

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

Colorado State University, Academic Partner

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| Voyage: | Fall 2022 |
| Discipline: | Journalism and Technical Communication/Liberal Arts |
| Course Number and Title: | JTC/LB 456 Documentary Film as a Liberal Art |
| Division: | Upper |
| Faculty Name: | Dr. Pete Seel |
| Semester Credit Hours: | 3 |

Prerequisites: None, but having completed a university-level film history course would be helpful.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students will view entire films or selected segments of thought-provoking documentaries (via the ship's closed-circuit television system or in class) to sharpen their critical assessment of how individuals, cultures, and events are depicted in these programs. In class sessions, students will view key highlights of these films to analyze a variety of documentary genres and examine the varied roles of the documentary producer as a historian, explorer, social activist, entertainer, muckraker, journalist, and creative troublemaker. The field class will provide an opportunity to meet with documentary filmmakers and broadcast journalists to discuss the research and production process.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The course will use documentary film as a vehicle for students to integrate various perspectives represented in the liberal arts disciplines. Specific objectives of the course are:

- students will develop critical and visual literacy perspectives appropriate to educated film audiences;
- students will learn to engage and evaluate documentary films from various perspectives ranging from the aesthetic to the ethical;
- students will engage social issues in a variety of global societies through the narratives of films we view, as well as through comparison among films;
- students will consider the multiple roles documentary films play in society: as a medium of communication, as an important cultural artifact, and as a form of art, popular culture, and social protest;
- students will analyze the differences between filmed, written, and oral history.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

AUTHOR: Nichols, B.
TITLE: *Introduction to Documentary* (2nd edition)
PUBLISHER: Indiana University Press
ISBN #: 978-0-253-22260-2
DATE/EDITION: 2010

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Embarkation Day – September 9

| Day | Lecture Topics and Films | Read <u>before</u> class | Film viewing assignments |
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| 1 | Course Introduction. | For today, please read pages xi to xviii in the <i>Introduction to Documentary</i> text. | For day 3, please watch the film 180 Degrees South on the ship's CCTV network. |
| 2 | Defining the Film Documentary. | Please read the first half of Chapter 1, pp. 1 to 20 on definitions. | Complete the Film Viewing Notes for 180 Degrees South . |
| 3 | Discuss 180 Degrees South (2010) as a classic expository quest film. | <i>Read three reviews for this film before our class meeting.</i> | Watch the first 30 minutes of Nanook of the North on the ship's CCTV network. |
| 4 | Documentary conventions, periods, movements and modes. Watch segments from Nanook (1922) in class. | Please read second half of Chapter 1, pp. 21 to 41. Introduction to documentary modes. | For day 5, please watch on the ship's CCTV network the King Otto documentary about the Greek national soccer team. |
| 5 | Writing about the Documentary. Watch and discuss segments from King Otto (2021) in class. | Read Ch. 8, pp. 253-271, Writing about the documentary. | Complete your F.V.N. for King Otto . Watch Free Solo on the ship's CCTV network. |
| 6 | View segments from Free Solo in class and discuss the interaction between subject and filmmaker. | <i>Read three reviews for this film before class.</i> | Study for Exam #1 on day 7. |
| 7 | Documentary Ethics. How do documentaries re-present their subjects and the world? Exam #1 | Read first section of Chapter 2 on Documentary Ethical Issues, pp. 42 to 59. | For day 8 please watch Petra: Lost City of Stone on CCTV and begin the F.V.N. |
| 8 | View segments from Petra: Lost City of Stone and discuss in class. | Read the second part of Chapter 2, pp. 59-66 about the documentary triad. <i>Read three reviews for this film.</i> | Complete F.V.N. for Petra: Lost City of Stone . |

