

**University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film**

**Film Studies (FILM) 305.24 L01
Documentary Film**

Winter 2018

Jan. 8, 2018 - April 9, 2018

(excluding Feb. 19, 21 & March 15)

Screenings (Labs): Monday 5:00 – 7:45

Lectures: Wednesday 5:00 – 6:50

Instructor: Dr. Matthew Croombs
Office: SS 216
Office Phone: TBD
E-Mail: Matthew.croombs@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: D2L
Office Hours: Thursdays 12:30-2:30

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.

Objectives of the Course

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.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Laptops should be used for note-taking purposes only. Cell phones should be turned off during screenings and lectures to avoid deductions from your participation grade.

Viewing Requirements

Students are required to attend all screenings. If you miss one, it is your responsibility to view the film(s) at the Media Library (3rd floor, TFDL) as soon as you are able. Certain titles (though not all) may be available at local video stores, as well. These resources are not a substitute for the scheduled screenings, but may prove helpful for review purposes.

Assignments and Evaluation

10%	Participation	weekly
25%	Response Paper	Jan 29
25%	Group Presentation	Feb. 5
40%	Final Assignment	April 9

Reading Response Paper: (25%)

Students will submit a response paper on January 29th (3 pages each), 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.

Participation (10%)

Since this class involves both challenging films and ideas, attendance, class participation, and completion of the readings are absolutely necessary. Lecture content will usually move beyond the week's assigned readings, so students will need to have read the required materials by the Thursday lecture in order for the class experience to remain meaningful.

Group Presentation (25%)

Starting from February 5th until the end of term, students will work in groups of four to five on a 20 minute presentation. The presentation will cover a given week's theme, focusing on a film **not** discussed in class. In allotting an equal amount of presentation time to each member of the group, the presentation should provide a brief précis of the film, and then describe how this work can broaden our understanding of the week's theme. Students must consult with the instructor about their given choice of film at least one week before their presentation date. Sign ups will begin on January 22nd.

Curatorial Assignment: 40%

An assignment sheet on the final paper will be given out February 27th.

Length: 6-8 pages, double-spaced

Due Date: Tuesday April 10th at the beginning of class.

All assignments and exams must be completed or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

Submission of Assignments: Please hand in your essays directly to your tutor or instructor if possible. If it is not possible to do so, a daytime drop box is available in SS320; a date stamp is provided for your use. A night drop box is also available for after-hours submission. Assignments will be removed the following morning, stamped with the previous day's date, and placed in the instructor's mailbox.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at marked final exams in SS 320. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip/foip-hia>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in your file name may be useful.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a 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 will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework 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) should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.
- When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.
- For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the *University Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g->

[6.html](#) and <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

Final grades are reported as letter grades. In this course, letter grades will be used for all assignments.

The following chart outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. In calculating final grades in this course, letter grades will be converted to the midpoint of the percentage range, as shown in the final column of the table below.

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%

* If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades.

** These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will 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. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the writing support services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library). Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

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. 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. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436>. Research and citation resources are also available on the website of the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/>. If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or visit the writing support services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library, at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

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 (e.g., surveys, interviews, or observations) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
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ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program 	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints <p>If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</p>
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line 	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Support Services • Student Services Mobile App 	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman 	https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds
SU WELLNESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health 403-266-HELP (4357) http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus <p>If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.</p>

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January 8**Introduction**

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

January 15**Documentary Origins**

Screening: *Nanook of the North* (USA/France, Flaherty, 1922)
The Plow That Broke the Plains (USA, Pare Lorentz, 1935)
Housing Problems (UK, Elton and Anstey, 1935)

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.

Recommended: John Grierson, "Flaherty's Poetic Moana," *The Documentary Tradition, 2nd edition*, pp. 25-26,

John Grierson, "First Principles of Documentary," *Grierson on Documentary, Revised Edition*, pp. 145-156.

January 22**Soviet Montage and Beyond**

Screening: *The Man with a Movie Camera* (Soviet Union, Vertov, 1929)
 Excerpts of:
The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty (Soviet Union, Shub, 1927)

Reading: Dziga Vertov, "WE: Variant of a Manifesto." *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*, pp. 5-9.

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.

Recommended: John MacKay, "*Man with a Movie Camera: An Introduction*," (forthcoming), 1-31.

January 29***READING RESPONSE PAPER DUE*****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.

Recommended:

Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin, "Chronicle of a Summer: A Film Book by Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin," in *Ciné-Ethnography*, pp. 230-342.**February 5****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.**February 12****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.

Recommended:

Michael Renov, *The Subject of Documentary*, (excerpts).**February 19****READING WEEK - NO CLASSES HELD****February 26****Queer Counter-Publics**

Screening:

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

- Reading: bell hooks, "Is Paris Burning," in *Black Looks: Race and Representation*, pp. 145-156.
- Chuck Kleinhans, "Ethnic Notions. Tongues Untied Mainstreams and margins," *Jump Cut*, 36 (1991): pp. 108-111
- Thomas Waugh, "Walking on Tippy Toes: Lesbian and Gay Liberation Documentary of the Post-Stonewall Period 1969-84," in *The Fruit Machine: Twenty Years of Writing on Queer Cinema*, pp. 246-271.

March 5 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.

March 12 *THERE WILL BE A SCREENING ON TUESDAY, BUT THURSDAY'S CLASS IS CANCELLED

Documentary Reenactment 2

- Screening: *The Act of Killing* (UK/Denmark/Norway, Oppenheimer, 2012)
- Reading: Nichols, Bill. "Documentary reenactment and the fantasmatic subject." *Critical Inquiry* 35.1 (2008): 72-89.

March 19 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.

March 26 Sensory Ethnography and the Cinema of Exploration

- Screening: *Leviathan* (USA, Castaing-Taylor, 2012)
 Excerpts:
 Jean Painlevé (Selected Shorts)
Le monde du silence (France/Italy, Cousteau, 1956)
- 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.

April 2 Postcoloniality and Third Cinema

- Screening: *The Battle of Chile: Part I* (Venezuela/France/Cuba, Guzmán, 1975)
Measures of Distance (Beirut/UK, Hatoum, 1988)
November (Germany/Turkey, Steyerl, 2004)
Home Movies Gaza (Palestine, Alsharif, 2013)
- Reading: Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, "Toward a third cinema." *Cinéaste* 4, no. 3 (1970): 1-10.
- Recommended: T.J. Demos, *The Migrant Image: The Art and Politics of Documentary during Global Crisis*, pp. 1-20, 74-89.

April 9 *FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE

Documentary and New Media

- Screening: *Eye/Machine I-III* (Germany, Farocki, 2001-03)
Serious Games (Germany, Farocki, 2010)
Bear 71 (Canada, Allison and Mendes, 2012)
- Reading: Judith Aston and Sandra Gaudenzi, "Interactive documentary: setting the field." *Studies in Documentary Film* 6, no. 2 (2012): 125-139.
- Thomas Keenan, "Publicity and Indifference: Media, Surveillance, and the Humanitarian Intervention," in *Killer Images: Documentary Film, Memory, and the Performance of Violence*, ed. Joram ten Brink and Joshua Oppenheimer, pp. 15-40.