

## **CMST 23931: DOCUMENTARY PRODUCTION II**

Cross-listings: (HMRT 35107 ARTV 33931 HMRT 25107 ARTV 23931 CMST 33931 MAAD 23931 CHST 23931)

Winter 2024, W & F, 1:30PM–4:20PM, Logan Arts Center 014 & 003

Lecturer: Marco G. Ferrari, [marcoferrari@uchicago.edu](mailto:marcoferrari@uchicago.edu), 773-230-1106 (mobile)

Office Hours: by appointment---in-person or remote

### **SYLLABUS**

#### **Course Description**

Documentary Video Production II focuses on the shaping and crafting of a non-Fiction video. Enrollment will be limited to those students who have taken Documentary Production I, and the class will continue working on the documentaries begun in the fall. Students will learn about grant writing and budgeting and will be expected to write a treatment detailing their project. Production techniques will concentrate on the language of handheld camera versus tripod, interview methodologies, microphone placement including working with wireless systems, and lighting for the interview. Post-production will cover editing techniques including color correction and audio sweetening, how to prepare for exhibition, and distribution strategies. A public screening of student work will take place Spring quarter.

#### **Overview**

An important part of the fabric of contemporary society is made up of the images we produce and receive every day. How these images affect us is tied to how and why we produce them. This production course is a way to facilitate the awareness of this interaction through fundamental technical exercises in listening, looking, and making—key pillars in documentary filmmaking.

The course will strive to answer: How do students perceive their relationship to the environment? How can that relationship be translated into a visual vocabulary? How can this vocabulary be refined, through the craft of writing, researching, filming, editing and presenting? Ultimately, how can the environment itself participate in facilitating the students' creative expression?

#### **Goals**

1. To explore the creative process by being introduced to the fundamental techniques in pre-production, production and post-production using digital video.
2. Through historical/theoretical readings and viewings cultivate the ability to see the world cinematographically and find creative solutions to “capture” or “interpret” that vision.
3. To develop relational skills in working collectively through the modes of documentary production while realizing a final expression.
4. To be an attentive spectator and expand the skill of critiquing, reflecting sincerely and meaningfully on readings, discussions, screenings, and in peer review contexts.

#### **Class Structure**

- Discussions based off of assigned readings and viewings/in-class film screenings.
- Conceptual and technical demonstrations, lab work and in-class assignments.
- Studio time (planning and production)
- Presentation of works (critiques)

**Canvas** (course page), <https://courses.uchicago.edu>

The online course will follow the syllabus as much as possible. Since the schedule is subject to change please stay current to the canvas course page, as changes or additions will be made in that platform.

#### **Classrooms**

We will use room 014 as our base for class meetings. We will use the computer lab 003/DML for editing labs and it is free for you to use during in-class editing time in-conjunction with the editing suites you began using last quarter.

#### **Readings**

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All required readings are posted on **Canvas** along with auxiliary readings and points of reference that can help further understanding. The extra readings will generally be on technical aspects of production or to expand on theoretical topics discussed in class. Additional material may be distributed in class and uploaded onto the course home page. In the event of absence, the student is responsible for all new assignments and information given during class time.

### Suggested Reference Readings:

- Murch, Walter. 2001. *In the Blink of an Eye: A Perspective on Film Editing*. 2Nd ed. Los Angeles, California: Silman-James Press. (available as pdf on canvas)
- *Documentary Editing: Principles & Practice*, Jacob Bricca, Focal Press, 2018
- *The Technique of Film and Video Editing: History Theory, and Practice*, Ken Dancyger, Focal Press, 2011

### Viewings

Each class will have a time where we will view screenings of works. A Viewing List (with links when possible) will be available on Canvas and updated on a weekly basis.

### Grading

The success of this course depends on the commitment of the students to engage creatively with theoretical and technical course matter. The student's openness and sensitivity towards fellow classmate's expression will allow for greater growth and exploration in the class as well. Evaluation of all student work will take into consideration the student's availability to experiment intellectually and creatively in a way that demonstrates a thoughtful consideration and creative interpretation of the themes and technical matter raised through course readings, screenings and class discussions. \*Late Assignments will affect your grade. Written feedback is given throughout the quarter, and an individual meeting at the mid-way point of the semester will be arranged to go over the student's current status and any concerns.

