EIU 4174G-600: Documentary Film and Society

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

Course materials:

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 1500 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 exam responding to the readings, ppts., discussions, and films explored by the after midterm. There will be a review sheet and explanation available a week before the exam on D2L.

5. Analytical Film Research Paper with Proposal: You will write a paper on a documentary film topic of your choice. The paper 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 could also create a documentary of your own, if you prefer a creative project (along with a written reflection). 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 Paper with Proposal: 20%
7. Online Response: 10%
8. Online Discussions: 10%

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. 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 either of your papers 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.

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.
August

Week I:

22-4  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 August 24.

25-6  Documentary screening and blog entry film analysis by midnight on August 26. Watch two of the following documentaries and take notes:

* Nanook of the North (1922)
* Night Mail (1937)
* The City (1939)

Complete blog entry film analysis: *documentaryfilmanalysissheet2016.doc*

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

Week II:

29-31  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, August 30 under Discussion I. The rest of the class will respond to the slide show and discussion due by midnight.

September

1  Documentary screening and blog entry film analysis due by midnight on September 2. Watch these two documentaries and take notes:


https://youtu.be/tpz0XI6X97U (*The River* 1938, Expository)

Complete blog entry film analysis: *documentaryfilmanalysissheet2016.doc*

Note: Film analysis blog due by midnight on September 2.

Week III:

5-7  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 Tuesday, September 6 under Discussion II. The rest of the class will respond to the slide show and discussion by midnight on September 7.

8-9  Documentary screening and blog entry film analysis by midnight on September 9. Watch one the following documentary 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 September 9.
Week IV:

12-14 American Direct Cinema; Read Chapter 2.6, “The Triumph of Observationalism...” in Winston and take Quiz 2 due by midnight. Please note that one of the questions will ask you to state your Paper I topic. Paper I draft is due by September 19 at noon, and the final is due on September 26 by Midnight.

15-16 Documentary screening and blog entry film analysis due by midnight on September 16. Watch Grey Gardens (1975, Dir. Ellen Horde and the Mayles Brothers) and take notes:

Grey Gardens

Complete blog entry film analysis: documentaryfilmanalysissheet2016.doc
Note: Film analysis blog due by midnight on September 16.

Week V:

19-21 Paper I draft due for peer review and conferences

26 Paper I final due by midnight on September 26.

Week VI:

26-28 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 September 27. The rest of the class will respond to the slide show and discussion by midnight on September 28.

29-30 Documentary screening and blog entry film analysis by midnight on September 30. Watch the following two short documentaries and take notes:

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

The House is Black (Forough Farokhizad, Iran, 1962)

Complete blog entry film analysis: documentaryfilmanalysissheet2016.doc
Note: Film analysis blog due by midnight on September 30.

October

Week VII:

3-5 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 October 5.

6-7 Documentary screening and blog entry film analysis by midnight on October 7. Watch one of the following documentaries and take notes:

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

Or Style Wars (1983, Tony Silver)

Complete blog entry film analysis: documentaryfilmanalysissheet2016.doc
Note: Film analysis blog due by midnight

Week VIII:

11 Prepare for Midterm; Introduce Paper II
13-14  Midterm due by midnight on October 14.

Week IX:

17-19  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 October 18. The rest of the class will respond to the slide show and discussion by midnight on October 19. Turn in a proposal for Paper II by midnight on October 20. Note: Paper II draft is due by November 1 at noon. Paper II final draft is due by midnight on November 11.

20-21  Documentary screening and blog entry film analysis by midnight on October 21. Watch Roger and Me (1989, Michael Moore)

Roger and Me

Complete blog entry film analysis: documentaryfilmanalysissheet2016.doc
Note: Film analysis blog due by midnight on October 21.

Week X:

24-26  Documentary and Contemporary Ethnography; Read chapter 5.1, “Anthropology: The Evolution of Ethnographic Film” in Winston and complete Quiz 4 by midnight on October 26.

27-8  Documentary screening and blog entry film analysis by midnight on October 28. 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 October 28.

November

Week XI:

1  Paper II draft due for peer review and conferences by noon.

3  Conferences, continued.

Week XII:

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

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

Twenty Feet from Stardom (2013)

Or Kate Bush: The Kate Bush Story (BBC 2014) Or This Is... The First 20 Years of Jethro Tull (1989)

11  Paper II Final due by midnight on November 11.

Week XIII:

15  Documentary in the Community; Read chapter 2, “Why are Ethical Issues Central to Documentary Filmmaking” in Nichols and complete quiz 5 by midnight. Introduce Wiki Page Assignment.
17 Documentary screening and blog entry film analysis due by midnight. Watch *Dark Days* (2000, Marc Singer) and take notes:

**Dark Days**

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

Note: Film analysis blog due by midnight on November 18.

21-25 No Classes: Thanksgiving Break

Week XIV:


1 Documentary screening and blog entry due by midnight on December 2. Prepare for Wiki page presentations.

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

**Under the Dome**

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

Note: Film analysis blog due by midnight on December 2.

**December**

Week XV:

6 Wiki Pages and Online Presentations--upload by midnight

8 Last Class Day: Online Presentations, continued.

Week XVI

12 Final Exam due by midnight