

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Film Studies (FILM) 305.24 L02

Topic in Genre: Documentary Film

Fall 2020

September 8 to Dec. 9 (excluding Oct. 12th and Nov. 9-13)

Lectures (asynchronous): F 11:00-12:20

Post-lecture Discussion: (synchronous): F 12:20-12:50

Lab Screenings (asynchronous)

Lectures and Screenings will be asynchronous. The film will be posted on D2L by noon each Monday and the lecture will be posted by 11:00 am each Friday. At 12:20 each Friday, there will be a synchronous question and answer period about the lecture via Zoom.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON COURSE DELIVERY FOR FALL 2020:

This Fall 2020 course will be offered entirely online as part of the University's plan to ensure everyone's safety during the Covid-19 pandemic. Please read the outline carefully to see which course components will be offered synchronously (where you are expected to participate at the usual scheduled course time) and which components will be offered asynchronously (to be completed on your own time). Synchronous course sessions will normally be hosted on Zoom, a video-conferencing program. To access scheduled Zoom course sessions, go to D2L, click on the COMMUNICATION tab, and select Zoom 5 or 10 minutes before class is scheduled to begin.

If you will not be able to participate in scheduled synchronous class sessions owing to time differences, then you should arrange to take this course when it is offered in person in the future.

Note that the time indicated on course outlines for all timed quizzes and exams in CMCL, COMS, and FILM courses includes 50% extra time to allow for technical difficulties.

Instructor:	Matthew Croombs
Email:	Matthew.croombs@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	I will be available for zoom consultations on Friday from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Course Description

This course will present an overview of the documentary tradition, exploring the aesthetic, historical, and political questions that have come to define the field since the 1920s. We will explore how documentary artists and practices have confronted the challenges of modernity and postmodernity, using creative and reflexive techniques to redefine the relationship between representation and reality, filmmaker and subject, and technology and the world. The course will proceed chronologically, focusing on the modes and approaches that proved fertile for both

artistic innovation and political debate: state propaganda, cinéma vérité, direct cinema, reenactment, the essay film, sensory ethnography, postcoloniality, and interactivity. By engaging with the history of the documentary tradition, students will learn how recent works recast and reanimate the themes, approaches, and problems of the past. This longer historical view will shape our understanding of documentary's expanded scope in the 21st century, its presence in sites ranging from the art gallery to the networked technologies that make up our daily lives.

Additional Information

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found at the end of this outline and on D2L.

Objectives of the Course

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Following the completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Establish a firm command over the aesthetic tendencies and political debates that have defined the documentary tradition.
2. Make connections between recent trends and the themes, approaches, and problems of the past.
3. Enhance their skills at collaborative work and oral presentations.
4. Perform critical analyses and write well-crafted arguments about visual culture.

Textbooks and Readings

All assigned readings for the course will be uploaded to D2L.

Learning Technologies and Requirements & Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices

This is an online course. In order to complete online (or blended) courses, University of Calgary students are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security and malware updates, with current antivirus software enabled;
- Broadband internet connection, and a current and updated web browser;
- A webcam (built-in or external);
- A microphone and speaker (built-in or external), or headset with microphone.

Most current laptops will have a built-in webcam, speaker and microphone. If you need access to other software programs to complete assignments, your instructor will provide relevant information and links.

If you have technical difficulties, contact the university's IT department. For more information, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/student-campus-services-information-technologies-it.html>

Instructors may arrange to record synchronous zoom class sessions for lesson capture; however, students are not to share recordings with others. Please carefully review the section on Instructor Copyright at the end of this outline.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
10%	Discussion Participation Class discussion is an essential component of the course. Students must come to the synchronous sessions prepared to discuss the readings and screenings. Class participation grades will be evaluated based on the quality of your contributions to in-class discussions and the completion of short in-class assignments.	Weekly
25%	Reading Response Paper Students will submit a response paper (3 pages in length), which can address any of the readings covered up until that date. Students should provide a cogent and brief précis of their chosen reading followed by a critical analysis. Critical analyses might include situating the reading in relation to other arguments surveyed in the course, relating the reading to a film screened in class, or following a particular strand of the reading's argument in order to pursue it further. Ultimately, the response paper is an opportunity for students to work their thoughts into written form, and to develop their writing skills before the major research paper.	October 5
25%	Film Review Film criticism is one of the main venues through which world cinema reaches a transnational audience. Following examples provided in class, students will write a three-page review of one of the films on the course outline. They will use the course readings and lectures as their "press kit", and address elements of form, theme, and historical context in an accessible prose style that is suitable for a non-specialized readership.	November 6
40%	Final Essay Assignment An assignment sheet on the final essay will be posted on D2L on November 6. The essay will be 8 pages, double-spaced, and is due on December 11th via dropbox on D2L.	December 11

