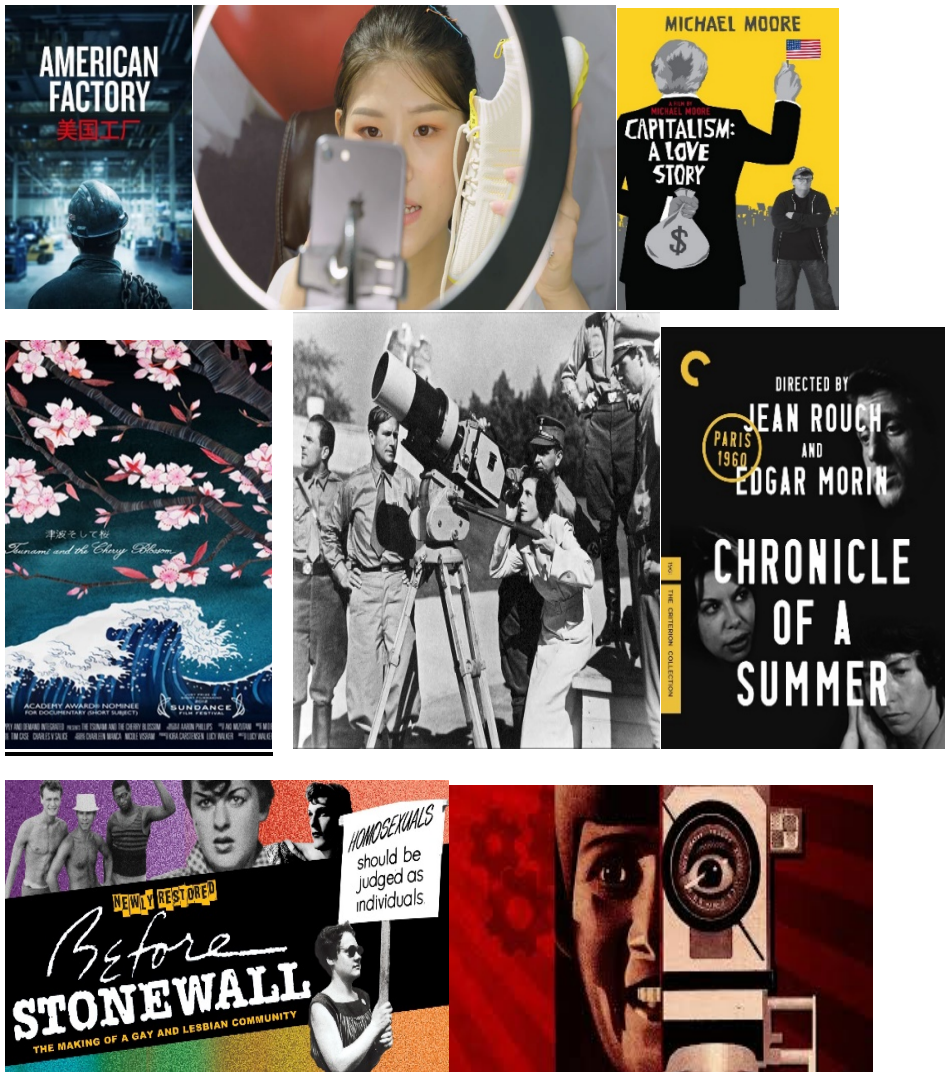


DOCUMENTARY, MEDIA, AND SOCIETY

CHI4930 28125 8CHI OR RTV4930 28328 8CJC OR (FOR GRADUATE CREDIT) MMC6936 8646
16306

FALL 2022



MWF Time period 5, 11:45 a.m. to 12:35 p.m.

The Florida Gym, FLG 0280 (across the street from Weimer Hall)

3 credit hours

Instructors

Dr. Ying Xiao, Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

Dr. Churchill Roberts, Department of Media Production, Management, and
Technology

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Course Description

The course is about documentary film and what documentary and media mean to us, to our lives, and to today's world. The course explores the history, theory, and practice of documentary film and media in the context of social, economic, political, and cultural change across different time periods, cultures, and countries (including American, British, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, French films, etc.). It shows how to make and distribute videos and make them aesthetically appealing, socially engaging, and widely impactful.