- Individual Digital Journal—Weekly reading notes, posted on Canvas	10%
- Group Project—Production Plan: Shot List & Production Schedule	10%
- Group Project—Revised Treatment	10%
- Group Project—Promotional Material	10%
- Group Project—Rough Cut Screening/Critique	5%
- Group Project—Rough Cut with sound mix, color correction and graphics	5%
- Group Project—Final Edit Screening/Critique	20%
- Personal Response Text regarding Individual and Group Projects	10%
- Participation (includes one class that a student leads discussion from their Digital Journal)	20%

A = Outstanding participation and attendance, asks questions and embraces the process, substantial growth is evident by the end of the quarter.

B = Above average participation and attendance, palpable growth is evident by the end of the quarter.

C = Average execution of assignments, participation and attendance, little or no growth is evident by the end of the quarter.

D = Well below average of the above.

F = Unsatisfactory work, participation, and attendance.

### Attendance

This class does not meet remotely. Regular in-presence attendance is required. More than two absences in class will result in a full letter drop in the final grade. A quarter is a very short amount of time, missing one class can mean missing out on a major technical lesson, which can affect the quality of your projects. In the case of excused absences due to documented illness or family emergencies, please present a dean's note as soon as possible.

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### Out of Pocket Materials

Macintosh formatted external 500gb to 1tb hard drive. Available for purchase at the DML.

### Inhouse Equipment and Resources

- Digital Media Center, <https://arts.uchicago.edu/logan-center/jonathan-logan-family-foundation-media-center>. Through the media center certain gear will be explored and available for your use on projects. As the course develops you will be introduced to gear and technical demonstrations.
- We will work with Adobe Premier Pro for editing projects. You will need to create an account to use the application, <https://www.adobe.com>. This does not give you the ability to edit off-site, for this you will have go on a payment plan through adobe.

### Premier Pro Tutorial (log in with Cnet id and search premier pro)

<https://humanresources.uchicago.edu/tpm/Lynda.com%20guidance.pdf>

<https://linkedinlearning.uchicago.edu>

**SCHEDULE** (subject to change, check canvas for updates)

### WEEK 1

#### Wednesday, January 3

- Class overview. Project reviews and needs. Look into Ferrari's work. Additional viewings.

#### Due 1/5

- Group Assignment—Print out previous draft of Treatment and bring print out to next class.
- Reading—kill-the-doc-Jill-Godmilow.pdf

#### Friday, January 5

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- Review Treatments—workshop session on shot-list and project focus.
- Group Assignments given—Production Plan: Shot List & Production Schedule due Week 3 & Revised Treatment due Week 5
- Student Final Projects from Fall Screenings

#### Due 1/10

- Reading—Nichols, “Preface” (pp. ix-xvi) & “I. The Domain of Documentary” (pp. 3-31), of *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*.
- Continue Project Production (organizing, research, filming, editing).

### WEEK 2

#### Wednesday, January 10

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- Revisiting sound, camera and lighting set up lab.

#### Due 1/12

- Reading—Sontag Susan\_On Photography\_In Platos Cave\_pp1-19.pdf

#### Friday, January 12

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- Revisiting sound, camera and lighting set up lab.

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### Due 1/17

- Group Assignment—Production Plan: Shot List & Production Schedule print out and post on canvas
- Reading—Nichols, “III. Axiographics: Ethical Space in Documentary Film” (pp. 76-103), of *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*.
- Continue Project Production (organizing, research, filming, editing).

## WEEK 3

### Wednesday, January 17

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- Advanced lighting/interviewing lab with Panasonic Gh5/6 and Sony X70
- Review Production Plan: Shot Lists & Production Schedules.

### Due 1/19

- Reading—Rabiger-Interviewing Chapter
- Reading—Document-Rosen

### Friday, January 19

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- Advanced lighting/interviewing lab.
- Review Shot Lists/Production Schedules.

