

DOCUMENTARY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

纪录片和社会变迁

MMC 6936 Class Number 18113

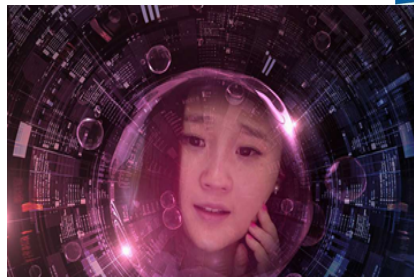
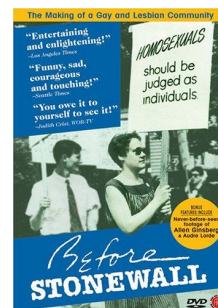
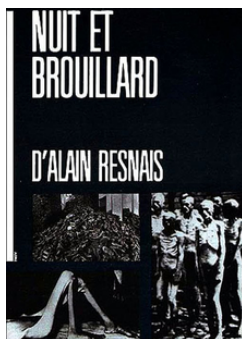
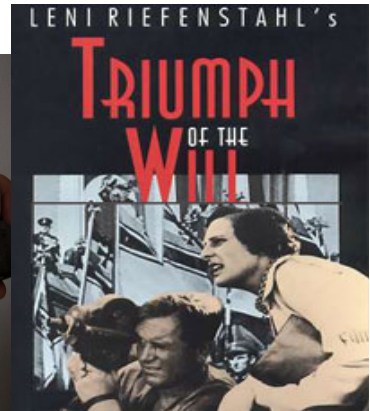
3 CREDIT HOURS

FALL 2023

Weimer Hall 3020



Rosie the Riveter



Instructor Churchill Roberts, 3040A Weimer
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Office hours Monday, 10-11, 2-5, or almost any time by appointment

Class Time Time period 5 on Monday (11:45 a.m. 12:35 p.m.) and time periods 5 and 6 on Wednesday (11:45 a.m.-1:40 p.m.)



Description

This course looks at documentary film as both an **index** and **agent** of social change—an **index** in the sense that documentary chronicles many important moments and movements of social change in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and **agent** in the sense that documentary is often used to bring about social change. For the purposes of this course, the term social change is used in the broadest sense—to encompass social, economic, political, and cultural change.

Since its introduction at the end of the nineteenth century, film has been recognized as an important tool for social movements. Lenin considered cinema the most important of the arts. Governments worldwide were quick to recognize the propaganda value of film, particularly documentary film, and to enlist it to their ends. In World War II, the United States and its allies produced documentaries to mobilize the public and maintain troop morale. Germany and its allies did the same. During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union used documentary film (as well as radio broadcasts and print media) to compete for the hearts and minds of people in the developing world. Today, activists use documentary to promote or protest a variety of causes from the environment and corporate practices to war, religion, and democracy.

Our study of documentary will focus on the following:

1. The various sociological and economic perspectives that attempt to explain social change
2. Documentary as a key component of social change worldwide
3. Persuasive techniques in documentary
4. Filmmakers at the forefront of social change

TOPICS

Part I Historical look at documentary and social change

- A. Theories of social and economic change, the diffusion of new ideas and practices

- B. Soviet film in the 1920s and 1930s—the marriage of film and socialism
- C. British documentary in the 1930s—Griersonian documentary as a means of fostering democracy
- D. German documentary in the 1930s—selling Fascism
- E. U.S. documentary in the 1930s—Pare Lorentz and Roosevelt's New Deal
- F. Documentary in World War II
- G. The Holocaust—the aftermath of war
- H. Changes in approach—a new style of documentary brought about by changes in technology

Part II Documentary and contemporary social change

- I. Civil rights—the struggle of African Americans in the United States
- J. The Women's Movement—women in the workplace
- K. Lifestyles—the Cultural Revolution of the sixties, gay and proud
- L. Religion—social and political dimensions
- M. Vietnam—the first living room war
- N. Corporate America—is what's good for GM really good for the country?

Part III Documenting social change in The People's Republic of China

- O. Social and economic change in the world's most populated country
- P. Political change

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

1. Identify key films (and filmmakers) that have influenced or documented social change around the world, particularly since the 1930s.
2. Describe the role that film has played as a propaganda tool for governments in the 1920s, '30s, and '40s.
3. Explain the role of technology in changing the ways in which documentary films are made.
4. Expound upon some of the major contemporary social issues in the United States, and the role that documentary films have played in addressing those issues.