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: You do not have to complete all the assignments and exams in order to receive a passing grade in this course.

If you miss a required course component, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.

Submission of Assignments

Please submit all assignments electronically by uploading them to the designated D2L dropbox (unless instructed otherwise in the assignment guidelines). Include your name and ID number on all assignments. It is your responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that you submit the proper version (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission).

Private information related to individual students is treated with the utmost regard by University of Calgary faculty. Student assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty,

and personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. Please note that instructors may use audio or video recorded for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized by a partial letter grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

Student Accommodations

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS); SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/. Students who require an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should provide supporting documentation to support their request; however, instructors may not require that a medical note be presented. For the policy on supporting documentation the use of a statutory declaration, see Section M.1 of the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>. Also see FAQs for Students: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

Expectations for Writing

Department policy directs that all written assignments and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization and proper documentation of research sources. For further information, please refer to the *University of Calgary Calendar* section on writing across the curriculum: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

The following table outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. Final grades are reported as letter grades. For components graded using percentages or numerical scores, those values will be used directly in calculating the final course grade, while for components graded using letter grades, the letter grades will be converted to the midpoint values listed in the final column of the table below in calculating the final course grade.

In this course, letter grades will be used for all course components.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations*
4.00	Outstanding performance	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent performance	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%

3.70	Approaching excellent performance	A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30	Exceeding good performance	B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good performance	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70	Approaching good performance	B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance	C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory performance	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance	C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	F	0 - 49.99%	0%

* Column 4: If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades. Column 5: These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. **In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin.** Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there.

For information on citation and documentation styles (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.), visit the Student Success Centre resource links at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support> or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Resources at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, please consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, 3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book

an appointment, go to https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success?utm_source=ssc&utm_medium=redirect&utm_campaign=redirect

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the same course section and term may be allowed under fair dealing. Check with the instructor if you have any questions about sharing materials with classmates.

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the *University of Calgary Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants, including surveys, interviews, or observations as part of your university studies, you are responsible for obtaining research ethics approval and for following university research ethics guidelines. In some cases, your instructors may apply for course-based research ethics approval for certain assignments, and in those cases, they must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, please see <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/arts-researchers/resources-researchers-and-instructors/ethics>

Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal

For university regulations and procedures related to deferrals of exams and course work, requests for reappraisals, and other matters, please see the relevant sections in the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html>

Student Support Services and Resources

Please visit <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information about student support services and resources, including Wellness and Mental Health Resources, Student Success programs and services, the Student Ombuds Office, the Student Union, and Safewalk.

For resources on D2L, visit <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students>. IT support is available at itsupport@ucalgary.ca or by calling 403-220.5555.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

September 8

Introduction

Screening: *F For Fake* (France/Iran/West Germany, Welles, 1975)

September 14

Documentary Origins

Screening: *Nanook of the North* (Canada/USA/France, Flaherty, 1922)

Reading: William Rothman, "The Filmmaker as Hunter: Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North*," in *Documenting the Documentary: Close Readings of Documentary Film and Video*, pp. 1-18.

Bill Nichols, "How did documentary filmmaking get started," in *Introduction to Documentary*, Third Edition, 89-103.

September 21

Soviet Montage and Beyond

Screening: *The Man with a Movie Camera* (Soviet Union, Vertov, 1929)

Reading: Seth Feldman, "Peace between Man and Machine: Dziga Vertov's *The Man with a Movie Camera*," in *Documenting the Documentary: Close Readings of Documentary Film and Video*, pp. 40-54.

