

University of Arkansas - Fort Smith
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General Syllabus

MCOM 4503 The Documentary Tradition

Credit Hours: 3

Lecture Hours: 3

Laboratory Hours: 0

Prerequisite: MCOM 3213 Visual Communication

Effective Catalog: 2018-2019

I. Course Information

A. Catalog Description

Examines the history and theory of documentary films and videos focusing on their various modes and approaches in relation to discursive formations of the self, others, and the historical world.

B. Additional Information - None

II. Student Learning Outcomes

A. Subject Matter

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Describe the historical development of documentary films and videos.
2. Analyze the formal elements and discursive techniques of documentary films and videos.
3. Evaluate ethical, aesthetic, and political questions particular to nonfiction subject matters.
4. Identify and distinguish different modes of documentary films and videos.
5. Analyze representational practices and modes of address that distinguish documentary from fiction film.
6. Conduct research to write a critical analysis of documentary film.
7. Produce a short video that demonstrates a distinct strategy of nonfiction storytelling.

B. University Learning Outcomes (ULO)

This course enhances student abilities in the following areas:

Analytical Skills

Critical Thinking Skills: Students will draw conclusions and/or solve problems through multimedia research project and/or oral presentation.

Communication Skills (written and oral)

Students will communicate effectively with a variety of audiences in any setting through media projects.

Global and Cultural Perspectives

Students will reflect upon cultural or global differences and their implications for interacting with people from cultures other than their own.

III. Major Course Topics

- A. Ethnography
- B. Propaganda
- C. Poetic documentary
- D. Social documentary
- E. Cinéma Vérité and Direct Cinema
- F. Political documentary
- G. Reflexivity
- H. Mockumentary
- I. Docudramas
- J. Animated documentary
- K. Interview techniques

