

CMST 23931: DOCUMENTARY PRODUCTION II

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

Winter 2023, W & F, 2:30PM–5:20PM, Logan Arts Center 014 & 003

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

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

Course Assistant: Hunter Koch, hmkoch@uchicago.edu

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 (4/1/23).

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.

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Readings

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.

- Digital Journal: weekly reading notes, posted on Canvas	10%
- Promotional Material Group Project Assignment	10%
- Group Project Treatment	15%
- Group Project Rough Cut	15%
- Participation	20%
- Final Edit Screening	30%

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 4

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

Due 1/6

- Print out previous draft of Treatment and bring to next class.

Friday, January 6

- Review Treatments—workshop session on shot-list and project focus.
- Assignments given—Shot List/Production Schedule due Week 3 & Revised Treatment due Week 5

Due 1/11 (week 2)

- Nichols, "Preface" (pp. ix-xvi) & "I. The Domain of Documentary" (pp. 3-31), of *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*.
- Krishnamurti, "I: 'Man's Search...'" (pp. 1-12), of *Freedom from the Known*.
- Check Canvas for additional readings.
- Continue Project Production (organizing, research, filming, editing).

WEEK 2

Wednesday, January 11

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- Advanced sound recording lab.

Friday, January 13

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- Advanced sound recording lab.

Due 1/18 (week 3)

- Assignment—Shot List/Production Schedule print out and via email
- Nichols, "III. Axiographics: Ethical Space in Documentary Film" (pp. 76-103), of *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*.
- Krishnamurti, "II: 'Learning About Ourselves...'" (pp. 13-17) & "III: Consciousness..." (pp. 18-22), of *Freedom from the Known*.

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- Check Canvas for additional readings.
- Continue Project Production (organizing, research, filming, editing).

WEEK 3

Wednesday, January 18

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

Friday, January 20

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

Due 1/25 (week 4)

- Nichols, “V. Telling Stories with Evidence and Arguments” (pp. 107-133), of *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*.
- Krishnamurti, “IV: Pursuit of Pleasure...” (pp. 21-23) & “V: Self-concern...” (pp. 24-29), of *Freedom from the Known*.
- Check Canvas for additional readings.
- Continue Project Production (organizing, research, filming, editing).

WEEK 4

Wednesday, January 25

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- Advanced camera lab.

Friday, January 27

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- Advanced camera lab.

Due 2/8 (week 5)

- Assignment—Revised Treatment print out and via email
- Nichols, “V. Sticking to Reality: Rhetoric and What Exceeds It” (pp. 134-164), in *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*.
- Krishnamurti, “VI: Violence-Anger...” (pp. 30-34) & “VII: Relationship...” (pp. 35-39), of *Freedom from the Known*.
- Check Canvas for additional readings.
- Continue Project Production (organizing, research, filming, editing).

WEEK 5

Wednesday, February 8

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- Reenactment & Experimental approaches lab.

Friday, February 10

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- Reenactment & Experimental approaches lab.
- Assignment—Promotional material due

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Due 2/15 (week 6)

- Assignment—Promotional material draft.
- Nichols, “VI. The Fact of Realism and the Fiction of Objectivity” (pp. 165-198), of *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*.
- Krishnamurti, “VIII: Freedom...” (pp. 40-42) & “IX: Time...” (pp. 43-46), of *Freedom of the Known*.
- Check Canvas for additional readings.
- Continue Project Production (organizing, research, filming, editing).

WEEK 6

Wednesday, February 15

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- Review Promotional material draft.
- Advanced editing/sound mix lab.

Friday, February 17

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- Review Promotional material draft.
- Advanced editing/sound mix lab.

Due 2/22 (week 7)

- Assignment—Promotional material final edit.
- Nichols, “VII. Pornography, Ethnography, and the Discourses of Power” (pp. 201-228), of *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*.
- Krishnamurti, “X: Love” (pp. 47-51) & “XI: To Look and to Listen...” (pp. 52-55), of *Freedom from the Known*.
- Check Canvas for additional readings.
- Continue Project Production (organizing, research, filming, editing).
- *- Assignment—Rough cut due 2/24*

WEEK 7

Wednesday, February 22

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

Due 2/24

- Assignment—Rough cut

Friday, February 24

- Screen Rough Cuts. Critiques with special guests.
- Filmmakers, Echaka Agba and Kristina Valada-Viars (NYC based) visit the class and discuss their production, post-production process and funding/distribution strategies regarding their film series “[Where could we go: A map of finding home](#)”.
- You will also present your projects to the them so that you can receive feedback.
- This special artist visit precedes their Film Studies Center screening this same evening at 7pm.
<https://filmstudiescenter.uchicago.edu/events/2023/root-bloom-where-could-we-go—map-finding-home>.
- *5% extra credit for attendance.

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Due 3/1 (week 8)

- Nichols, “VIII. Representing the Body: Questions of Meaning and Magnitude” (pp. 229-266), of *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*.
- Krishnamurti, “XII: The Observer and the Observed” (pp. 56-58) & “XIII: What is Thinking?...” (pp. 59-61), of *Freedom from the Known*.
- Check Canvas for additional readings.
- Continue Project Production (organizing, research, filming, editing).

WEEK 8

Wednesday, March 1

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- In class editing, audio sweetening and color correction.
- Discuss and plan Film Studies Center public screening of final projects set for 4/1 at 7pm. On 3/31 through the Film Studies Center at 7pm I will present my work in relation to the class.

Friday, March 3

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- In class editing, audio sweetening and color correction.
- Discuss and plan Film Studies Center public screening of final projects set for 4/1 at 7pm. On 3/31 through the Film Studies Center at 7pm I will present my work in relation to the class.

Due 3/8 (week 9)

- Krishnamurti, “XIV: The Burdens of Yesterday...” (pp. 62-64), “XV: Experience...” (pp. 65-68) & “XVI: Total Revolution...” (pp. 69-72), of *Freedom from the Known*.
- Final Cut (3/10)

WEEK 9

Wednesday, March 8

- Discussion on readings. Additional viewings.
- In class editing, audio sweetening and color correction.

Due 3/10

- Final Cut

Friday, March 10

- Screen Final Cut. Critiques.

~FINE~

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