

Spring 1-15-2019

## EIU 4174G-600: Documentary Film and Society

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**Spring 2019 EIU 4174G, Documentary Film and Society  
Online Course Syllabus**

**Dr. Robin L. Murray**  
**Office: CH 3351**  
**Office Hours: MW 5:50-6:50 p.m. Online in Office; T 1-3:30 and by appnt.**

**Email: [rlmurray@eiu.edu](mailto:rlmurray@eiu.edu)**  
**Phone: 549-0199 before 10 p.m.**

**Catalog description:** This course will examine some of the aesthetic, social, and cultural issues unique to documentary film and video. WI.

**Course materials:**

Nichols, Bill. *Introduction to Documentary, Second Edition*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press (2010).  
Winston, Brian. *The Documentary Film Book*. London, BFI (2013)

**Learning objectives.** Students completing this course will:

- a. Identify and analyze the documentary as a tool to address and critique a variety of contemporary and historical social problems and issues. WCR 5, RC2, RC3
- b. Identify and analyze the potential of documentary to foster critical thinking skills and promote social change. WCR 5, RC 2, RC 3
- c. Evaluate the uses of camera, editing, lighting, sound, and acting, as well as their contributions to the construction of meaning for audiences. CT 2
- d. Analyze how documentary film reveals and responds to the social, economic, and cultural contexts of their production. CT 1, WCR 6, SL 1, RC 1
- e. Examine how meaning in documentary film is filtered through various cultural contexts. CT 1, SL 1, RC 1
- f. Identify, critique and apply film theories in relation to global historical contexts. CT 3, CT 4, CT 6, WCR 6, SL 1, RC 4
- g. Write analytically and effectively about film in relation to its historical and cultural contexts. WCR 1, WCR 2, WCR 3, WCR 7
- h. Examine various documentary forms such as observational, propaganda, participatory, reflexivity, diary, experimental and new media methodologies. CT 2, RC 4

**EIU Learning Goals:**

**I. Critical Thinking**

EIU graduates question, examine, evaluate, and respond to problems or arguments by:

- Asking essential questions and engaging diverse perspectives.
- Seeking and gathering data, information, and knowledge from experience, texts, graphics, and media.
- Understanding, interpreting, and critiquing relevant data, information, and knowledge.
- Synthesizing and integrating data, information, and knowledge to infer and create new insights Anticipating, reflecting upon, and evaluating implications of assumptions, arguments, hypotheses, and conclusions.
- Creating and presenting defensible expressions, arguments, positions, hypotheses, and proposals.

**II. Writing and Critical Reading**

EIU graduates write critically and evaluate varied sources by:

- Creating documents appropriate for specific audiences, purposes, genres, disciplines, and professions.
- Crafting cogent and defensible applications, analyses, evaluations, and arguments about problems, ideas, and issues.
- Producing documents that are well organized, focused, and cohesive.
- Using appropriate vocabulary, mechanics, grammar, diction, and sentence structure.
- Understanding, questioning, analyzing, and synthesizing complex textual, numeric, and graphical sources.
- Evaluating evidence, issues, ideas, and problems from multiple perspectives.
- Collecting and employing source materials ethically and understanding their strengths and limitations.

### III. Speaking and Listening

EIU graduates prepare, deliver, and critically evaluate presentations and other formal speaking activities by:

- Collecting, comprehending, analyzing, synthesizing and ethically incorporating source material.
- Adapting formal and impromptu presentations, debates, and discussions to their audience and purpose.
- Developing and organizing ideas and supporting them with appropriate details and evidence.
- Using effective language skills adapted for oral delivery, including appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure.
- Using effective vocal delivery skills, including volume, pitch, rate of speech, articulation, pronunciation, and fluency.
- Employing effective physical delivery skills, including eye contact, gestures, and movement.
- Using active and critical listening skills to understand and evaluate oral communication.

### IV. Responsible Citizenship

EIU graduates make informed decisions based on knowledge of the physical and natural world and human history and culture by:

- Engaging with diverse ideas, individuals, groups, and cultures.
- Applying ethical reasoning and standards in personal, professional, disciplinary, and civic contexts.
- Participating formally and informally in civic life to better the public good.
- Applying knowledge and skills to new and changing contexts within and beyond the classroom.

