

(Updated: Spring 2016)

PREREQUISITES: WP 1010 Introduction to Academic Writing
 WP 1111 Academic Writing
 CN 2202 Writing for Mass Communication
 CN 2227 Introduction to Film and Television Studies
 CN 4535 Editing Theory and Practice
 CS 1070 Introduction to Information Systems

CATALOG

DESCRIPTION: Researching, focusing, planning, shooting, writing, and editing the short documentary, or industrial or public relations, film. Working with clients. Ethical issues and principles. History of the documentary. Industrial video functions.

RATIONALE: Students learn to make a 7- to 12-minute documentary or industrial video. Industrial film production is based on the documentary format, but also requires the practitioner to understand client needs and preferences. They availability of cheap, easy-to-use cameras and editing software make it essential that students learn how to use video-production technology today: basic production skills are useful in media-related jobs and to people who wish to do freelance work.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: As a result of taking this course, the student should be able to:

1. Differentiate between alternative documentary types and identify their cinematographic historical context.
2. Demonstrate detailed knowledge of the visual, stylistic and structural elements necessary for communicating messages.
3. Apply their knowledge in make a short documentary or industrial or public relations video.
4. Apply ethical judgment in addressing issues related to objectivity, balance, truth, bias, fairness in media communication.
5. Conduct interviews and other relevant research for the completion of the project.

METHOD OF TEACHING

AND LEARNING: In congruence with the learning and teaching strategy of the college, the following tools are used:

- Classes consisting of lectures and discussions.
- Documentary screenings.
- Office Hours: Students are encouraged to make full use of the office hours of their instructor, where they can ask questions and go over lecture material.
- Use of a Blackboard site, where instructors post lecture notes, assignment instructions, announcements, and additional resources.

ASSESSMENT:

Proposal for project – formative	0	Written outline of project
First draft of project – formative	0	Shooting script and in-class presentation

In-class 1-hour midterm examination – summative	30	Essay questions
Final Documentary – summative	70	Submission of film (7-12 minutes)

Formative assessment aims to prepare the student for the final project. Proposals and drafts will be discussed and evaluated in class.

The mid-term examination tests Learning Outcomes 1 and 2
The final project tests Learning Outcomes 3, 4 and 5

READING LIST:

1. Required Text

Rosenthal, Alan. *Writing, Directing, and Producing Documentary Films and Videos*, Southern Illinois Press; 2007

2. Further Readings

Bordwell, David and Noel Carroll, (eds). *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1996.

Cook, Pam. *The Cinema Book*. BFI Publications, London, 2008

Hampe, Barry, *Making Documentary Films and Videos: A Practical Guide to Planning, Filming, and Editing Documentaries*, Holt paperbacks; 2007.

Nichols, Bill. *Introduction to Documentary*, Indiana University Press, 2010

Rabiger, Michael, *Directing the Documentary*, Focal Press, 2014

Shook, Fred, John Larson, and John DeTarsio. *Television Field Production and Reporting*, Allyn and Bacon; 2009.

RECOMMENDED MATERIAL:

Filmmaker magazine (quarterly)
Documentary (quarterly)
Sight and Sound (monthly)
Premiere (monthly)

WWW RESOURCES:

<http://freedocumentaries.org/>
<http://www.documentaryfilms.net/>
<http://www.dfgdocs.com/>
<http://www.documentary.org/>
<http://www.documentaryarts.com/>

SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS:

editing software

Word, DVD Player, Digital Video Camera, Computer equipped with

COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS:

Verbal presentation skills using relevant terminology

INDICATIVE CONTENT OUTLINE:

1. The Documentary Form

- 1.2 Industrial and public relations videos
- 1.3 Reporting and storytelling

2. Ethical Issues

- 2.1 Objectivity, truth, balance, and fairness vs. limited knowledge and point-of-view
- 2.2 Getting permission to shoot video
- 2.3 Getting permission to conduct interviews
- 2.4 Revealing intentions to interviewees
- 2.5 Getting permission to conduct research
- 2.6 Considerations in using information
- 2.7 Deciding whether or not to allow source interference in the structuring of interviews or use of information

3. Conception and Initial Planning

- 3.1 Being realistic: Can you do it, and by deadline?
- 3.2 The concept: Putting it into a simple sentence or two
- 3.3 Considering the audience and client
- 3.4 The proposal: film statement; background and need/objectives; approach, form, and style; shooting schedule; audience
- 3.5 Research: texts, photos and stock video, interviews, location

4. Shaping the Film

- 4.1 Essay vs. narrative; combinations
- 4.2 Angle: finding a character to focus on
- 4.3 Structure: complication-resolution; timelines
- 4.4 Tools of style and freedom of imagination
- 4.5 Writing the first draft
- 4.6 Staying focused and the art of omission

5. Shooting, Narrating, and Editing

- 5.1 Planning shots for structure and meaning
- 5.2 Useful shots (establishing, wide, medium, close-up, cutaway, macro) and their uses; shots to avoid (pan, zoom)
- 5.3 Deciding whether to use music and other sound effects
- 5.4 Shooting sequences
- 5.5 Providing visual “proof” of points
- 5.6 Shooting beginnings and ends
- 5.7 Conducting and shooting interviews
- 5.8 Logging video
- 5.9 Arranging video shots
- 5.10 Preparing narration, natural sound, and/or sound effects
- 5.11 Editing the final project

6. Documentary history and aesthetics (in the work of Bill Nichols)

- 6.1** Defining the documentary
- 6.2 History of documentary
- 6.3 Documentary and representation
- 6.4** The rhetorical tradition of documentaries
- 6.5 Types of documentary