As the 2022 Interdisciplinary Team-teaching Awardee by the Center for the Humanities and the Public Sphere, it means that on top of the critical reflections on the important concepts and contemporary issues, such as gender, race, ethnicity, class, nation-states, technological advances, aesthetic sensibilities, media ecology, and cross-cultural representation, students will have opportunities to meet acclaimed guest filmmakers, discuss their works, and try their own hand at crafting videos.

Course Objectives

Our study of documentary and media will focus on the following themes and questions:

1. The various sociological and economic perspectives that attempt to explain social change
2. The nature and function of documentary as a non-fiction visual form to address social and political issues and represent reality
3. Persuasive techniques and aesthetic styles in documentary
4. The convergence and divergence of documentary filmmaking, production, and distribution in Asia, Europe, and the United States
5. The impact of media on society
6. Documentary's intersections with technology and various forms of media such as docudrama, propaganda, activist videos, multiple screens, and digital social media

This course is designed as an advanced seminar that combines film screenings, lectures, workshops, film events, and substantial class discussions. It introduces key themes and concepts in the study of documentary and more broadly in film and media studies. Students receive training in critical thinking and effective analysis, as well as in developing public speaking and communication skills that enable them to discuss key issues from a multiplicity of perspectives. They also learn about the topics on a larger global scale that serve as a constructive conceptual

framework for reflecting on their own culture and identity and study to identify, formulate, and conduct a final research paper or a final project as a capstone experience.

Textbooks and Readings

Patricia Aufderheide, *Documentary Film: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010). Additional readings can be accessed through ARES, UF Libraries Course Reserve System, also available on Canvas. This class utilizes E-learning in Canvas to conduct synchronous Zoom meetings (when needed), facilitate class communications and discussions, distribute and submit course documents & assignments, and share links, videos, music, and other media; and most of all, to create a quality learning experience for students. Be sure to check the E-learning class page on a regular basis for updates and announcements.

Topics and Course Schedule

PART 1 HOPSKOTCHING DOCUMENTARY FILM HISTORY

Week 1 (08/24-08/26) **Introduction and Course Overview**

Reading: The syllabus

Week 2 (08/29-09/02) **What Is Film, What Is Documentary, Founders and Traditions**

Films: *Nanook of the North* (Robert Flaherty, 1922), *Rain* (Joris Ivens, 1929)

Readings: Bill Nichols, "How Can We Define Documentary Film?" in *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 1-41.

Joris Ivens, *The Camera and I* (International Publishers, 1974), 34-40.

Ian Mundell, "Joris Ivens: Great Director Profile." *Senses of Cinema*,

<http://sensesofcinema.com/2005/great-directors/ivens/>

Bill Nichols, "How Did Documentary Filmmaking Get Started?" in *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 120-141.

Keith Beattie, "Men with Movie Cameras: Flaherty and Grierson," in

Documentary Screens: Nonfiction Film and Television (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 26-43.

September 5 **LABOR DAY HOLIDAY**

Week 3 (09/07-09/09) **European Avant-garde, Soviet Film, Montage, and Docudrama**

Films: *The Man with a Movie Camera* (Dziga Vertov, 1929), *The Battleship of Potemkin* (dir. Sergei Eisenstein, 1925), *October: Ten Days that Shook the World* (Dir. Grigoriy Aleksandrov and Sergei Eisenstein, 1927)

Readings: Dziga Vertov, "We: Variant of a Manifesto (1922)," in *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*, ed. Annette Michelson, trans. Kevin O'Brien (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 5-9.

Richard Pipes, "Culture as Propaganda," in *Russia under the Bolshevik Regime* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 282-336.

Week 4 (09/12-09/16) The British Documentary Movement

Films: *Drifters* (John Grierson, 1929), *Housing Problems* (John Grierson, 1935), *Grierson* (Roger Blais, 1973)

Readings: John Grierson, "First Principles of Documentary (1932-1934)," in *Nonfiction Film Theory and Criticism*, ed. Richard Barsam (Clarke, 1976), 19-30.