### Course Requirements:

1. **Short Film Analysis Paper:** You will write a paper of approximately 1000 words evaluating one of the documentaries viewed as a class. There is a prompt on D2L describing this assignment.
2. **Film Analysis Blogs:** You will complete a film analysis blog after watching and taking notes on the documentaries viewed in class. There is a template for the film analysis in the calendar and news section on D2L (and in the syllabus calendar) to explain the elements you should include.
3. **Midterm Exam:** You will complete a midterm exam responding to the readings, ppts., discussions, and films explored by the middle of the semester. There will be a review sheet and explanation available a week before the exam on D2L.
4. **Final Exam:** You will complete a final responding to the readings, ppts., discussions, and films explored by the films after midterm. There will be a review sheet and explanation available a week before the exam on D2L.
5. **Analytical Film Research Presentation with Proposal:** You will create a presentation with audio and visuals on a documentary film topic of your choice. The presentation might be about a particular documentary director, a particular period/region, a particular mode or type of documentary, or a theme or topic of interest to you. You may create a PPT with audio descriptions, but you could also create a video essay or documentary of your own, if you prefer a creative project. There is a prompt on D2L for this assignment.
6. **Quizzes:** These will be on D2L. There are five of them. And they're easy.
7. **Responses:** I have divided you into five groups. Each group will provide a slide show summarizing the reading for the week to which they are assigned (I recommend delegating!). Each group should include example films from the chapter in the slide show with clips to illustrate the chapter's points. Each member will be responsible for preparing at least 4 slides with at least one example film clip and one image included. There is a prompt on D2L.

8. **Discussions:** The rest of the class will respond to your slide show. Each group presents once. Everyone responds to four of the five slide shows.

**Grades:**

1. Short Film Evaluation Paper:	10%
2. Film Analysis Blogs:	15%
3. Midterm Exam:	10%
4. Final Exam:	15%
5. Quizzes	10%
6. Analytical Film Research Presentation with Proposal:	20%
7. Online Responses	10%
8. Online Discussions	10%
	<hr/>
	100%

**Other Policies:**

**Tech Support:** If you need assistance with D2L, call the Center for Online Learning (217-581-8452) during regular business hours or email [col@eiu.edu](mailto:col@eiu.edu). D2L tutorials and guides are available 24/7 under the "Help for Students" widget on the D2L My Home page. For technical questions regarding other software, hardware, network issues, EIU NetID/password, or Panthermail, contact the ITS Helpdesk (217-581-HELP). If you have a question regarding course content, contact your instructor.

**Students with Disabilities:** If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

**Plagiarism:** The English Department states, "Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism -- 'The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work' -- has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of "F" in the course."

**Electronic Writing Portfolio:** This class is a writing intensive class, so you may submit your paper as a writing portfolio sample, following the instructions on the CASL Website. Submissions must be made during the course of the class to receive my approval. Please note that the Writing Center is available for help with all writing assignments, as well. Take advantage of this free service.

**The Student Success Center-** Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center ([www.eiu.edu/~success](http://www.eiu.edu/~success)) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

**Writing Center:** Ambitious students can also seek help from the Writing Center. Call for an appointment (581-5920) or visit ((CH3110) at any point in the writing process, from brainstorming, planning and drafting, to final editing. Bring your assignment sheet and any written work and/or sources with you. The Writing Center is open Monday-Thursday, 9-3 and 6-9, and Friday from 9-1.

**Please Note:** You must complete all major assignments to complete this course.

## Spring 2019 Tentative Calendar: EIU 4174G

### January

Week I: January 7

Introduction to the course and each other: Complete a media survey and introduce yourself in your blog and make it public and allow comments. Here's how:

### Creating a blog entry in D2L

1. Click  Blog on the navbar.
2. Click New Entry on the My Blog page.
3. Enter a Title, which appears in the blog entry list after you publish it. The title should be something descriptive and easy to identify.
4. Add Content.
5. Select Make entry public to allow other users to view your blog entry.
6. Select Allow Comments to allow other users to comment on your blog entry.
7. Click Save.
8. Click Cancel to return to the My Blog page.