### Due 1/24

- Group Assignment—New Footage/String-outs due
- Group Assignment—Reenactment Ideas or Experimental Scenes text
- Reading—Nichols, “V. Telling Stories with Evidence and Arguments” (pp. 107-133), of *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*.
- Reading—Reenactment-text-docu-Nichols, Bill-Documentary Reenactment.pdf
- Continue Project Production (organizing, research, filming, editing).

## WEEK 4

### Wednesday, January 24

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- Discuss and Select Date for Spring Quarter Public Screening at FSC
- Reenactment & Experimental approaches lab.
- Review of New Footage/String-outs

### Friday, January 26

- *Class canceled. Students to use class time for field work and to view a film—link will be listed on canvas.*

### Due 1/31

- Group Assignment—Revised Treatment print out and post on canvas.
- Reading—Nichols, “V. Sticking to Reality: Rhetoric and What Exceeds It” (pp. 134-164), in *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*.
- Continue Project Production (organizing, research, filming, editing).

## WEEK 5

### Wednesday, January 31

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- Premier Pro—Sound Editing Lab.
- Review of New Footage/String-outs

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### Due 2/2

- Reading—How-Have-Documentaries.pdf
- Reading—Narration\_Invention\_History.pdf

### **Friday, February 2**

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- Continue—Premier Pro—Sound Editing Lab.

### Due 2/7

- Group Assignment—New Footage/String-outs
- Reading—Nichols, “VI. The Fact of Realism and the Fiction of Objectivity” (pp. 165-198), of *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*.
- Continue Project Production (organizing, research, filming, editing).

## **WEEK 6**

### **Wednesday, February 7**

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- Premier Pro—Color Correction and Text/Graphics Lab.
- New Footage/String-outs Review

### Due 2/9

- Reading—Towards a Third Cinema.pdf
- Reading—Documentary-Political-Activism.pdf

### **Friday, February 9**

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- Continue—Premier Pro—Color Correction and Text/Graphics Lab
- Assignment Given—Promotional material

### Due 2/14

- Group Assignment—Promotional material
- Reading—Nichols, “VII. Pornography, Ethnography, and the Discourses of Power” (pp. 201-228), of *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*.

## **WEEK 7**

### **Wednesday, February 14**

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- Funding & Distribution strategies.
- Review Promotional material.
- Advanced editing/sound mix lab.

### Due 2/16

- Group Assignment—Review of Sequence Edit (Majority of audiovisual material captured by 2/16)

### **Friday, February 16**

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- Advanced editing/sound mix lab.
- Review of Sequence Edit (Majority of audiovisual material captured)

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### Due 2/21

- Reading—Nichols, “VIII. Representing the Body: Questions of Meaning and Magnitude” (pp. 229-266), of *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*.
- Reading—Rethinking-Womens-Cinema.pdf

## **WEEK 8**

### **Wednesday, February 21**

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- Funding & Distribution strategies.
- Advanced editing/sound mix lab.

### Due 2/23

- Group Project—Rough Edit

### **Friday, February 23**

- Group Project—Rough Edit Screening/Critique. Meet in Logan Screening Room 201.

### Due 2/28

- Reading—Pasolini-pierpaolopasolini-furiocolombointerview-1975-byabattista-eng.pdf

## **WEEK 9**

### **Wednesday, February 28**

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- In class editing, audio sweetening and color correction.
- Discuss and plan Film Studies Center public screening of final projects for spring quarter.

### Due 3/1

- Rough Cut with sound mix, color correction and graphics
- Class Screening Poster drafts (volunteer designers)

### **Friday, March 1**

- In class editing, audio sweetening and color correction.
- Rough Cut with sound mix, color correction and graphics—review in edit suites

### Due 3/8

- Group Project—Final Edit
- Personal Response Text (send via canvas and print)
- Class Screening Poster final version (volunteer designers)

## **WEEK 10**

### **Wednesday, March 6**

- In class editing, audio sweetening and color correction.

### Due 3/8

- Final Edit (works to be ready for screening in Logan 201).
- Personal Response Text (send via canvas and print)
- Class Screening Poster final version (volunteer designers)

### **Friday, March 8**

- Group Project—Final Edit Screening/Critique. Meet in Logan Screening Room 201.

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