Week 5 (09/19-09/23) Germany, The Third Reich, and Leni Riefenstahl

Films: *Triumph of the Will* (dir. Leni Riefenstahl, 1935), *Olympia* (dir. Leni Riefenstahl, 1936)

Readings: David Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema: 1933-1945* (I.B. Tauris: London, 2001), 123-158. David B. Hinton, *The Films of Leni Riefenstahl*, 3rd edition (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2000), 19-46.

Week 6 (09/26-09/30) Development of the Sociopolitical Documentary in the U.S.

Films: *The Plow That Broke the Plains* (Pare Lorentz, 1935), *The River* (Pare Lorentz, 1936)

Readings: Robert L. Snyder, *Pare Lorentz and the Documentary Film* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), 21-78.

Bill Nichols, "What Makes Documentaries Engaging and Persuasive?" in *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 94-119.

Bill Nichols, "How Can We Differentiate among Documentaries? Categories, Models, and the Expository and Poetic Modes of Documentary Film," in *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 142-171.

Week 7 (10/03-10/05) World War II and the Holocaust

Films: *The Battle of Russia* (Frank Capra, 1943), *Night and Fog* (Alain Resnais, 1956)

Readings: Aufderheide, *Documentary Film, A Very Short Introduction*, pp. 1-44.
Frank Capra, *The Name Above the Title* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), pp. 325-342.
Churchill Roberts, *Reconstructing the Most Terrifying Moments of the Holocaust: A Documentary Approach*, Holocaust Workshop presentation, Hanover, Germany, 2017.

OCTOBER 7 HOMECOMING HOLIDAY

PART 2 CAPTURING THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Week 8 (10/10-10/12) Cinema Verité and Direct Cinema

Films: *Chronicle of a Summer* (Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin, 1961), *High School* (Frederick Wiseman, 1968)

Readings: Aufderheide, *Documentary Film, A Very Short Introduction*, pp. 44-55.
Jean Rouch, "The Camera and Man," *Studies in Visual Communication* 1.1 (Fall 1974): 37-44.
Keith Beattie, "The Truth of the Matter: Cinema Verite and Direct Cinema," in *Documentary Screens: Nonfiction Film and Television* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 83-104.
Stella Bruzzi, "The Legacy of Direct Cinema," in *New Documentary: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2000), 67-74.

10/14

MID-TERM EXAMINATION

Week 9 (10/17-10/21)

Civil Rights, Gay Rights, the Women's Movement, and the Counterculture Movement

Films: *Freedom Never Dies: The Legacy of Harry T. Moore* (Sandra Dickson and Churchill Roberts, 2000), *The Times of Harvey Milk* (Rob Epstein, 1984), *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter* (Connie Field, 1980), *Génération 68* (Simon Brook, 2008)

Readings: Toby Miller, "The Truth Is a Murky Path: Technologies of Citizenship and the Visual," in *Technologies of Truth: Cultural Citizenship and the Popular Media* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 182-215.
Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 1-25.
Jo Freeman, "From Suffrage to Women's Liberation: Feminism in Twentieth Century America," in *Women: A Feminist Perspective*, edited by Jo Freeman (Mayfield: Mountain View, CA, 1995), 509-528.

Week 10 (10/24-10/28)

Capitalism, Corporate America, and Globalization

Films: *Capitalism: A Love Story* (Michael Moore, US, 2009), *American Factory* (Steven Bognar and Julia Reichert, 2019), *Ascension* (Jessica Kingdon, 2021)

Readings: Bill Nichols. "How Can We Describe the Observational, Participatory, Reflexive, and Performative Modes of Documentary Film?" in *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 172-211.
Bill Nichols, "How Have Documentaries Addressed Social and Political Issues?" in *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 212-252.