Introduction to Documentary and Society: Read chapter 1, "How Can We Define Documentary Film?" in Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* and critically view the PPT and take a quiz. Quiz 1 is due by midnight on January 9.

Documentary screening and blog entry film analysis by midnight on January 11. Watch **two** of the following documentaries and take notes:

[Night Mail \(1937\)](#)

[The City \(1939\)](#)

Complete blog entry film analysis about 1: [documentaryfilmanalysissheet2016.doc](#)

Note: Film analysis blog due by midnight on January 12.

Week II: January 14

Documentary Paradigms: Categories, Models, and Expository and Poetic Modes; Read Nichols chapter 6, "How can we Differentiate among Documentaries? Categories, Models, and the Expository and Poetic Modes of Documentary Film." Group I will complete a slide show summarizing the chapter by midnight on Tuesday, January 16 under Discussion I. The rest of the class will respond to the slide show and discussion due by midnight on January 18.

Documentary screening and blog entry film analysis due by midnight on January 19. Watch these two documentaries and take notes:

<https://www.imdb.com/videoplayer/vi739088665> (*Silence* 1998, Poetic Mode)

<https://youtu.be/fpz0XI6U97U> (*The River* 1938, Expository)

Complete blog entry film analysis: [documentaryfilmanalysissheet2016.doc](#)

Note: Film analysis blog due by midnight on January 19.

Week III: January 22 (1/21, MLK Day)

Observational, Reflexive, Participatory, and Performative Documentary and Society; Introduce Paper I; Read Nichols Chapter 7, "How Can We Describe the Observational, Participatory, Reflexive, and Performative Modes of Documentary Film?" Group II will complete a slide show summarizing the chapter by midnight on Wednesday, January 23 under Discussion II. The rest of the class will respond to the slide show and discussion by midnight on January 25.

Documentary screening and blog entry film analysis by midnight on January 26. Watch **one** the following documentaries and take notes:

*Bus 174* (2002) on Kaltura (see D2L calendar and news)

Or *Nostalgia for the Light* (2010, Patricio Guzmán, Chile)

Complete blog entry film analysis: [documentaryfilmanalysissheet2016.doc](#)

Note: Film analysis blog due by midnight on January 26.

Week IV: January 28

American Direct Cinema; Read Chapter 2.6, "The Triumph of Observationalism..." in Winston and take Quiz 2 due by midnight on January 31. Please note that one of the questions will ask you to state your Paper I topic. Paper I draft is due by February 5 at midnight, and the final is due on February 11 by Midnight.

Documentary screening and blog entry film analysis due by midnight on February 2. Watch *Grey Gardens* (1975, Dir. Ellen Horde and the Maylises Brothers) and take notes:

[Grey Gardens on Kanopy](#)

Complete blog entry film analysis: [documentaryfilmanalysissheet2016.doc](#)

Note: Film analysis blog due by midnight on September 17.

Week V: February 4

Paper I draft due for peer review and conferences by February 5 at midnight.

Paper I final due by midnight on February 4 at midnight.

Week VI: February 11

Documentary Horizons: Mapping the Global South; Read Chapters 3.1 "Eastwards," 3.2 "Mapping Africa," and 3.3 "Images from the South..." in Winston. Group III will complete a slide show for Response 3 Discussion due by midnight on February 13. The rest of the class will respond to the slide show and discussion by midnight on February 16..

Documentary screening and blog entry film analysis by midnight on February 16. Watch the following **two short** documentaries and take notes:

[Children Who Draw](#) (1955); Dir. Susumi Hani, Japan.

[The House is Black](#) (Forough Farokhzad, Iran, 1962)

Complete blog entry film analysis for one film: [documentaryfilmanalysissheet2016.doc](#)

Note: Film analysis blog due by midnight on February 16.

Week VII: February 18

Documentary and Gender; Read chapter 4.2, “Feminist Documentaries...” and 4.2 “Pioneers of Black Documentary Film” in Winston and Complete Quiz 3 by midnight on February 21.

Documentary screening and blog entry film analysis by midnight on February 23. Watch **one** of the following documentaries and take notes:

Surname Viet Given Name Nam (Trinh T. Minh-ha, 1989) on Kanopy

Or Style Wars (1983, Tony Silver)

Complete blog entry film analysis: documentaryfilmanalysissheet2016.doc

Note: Film analysis blog due by midnight on February 23.