5. Contrast social and political change in China and the United States, especially as they pertain to the role of media in each country, and the kinds of films that can be made and distributed.

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 20 and a final exam December 13 from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. in our regular classroom. **Each test counts as 30 percent of your grade.** (Note: I'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 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 6 (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 films is *sine qua non* to understanding documentary.

Grading

93-	A	4.0
90-92.5	A-	3.67
87-89.5	B+	3.33
84-86.5	B	3.0
81-83.5	B-	2.67
78-80.5	C+	2.33
75-77.5	C	2.0
72-74.5	C-	1.67
69-71.5	D+	1.33
66-68.5	D	1.0
63-65.5	D-	.67
Less than 63	E	0

As you are no doubt aware, grading in a class of this nature is highly subjective. Nevertheless, here are some guidelines I 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?

Information on current University of Florida grading policies can be found at:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

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.

ACCOMMODATION 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.

Texts

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

Gary Evans, **John Grierson: Trailblazer of Documentary Film** (Lantzville, BC: XYZ Publishing, 2005).

Additional Readings

1. Richard Pipes, "Culture as Propaganda," in **Russia under the Bolshevik Regime** (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), pp. 282-336.
2. David Welch, **Propaganda and the German Cinema: 1933-1945** (I.B. Tauris: London, 2001), pp. 123-158.
3. David B. Hinton, **The Films of Leni Riefenstahl**, 3rd edition (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2000), pp. 19-46.
4. Robert L. Snyder, **Pare Lorentz and the Documentary Film** (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), pp. 21-78.
5. Frank Capra, **The Name Above the Title** (New York: Macmillan, 1971), pp. 325-342.
6. Churchill Roberts, **Reconstructing the Most Terrifying Moments of the Holocaust: A Documentary Approach**, Holocaust Workshop presentation, Hanover, Germany, October, 2017.

7. Lewis Jacobs, "The Turn Toward Conservatism," in **The Documentary Tradition**, 2nd ed., edited by Lewis Jacobs (New York: Norton and Company, 1979), pp. 276-282.
8. Timothy B. Tyson, **Radio Free Dixie: Robert Williams and the Roots of Black Power** (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), pp. 1-25.
9. 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), pp. 509-528.
10. B.J. Bullert, "Tongues Untied," in **Public Television: Politics and the Battle over Documentary Film** (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), pp. 91-122.
11. <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/china-economic-growth-history/>
12. <https://u.osu.edu/mclc/2019/09/27/the-future-of-independent-documentary-in-china/>

Viewing Schedule

Note: We will view and discuss as many of these films as possible.

Battleship Potemkin (Sergei Eisenstein, 1925), Soviet film about the 1905 revolution

October (Sergei Eisenstein, 1927), a film commemorating the 1917 revolution

The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty (Esther Shub, 1927), historical account of the fall of the czar and the triumph of communism

Man with the Movie Camera (Dziga Vertov, 1929), a visual manifesto of socialist society

Three Songs about Lenin (Dziga Vertov, 1934), Vertov's poetic tribute to Lenin

Grierson (Roger Blais, 1973), Canadian National Film Board biography of the father of documentary film

Triumph of the Will (Leni Riefenstahl, 1935), powerful propaganda film about Adolph Hitler

The Plow That Broke the Plains (Pare Lorentz, 1935), causes of the Dust Bowl in the 1930s and the government's response

The River (Pare Lorentz, 1936), government documentary on the need to create the Tennessee Valley Authority and prevent flooding in the Mississippi River Valley

Battle of Russia (Frank Capra, 1943), the "Why We Fight" film showing the Soviets as heroic allies

Night and Fog (Alain Resnais, 1956), one of the first films to acknowledge the Holocaust

The Last Flight of Petr Ginz (Sandra Dickson and Churchill Roberts, 2012), the story of a child prodigy trapped by the Holocaust

Chronicle of a Summer (Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin, 1961), influential French cinema vérité film that analyzed the sociopolitical conditions in France in the early 1960s

A Time for Burning (1966), William Jersey's use of the direct cinema approach to reveal the turmoil caused by a minister's attempt to integrate a Lutheran Church