Week 11 (10/31-11/04)

The New Chinese Documentary Movement: Independent Filmmaking for the Public Record

Films: *Bumming in Beijing* (WU Wenguang, 1990), *Though I Am Gone* (HU Jie, 2006), *Disorder* (HUANG Weikai, 2008), *West of the Tracks* (WANG Bing, 2003)

Readings: WU Wenguang, "DV: Individual Filmmaking," trans. Cathryn Clayton, *Cinema Journal* 46.1 (Fall 2006): 136-140.
LU Xinyu, "Rethinking China's New Documentary Movement: Engagement with the Social," in *The New Chinese Documentary Film Movement: For the Public Record*, eds. Chris Berry, LU Xinyu, and Lisa Rofel (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), 15-48.
Chris Berry and Lisa Rofel, "Alternative Archive: China's Independent Documentary Culture," in *The New Chinese Documentary Film Movement: For the Public Record*, eds. Chris Berry, LU Xinyu, and Lisa Rofel (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), 135-154.

Week 12 (11/07-11/09) **Ecocinema, Crisis Documentary, and the Path of Healing**

Films: *The Tsunami and the Cherry Blossom* (Lucy Walker, 2011), *Under the Dome* (Chai Jing, 2015)

Readings: Bill Nichols, "How Can We Write Effectively about Documentary?" in *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 253-271.
Cui, Shuqin. "Chai Jing's *Under the Dome*: A Multimedia Documentary in the Digital Age." *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 11.1 (March 2017): 30-45.

NOVEMBER 11 VETERANS DAY HOLIDAY

PART 3 PRODUCING DOCUMENTARIES, FINDING AN AUDIENCE

Week 13 (11/14-11/18) **Tools of the Trade, The DV Revolution, Documentary/Media Activism, and Social Change**

Films: *Fahrenheit 9/11* (Michael Moore, US, 2004), *Ai Weiwei Never Sorry* (Alison Klayman, 2011)

Readings: Barry Natusch and Beryl Hawkins, "Mapping Nichols' Modes in Documentary Film: *Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry* and *Helvetica*," *The IAFOR Journal of Media, Communication and Film* 2.1 (Summer 2014): 103-127.
Sergio Rizzo, "Why Less Is Still Moore: Celebrity and the Reactive Politics of *Fahrenheit 9/11*," *Film Quarterly* 59.2 (2005): 32-39.
Zhen Zhang, "Toward a Digital Political Mimesis: Aesthetic of Affect and Activist Video," in *DV-made China: Digital Subjects and Social Transformations After Independent Film*, eds. Zhang Zhen and Angela Zito (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2015), 316-345.

Week 14 (11/21) **Documentary, Popular Culture, and Youth in the Age of Social Media**

Films: *People's Republic of Desire* (WU Hao, 2018), *Berkeley in the Sixties* (Mark Kitchell, 1990), *Minding the Gap* (Bing Liu, 2018), *China Remix* (Dorian Carlin-Jones and Melissa Lefkowitz, 2015)

Readings: Xiao, Ying. "'Hip Hop Is My Knife, Rap Is My Sword': Hip Hop Network and the Changing Landscape of Image and Sound Making." In *China in the Mix: Cinema, Sound, and Popular Culture in the Age of Globalization*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2017, 195-232.
Voci, Paola. "Multiple-screen Realities." In *Futures of Chinese Cinema: Technologies and Temporalities in Chinese Screen Cultures*, eds. Olivia Khoo and Sean Metzger. Bristol: Intellect, 2009, 263-276.

NOVEMBER 25 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week 15 (11/28-12/02) **Documentary Distribution, Film Festivals, and the Crossovers**

Films: *Last Train Home* (FAN Lixin, 2009), *Close-Up* (Abbas Kiarostami, 1990), *24 City* (Jia Zhangke, 2008), *Money and Honey* (Jasmine Ching-Hui Lee, 2015), *In the Same Breadth* (Nanfu Wang, 2021)

Readings: Aufderheide, *Documentary Film, A Very Short Introduction*, pp. 56-136.
Chapters of Žižek, Slavoj. *Pandemic! COVID-19 Shakes the World*. New York: Polity Press, 2020.
Hsiu-Chuang Deppman, "Reading Docufiction: Jia Zhangke's *24 City*," *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 8.3 (2014): 188-208.