Week VIII: February 25

Prepare for Midterm; Introduce Research Presentation

Midterm due by midnight on March 2.

Week IX: March 4

Documentary, Race, and Class Identities; Read chapter 8, “How Have Documentaries Addressed Social and Political Issues.” Group IV will complete a slide show summarizing the chapter by midnight on March 6. The rest of the class will respond to the slide show and discussion by midnight on March 8. Turn in a proposal for Presentation by midnight on March 9. Note: Presentation draft is due by March 25 at midnight. Presentation final draft is due by Midnight on April 1.

Documentary screening and blog entry film analysis by midnight on March 9. Watch *Roger and Me* (1989, Michael Moore)

Roger and Me on Kanopy

Complete blog entry film analysis: documentaryfilmanalysissheet2016.doc

Note: Film analysis blog and presentation proposal due by midnight on March 9.

Week X: March 18

Documentary and Contemporary Ethnography; Read chapter 5.1, “Anthropology: The Evolution of Ethnographic Film” in Winston and complete Quiz 4 by midnight on March 20.

Documentary screening and blog entry film analysis by midnight on March 23. Watch **one** of the following films and take notes:

*Paris is Burning* (Jennie Livingston, 1990), *Tongues Untied* (Marlon Riggs, 1989), or *Exit Through the Gift Shop* (Banksy, 2010). On D2L.

Complete blog entry film analysis: documentaryfilmanalysissheet2016.doc

Note: Film analysis blog due by midnight on March 23.

Week XI: March 25

1 Presentation draft due for peer review and conferences by midnight on March 25.

3 Conferences, continued.

Week XII: April 1

Rockumentary and Documentary. Read chapter 5.4, “Music, Documentary, Music Documentary” in Winston. Please note. This chapter will be assessed on your final exam.

PPT Overview of Chapter: [https://pmaileiu-my.sharepoint.com/personal/rfmurray\\_eiu\\_edu/\\_layouts/15/guestaccess.aspx?guestaccesstoken=bCmkiynr%2ffiryLh93wrwOBVsmjZ%2fNspM5JLsrOW%2bz4%3d&docid=15d994bc51d254decae9948c694870d1f&rev=1](https://pmaileiu-my.sharepoint.com/personal/rfmurray_eiu_edu/_layouts/15/guestaccess.aspx?guestaccesstoken=bCmkiynr%2ffiryLh93wrwOBVsmjZ%2fNspM5JLsrOW%2bz4%3d&docid=15d994bc51d254decae9948c694870d1f&rev=1)

Documentary screening—no blog film analysis because of Presentation. Please note documentary will be on final exam.

Twenty Feet from Stardom (2013) on Kanopy

Or Kate Bush: The Kate Bush Story (BBC 2014)

Presentation Final due by midnight on April 6.

Week XIII: April 8

Documentary in the Community; Read chapter 2, “Why are Ethical Issues Central to Documentary Filmmaking” in Nichols and complete quiz 5 by midnight on April 10.

Documentary screening and blog entry film analysis due by midnight on April 13. Watch *Dark Days* (2000, Marc Singer) and take notes:

Dark Days

Complete blog entry film analysis: [documentaryfilmanalysisheet2016.doc](#)  
Note: Film analysis blog due by midnight on April 13.

Week XIV: April 15

Documentary and the Environment; Read chapter 5.2, “Science, Society and Documentary” and “chapter 6.3, “New Platforms for Documedia...” in Winston. Group V will complete a slide show summarizing the chapters by midnight on April 17. The rest of the class will respond to the slide show and discussion by midnight on April 20.

Documentary screening and blog entry due by midnight on April 17.

Watch *Under the Dome* (2015, China, Chai Jing) and take notes:

Under the Dome

Complete blog entry film analysis: [documentaryfilmanalysisheet2016.doc](#)  
Note: Film analysis blog due by midnight on April 17.

Week XV: April 22

Last Class Day: Final Film Screening: *Food, Inc.* (2008) or *The Gleaners and I* (2000). These will be on the final (as choices).

Week XVI

May 2: Final Exam due by midnight