Negroes with Guns: Rob Williams and Black Power (Sandra Dickson and Churchill Roberts, 2005), forgotten hero of the Civil Rights Movement

The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter (Connie Field, 1980), a film about working women in World War II

Tongues Untied (Marlon Riggs, 1989), classic film about gays blacks and the homophobia and racism they encounter

Before Stonewall (Greta Schiller, 1985), the life of gay and lesbian Americans prior to the famous raid on a gay bar in Greenwich Village in 1969

Berkeley in the Sixties (Mark Kitchell, 1990), a look at free speech, anti-war, counter-culture, and women's lib movements of the sixties

Générations '68 (Simon Brook, 2008), the end of the sixties cultural revolution in Europe

Jesus Camp (Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady, 2006), a look at a summer camp for Evangelical Christian kids

Regret to Inform (Barbara Sonneborn, 1998), a film about Sonneborn's journey to Vietnam to try and understand the war and death of her husband who was killed in Vietnam

Sad Song of the Yellow Skin (Michael Rubbo, 1970), National Film Board film about the people of Saigon as seen through the experiences of three young American journalists

Capitalism: A Love Story (Michael Moore, 2009), Michael Moore examines the impact of corporate dominance over people's everyday lives

The Corporation (Jennifer Abbott and Mark Achbar, 2003), based on the book, *The Corporation: The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power*

Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price (Robert Greenwald, 2005), a portrait of Wal-Mart as a giant greedy corporation

Food, Inc. (Robert Kenner, 2008), a shocking look at what we eat and how the fast food industry puts value and convenience over nutrition and environmental impact

Bumming in Beijing (Wu Wenguan, 1999), independent documentary about the lives of four artists trying to make it in Beijing.

Searching for Lin Zhao's Soul (Hu Jie, 2004), a film about the tragic life of a gifted young woman who was executed for speaking out during the height of Chairman Mao's rule

Please Vote for Me (Weijun Chen, 2007), democracy at work—a look at the first open elections of a class officer in a third-grade, public elementary school in Wuhan, China

Last Train Home (Lixin Fan, 2009), the story of migrant workers trying to balance earning a living, supporting their families, and getting home for Chinese New Year's celebrations

Ai Weiwei Never Sorry (Alison Klayman, 2011), the story of the renowned dissident Chinese artist

People's Republic of Desire (Hao Wu, 2018), the story of two live streamers seeking fame and fortune and a human connection in the digital world.

One Child Nation (Nanfu Wang, Jialing Zhang, 2019), a story of the consequences of China's One-Child Policy

Weekly Lecture-Discussion Schedule

1. August 23

Overview, definition of social change, theory

2. August 28

Soviet film in the 20s and 30s

Readings: Additional Reading No. 1

3. August 30

Soviet film in the 20s and 30s

4. September 4

NO CLASS LABOR DAY HOLIDAY

5. September 6

British documentary in the 1930s

Readings: **John Grierson: Trailblazer of Documentary Film** (complete by September 8)

6. September 11
NFB documentary on John Grierson
7. September 13 and 18
German documentary in the 1930s
Readings: Additional Readings No. 2 and No. 3
8. September 20 and 25
U.S. documentary in the 1930s
Readings: Additional Reading No. 4
9. September 27 and October 2
World War II, the Holocaust, and the Aftermath of War
Readings: Additional Readings No. 5, 6, and 7
10. October 4
Changes in technology and impact on documentary
11. October 9 and 11
The Civil Rights Movement
Readings: Additional Reading No. 8
12. October 16 and 18
The Women's Movement and Lifestyles
Readings: Additional Readings No. 9 and No. 10
13. October 23 and 25
Review and mid-term exam
14. October 30 and November 1
Lifestyles, Religion and Politics
15. November 6 and 8

Vietnam and the aftermath of war

16. November 13 and 15

Corporate America

17. November 20

Corporate America

18. November 22

NO CLASS THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

19. November 27

China

20. November 29

China

21. December 4 and 6

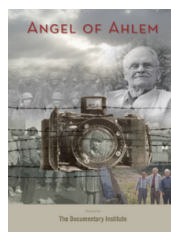
China

Readings: **Documentary: A Very Short Introduction** (complete by December 4)

22. TO BE DETERMINED

Final exam

Churchill Roberts: Recent Films



Discovering the Kingdom of Women (in production)