Week 16 (12/05-12/07) **Presentations and Final Review**

12/16 (10:00 a.m.-noon) FINAL EXAMINATION

Class Sessions

Most class sessions will consist of lecture and discussion and viewing and critiquing of selected documentary films or film excerpts. Some sessions will be devoted to the presentation of class assignments.

Basis for Grades

There will be two tests, a mid-term October 14 and a final exam December 16 from 10:00 a.m. to noon in our regular classroom. **Each test counts as 30 percent of your grade.** (Note: We'll provide a study guide and sample questions prior to the mid-term and final so you'll have an idea of what and how to study.)

Another assignment, a critical look at documentary film and social change, will count 30 percent. The paper for this assignment will be 15-20 pages in length, numbered, typed in an appropriate style such as MLA, Turabian, APA, etc., and include accompanying endnotes/references.

OR

Unless you are a doctoral student, you may choose to produce a documentary script (**counts as 30 percent of your grade**) in lieu of a paper. The screenplay must be well researched, 20-30 pages in length, and typed in the Celtx or Arc Studio format. Guidelines for the script and sample scripts can be found on the Canvas website under “Paper and script materials.”

The due date for the paper or script is Wednesday, December 7 (at the time of our last class).

The remaining 10 percent of the grade will be based on individual and/or group assignments.

I strongly suggest you miss as few classes as possible, for viewing of the films is *sine qua non* to understanding documentary.

Grading

A=93-100%; A-=90-92%; B+=87-89%; B=83-86%; B-=80-82%; C+=77-79%; C=73-76%; C-=70-72%; D+=67-69%; D=63-66%; D-=60-62%; E=below 60%. S is equivalent to C or better.

Passing Grades and Grade Points

According to university guidelines, letter grades will convert to GPA as follows: A = 4.0; A- = 3.67; B+ = 3.33; B = 3; B- = 2.67; C+ = 2.33; C = 2.0; C- = 1.67; D+ = 1.33; D = 1.0; D- = .67; E = 0; WF = 0; I = 0; NG = 0; S-U = 0

“Students must earn a grade of C or higher to meet their major, minor, or General Education requirements. The S-U option is not counted toward their major or minor degree, nor General Education requirements.”

For more information on grades and grading policies, please visit:

<http://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Students are responsible for maintaining duplicated copies of all work submitted and all returned work in this course. Should the need for a review of the grade arises, it is the student's responsibility to make available all work and documentation.

As you are no doubt aware, grading in a class of this nature is highly subjective. Nevertheless, here are some guidelines we will use for grading test questions, papers, and assignments.

1. Tests: Is the response to the test question well written and to the point (a bit redundant but you get the idea)? Does the response address the main points in our discussion or in the relevant assigned reading? How does the response compare to the responses of other students?
2. The paper: How original is it? That is, does it offer any new insights into the issue? How thorough is it in terms of the research? Put another way, does it suggest a superficial treatment of the subject or a comprehensive treatment?

How narrowly focused is the paper? (Usually, the narrower the focus the better the paper is.) How well written is the paper? Are the pages numbered? Is it replete with typos? Does it follow a style manual?

3. The script: How original is it? Is it a good story? Is it dramatically told? Is it in the proper format? Do you have good characters? Do you know the intended audience?
4. The assignments: How thoroughly was the assignment researched? How insightful was it?

Note: Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

University of Florida Honor Code

We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

The University requires all members of its community to be honest in all endeavors. A fundamental principle is that the whole process of learning and pursuit of knowledge is diminished by cheating, plagiarism and other acts of academic dishonesty. In addition, every dishonest act in the academic environment affects other students adversely, from the skewing of the grading curve to giving unfair advantage for honors or for professional or graduate school admission. Therefore, the University will take severe action against dishonest students. Similarly, measures will be taken against faculty, staff and administrators who practice dishonest or demeaning behavior.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting

<https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

U Matter, We Care

If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit umatter.ufl.edu/ to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.