

IMA 753.00 - Documentary II • Spring 2020 / REVISED FOR ONLINE

Tuesday 3PM - 6PM • HN544

Instructor: Martin Lucas mluc@hunter.cuny.edu

Office: HN477 • Hours: Tuesday 1 -2 PM

This course asks students to take a single documentary project from proposal through production. There will be a strong focus on story and pre-production planning, conceptual approaches to filming and writing the project, as well as careful attention to craft elements of cinematography and sound design. The student should have a project idea in advance of the first class, and be prepared to develop a proposal, do research, and complete substantial filming during the term, as well as preparing material for post-production (without actually editing).

The course assumes basic knowledge of videography, and documentary techniques, and will help build on that knowledge. The main focus will be on how to develop a rigorous approach to story and how to actually make a film that tells your story while reflecting in the best way the tensions between form, readability and personal vision. In addition to craft concerns, the class will address a variety of conceptual issues in terms of the aesthetics and strategies of documentary, looking at different approaches, and interrogating observational, experimental and other models for the problems they solve, and the ones they create. This will include screenings and readings grouped around different discussions that have evolved around documentary media.

Prerequisite IMA 751 or permission of instructor.

Grading will be based on milestones: a written proposal, a production plan, developed research, a binder and the completion of principle filming. In addition there will be one presentation assignment. Each student will present in class the work of a filmmaker whose approach you find significant or useful. In addition, all students will be required to assist another student in a technical capacity at least once.

Lateness and Absences: Attendance to class is mandatory. This is a graduate course, and it is understood that you may have to miss a class for reasons related to work, or because you are on a shoot, attending a conference, etc. If you think that you will have to miss three or more classes of our fourteen sessions, please speak with me and consider taking the class during a semester when you have more time.

Completion of the project depends on the size and complexity. However, the timeline for the piece should be agreed upon between the student and the instructor as part of the production plan **at the beginning of the term**. The basic idea is that you will complete both pre-production, and principle cinematography by semester's end, and have good logs, etc. You do not have to have an edited version of your project.

TEXT:

Michael Rabiger *Directing the Documentary* 6th Ed. (Focal Press, 2014)

Other readings will be made available online.

The website for the class is: <https://wordpress.com/view/imadocumentaryii.movie.blog>

I will try to list everyone as a contributor to the site. You are encouraged to post about relevant screenings, artists, etc.

SCHEDULE

Pt 1 The Proposal

Week 1 - January 29 - The Documentary Proposal & The Subject of Documentary

Week 2 - Feb 5 - The Rocky Road to Representation

Project Presentations

READING: Rabiger Chap 6 "Developing Story Ideas". Also: Allan Sekula "Dismantling Modernism" (pdf); David Levi-Strauss "No Caption Needed" (pdf)

Week 3 - February 19 - Documentary and the Idea of Personal Style

Project Presentations

READING: Brian Massoumi "The Political Economy of Belonging"; Rabiger Chap 17 "POV & Storytelling"; Rabiger Chap 7 "Research."

Due: Proposal Draft

Pt 2 The Research

Week 4 - February 26 - Art as Research

Screening: Screening: *Chronicle of a Summer* (Rouch & Morin, 1961) excerpt.

READING: Barbash "From Fieldwork to Filming"(pdf); Rabiger Chap 22 "Advanced Research".

Due: Research Plan

Week 5 - March 04 - "Documentary as Social Text"

READING: Doc V&V Chap 2 "Documentary Styles."

Pt 3 Pre-production

Week 6 - March 11 - What is Coverage? Approaches to visual evidence.

Developing a Production Schedule

READING: Hampe "Visual Evidence" from *Making Documentary Films and Videos*

Rabiger: Chap 5 "Story Elements & Film Grammar."

Pt 4 Production

Week 7 - March 18 - CLASSES SUSPENDED

Week 8 - March 25 - ONLINE

LECTURE: Documentary By Other Means: A look at the essay film

Go over revised project ideas.

Reading: Articles by Philip Lopate, Nora Alter, and Laura Rascaroli

Week 9 - April 7 - (NOTE: This is a Tuesday!)

LECTURE: The Essay Film, Pt. 2

TECH SECTION: Digital Video: Color Spaces, Color Encoding and more.

Week 10 - April 15

LECTURE: Fair Use: Working with archival material

READING Doc V&V Chap 12 "Lighting and Exposure: Beyond the Basics." (pdf)

TECH SECTION: Gamma Curve: The digital image and exposure.

Week 11 - APR 22 - LECTURE: TBA

TECH SECTION: Fine Tuning Your Editing

Week 12 - APR 29 - Reconstruction/Reenactment & Documentary Ethics

Screen and Discuss: *Far from Poland*, (Jill Godmilow, 1984) excerpt; *Resisting Paradise* (Barbara Hammer, 2003) excerpt.

Week 13 - May 06 - View project presentations.

Week 14 - May 13 - View project presentations.

Week 15 - May 20 - DUE: Binder with Logs and Post-production Plan.

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In compliance with the CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Hunter College reaffirms the prohibition of any sexual misconduct, which includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment retaliation against students, employees, or visitors, as well as certain intimate relationships. Students who have experienced any form of sexual violence on or off campus (including CUNY-sponsored trips and events) are entitled to the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights for Hunter College. Sexual Violence: Students are strongly encouraged to immediately report the incident by calling 911, contacting NYPD Special Victims Division Hotline (646-610-7272) or their local police precinct, or contacting the College's Public Safety Office (212-772-4444).

All Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct: Students are also encouraged to contact the College's Title IX Campus Coordinator, Dean John Rose (jtrose@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-650-3262) or Colleen Barry (colleen.barry@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-772-4534) and seek complimentary services through the Counseling and Wellness Services Office, Hunter East 1123. CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct Link: <http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/la/Policy-on-Sexual-Misconduct-12-1-14-with-links.pdf>

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Hunter College upholds the right to promote academic integrity on its campus as an educational institution of the City University of New York. The College has the responsibility to review all charges of academic dishonesty and implement sanctions, including, but not limited to, failing the course, official transcript notation, suspension or expulsion from the College when it has been determined that academic dishonesty did occur. Please click here to see a full list of disciplinary sanctions.

READING/WRITING CENTER

Students can receive tutoring in reading and writing skills, critical reading, and the writing process at Hunter's Reading/Writing Center.

ACCESSIBILITY

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