Bill Nichols, "How Can We Differentiate among Documentary Models and Modes? What Are the Poetic, Expository, and Reflexive Modes?" in *Introduction to Documentary*, Third Edition, 104-131.

September 28

Cinéma vérité

Screening: *Chronique d'un été* (France, Morin and Rouch, 1961)

Reading: Steven Ungar, "In the Thick of Things: Rouch and Morin's *Chronique d'un été* Reconsidered," *French Cultural Studies*, 14.1 (2003): pp. 5-22.

Peter Graham, "'Cinéma-Vérité' in France," *Film Quarterly*, 17. 4 (1964): pp. 30-36.

October 5

READING RESPONSE DUE VIA DROPBOX ON OCTOBER 9

Direct Cinema

Screening: *Gimme Shelter* (USA, Maysles and Maysles, 1970)

Reading: Jonathan B. Vogels, *The Direct Cinema of David and Albert Maysles*, pp. 1-19, and 74-99.

October 13 Documentary and the Self: The Essay Film

Screening: *The Gleaners and I* (France, Varda, 2000)

Reading: Laura Rascarolli, "The essay film: Problems, definitions, textual commitments," *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media*, 49. 2 (2008): pp. 24-47.

October 19 SHOT-BY-SHOT DUE FRIDAY OCTOBER 23 VIA DROPBOX

Queer Counter-Publics

Screening: *Tongues Untied* (USA, Riggs, 1989)
Paris is Burning (USA, Livingston, 1990)

Reading: Sheila Petty, "Expressions of Race in *Tongues Untied*," in *Documenting the Documentary: Close Readings of Documentary Film and Video*, pp. 424-437.

Caryl Flinn, "Containing Fire: Performance in *Paris is Burning*," in *Documenting the Documentary: Close Readings of Documentary Film and Video*, pp. 438—455.

October 26 Documentary Reenactment 1

Screening: *The Thin Blue Line* (USA, Morris, 1988)

Reading: Linda Williams, "Mirrors without Memories," in *Documenting the Documentary*, pp. 379-96.

Recommended: Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism and consumer society" in *Postmodern Culture*, pp. 111-25.

November 2 FILM REVIEW DUE NOVEMBER 6 VIA DROPBOX

Documentary Reenactment 2

Screening: *The Act of Killing* (UK/Denmark/Norway, Oppenheimer, 2012)

Reading: Bill Nichols. "Documentary reenactment and the fantasmatic subject." *Critical Inquiry* 35.1 (2008): 72-89.

November 9 READING WEEK – NO CLASSES HELD

November 16 Documentary and the Inhuman

Screening: *Grizzly Man* (USA, Herzog, 2005)

Reading: Seung-Hoon Jeong and Dudley Andrew, “Grizzly ghost: Herzog, Bazin and the cinematic animal.” *Screen* 49, no. 1 (2008): 1-12.

Akira Mizuta Lippit, “The death of an animal.” *Film Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (2002): 9-22.

November 23 SHORT ESSAY DUE IN VIA DROPBOX ON FRIDAY NOV 27

Sensory Ethnography and the Cinema of Exploration

Screening: *Leviathan* (USA, Castaing-Taylor, 2012)

Reading: Lucien Castaing-Taylor, “Iconophobia: How Anthropology Lost it at the Movies,” *Transition* 69 (1996): 64-88.

Scott MacDonald, “Lucien Castaing-Taylor and Sensory Ethnography,” in *American Ethnographic Film and Personal Documentary: The Cambridge Turn*, pp. 314-338.

November 30 The Black Radical Tradition

Screening: *I Am Not Your Negro* (Switzerland/France/Belgium/USA, Peck, 2017)

Reading: TBA

December 7 FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE DECEMBER 11 VIA DROPBOX

Docu-Fiction

Screening: *John and Jane* (India, Ahluwalia, 2005)

Recommended: Hito Steyerl, “Documentary Uncertainty,” *Re-visiones* 1 (2011), <<http://re-visiones.net/spip.php?article37>>