| Day | Lecture Topics and Films | Read <u>before</u> class | Film viewing assignments |
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| 9 | Qualities of Voice in the Documentary – part 1. | Please read first section of Ch. 3, pp. 67 to 77 on Voice. | For day 10, watch Stories We Tell on CCTV system. |
| 10 | Qualities of Voice in the Documentary – pt. 2. Watch segments of Stories We Tell . | <i>Read three reviews for this film before class meeting.</i> | Complete the F.V.N. for Stories We Tell . Study for Exam #2 on day 11. |
| 11 | Presenting Evidence in the Documentary – part 1. Exam #2. | Please read 2 nd section of Ch. 3, pp. 77 to 93, on the “MAIDS.” | Watch Citizen Four on ship’s CCTV system. |
| 12 | Presenting Evidence in the Documentary – part 2. View segments from Citizen Four and discuss in class. | <i>Read three reviews for this film before class.</i> | Watch Born into Brothels on the ship’s CCTV network. Complete the F.V.N. for Citizen Four . |
| 13 | Engagement and Persuasion in the Documentary. Watch segments from Born Into Brothels in class. | Please read the first part of Chapter 4, pp. 94 to 103. | Complete the F.V.N. for Born into Brothels . |
| 14 | View segments from Born into Brothels (2004) and discuss. | <i>Read three reviews for this film before class meeting.</i> | On ship’s CCTV system watch The Fog of War . |
| 15 | Making a Persuasive Case. Watch segments from The Fog of War in class. | Please read last part of Chapter 4, pp. 103 to 119, on evidence & use of metaphor. | Field class essay is due – turn in on day 16. |
| 16 | Documentary styles and modes: Classic expository and poetic films. | Please read Ch. 6 on the expository and poetic modes, pp. 142-171. | For day 17, please watch Baraka on the CCTV system. |
| 17 | View segments from Baraka (2001) and discuss how it exemplifies the poetic mode. | <i>Read three reviews for this film before class meeting.</i> | Complete F.V.N. for Baraka . For day 18, please watch Vietnam’s Unseen War . |
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| Day | Lecture Topics and Films | Read <u>before</u> class | Film viewing assignments |
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| 18 | View segments from <i>Vietnam's Unseen War</i> and discuss. | <i>Read three reviews for this film before class meeting.</i> | Complete the F.V.N. for <i>Vietnam's Unseen War</i> . Complete film review papers due on day 19. |
| 19 | The Observational and Participatory Documentary Modes. | Please read the first part of Ch. 7, pp. 172 to 194, on the observational and participatory modes. | Finish film review papers. View Stories We Tell on the CCTV system. |
| 20 | The Reflexive and Performative Documentary Modes. View segments from <i>Stories We Tell</i> (2013) and discuss performative mode. | Please read the second half of Ch. 7, pp. 194 to 211, on the reflexive and performative modes. | For day 21 please watch The Salt of the Earth . Read three online reviews before the class meeting. |
| 21 | Addressing Social and Political Issues in the Documentary. View segments from <i>The Salt of the Earth</i> and discuss. | Please read pp. 212 to 228, first half of Chapter 8. Addressing global social, environmental & political issues. | Complete the F.V.N. for The Salt of the Earth . Study for Exam #3 on day 22. |
| 22 | Documentaries about Subcultures and Unique Groups. Exam #3 on Modes. | Please read the second half of Ch. 8, pp. 228 to 252, on exploring subcultures. | Watch <i>Jiro Dreams of Sushi</i> on CCTV system. |
| 23 | View segments from <i>Jiro Dreams of Sushi</i> and discuss in class. | <i>Read three reviews for this film before class meeting.</i> | Finish F.V.N. for Jiro Dreams of Sushi . Complete all Film Viewing Notes due day 24. |
| 24 | Final exam (#4) | Turn in Film Viewing Notes . | |
| 25 | Final Class – Review key insights gained in the course | N.A. | N.A. |

Disembarkation Day – December 22

FIELD WORK

Semester at Sea® field experiences allow for an unparalleled opportunity to compare, contrast, and synthesize the different cultures and countries encountered over the course of the voyage. In addition to the one field class, students will complete a Comparative Experiential Project that span multiple countries.

FIELD CLASS AND ASSIGNMENT

STUDENTS: Field Class proposals listed below are not finalized. Confirmed ports, dates, and times will be posted to the [Fall 22 Courses and Field Class page](#) when available.

Field Class attendance is mandatory for all students enrolled in this course. Do not book individual travel plans or a Semester at Sea sponsored trip on the day of your field class. Field Classes constitute 20% of the contact hours for each course.

Field Class Title: Documenting Cultural and Religious Practices

Activities: Students will meet **documentary filmmakers** and discuss examples of their work. The class will visit a **local television station** and meet with a producer/director and their staff to discuss news documentary production. Students will then **visit a religious site** to document a ceremony and, ***with their permission***, photograph local worshipers at that ceremony.

1. After meeting with the two documentary filmmakers, students can define at least two genres of contemporary documentaries and explain the insights they provide about Indian culture.
2. After the television station visit and talking with the producers and their staff, students can articulate the state of news documentaries in India and the training needed to succeed in these fields.
3. Students can articulate the cultural and religious issues involved in documenting religious ceremonies.

Outcomes: Students will take photographs and videos at each site. Each student will document the field class day for the reflective essay with photos and videos.

Assessment: Each student will complete a reflective essay (with 15-20 images with detailed captions) illustrating what they observed at these sites. This essay will include an analysis of how their photographs and videos document local cultures and religious practices and the student's reflections on how the process of documentation affects human behavior. Save and submit online and on a flash drive.

COMPARATIVE EXPERIENTIAL PROJECT DOCUMENTARY

The CEP is the required comparative assignment that span multiple countries. The Comparative Experiential Project Documentary constitutes at least 5% of the grade for each course.

Each student will select a universal cultural theme (e.g., family, work, play, learning, faith, etc.,) and record brief video clips (10-30 seconds) on the selected theme using a mobile phone or digital camera in **a minimum of five ports**. These brief clips will be edited using simple free software on personal laptops (or the shared computers in the ship's library) into a 3-5 minute mini-documentary on your selected theme. Students will not be evaluated on *video production*

quality, but rather the breadth of the documentation across at least five cultures (a detailed rubric will be provided in the first week of the voyage. Course assessment value is up to 50 points and the completed videos will be shown in class for peer and instructor critique. These brief videos will be an important record of cultural observations during the voyage that students can share with friends and family afterward (if desired).

METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING SCALE

The following Grading Scale is utilized for student evaluation. Pass/Fail is not an option for Semester at Sea coursework. Note that C-, D+ and D- grades are also not assigned on Semester at Sea in accordance with the grading system at Colorado State University (the SAS partner institution). Pluses and minuses are awarded as follows on a 100% scale:

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| <u>Excellent</u> | <u>Good</u> | <u>Satisfactory/Poor</u> | <u>Failing</u> |
| 97-100%: A+ | 87-89%: B+ | 77-80%: C+ | Less than 60%: F |
| 93-96%: A | 83-86%: B | 70-76%: C | |
| 90-92%: A- | 80-82%: B- | 60-69%: D | |

Grading – There will be three exams, an analytical film critique paper, an essay on your field class experience, and the comparative experiential project:

| Points | Assessment Component |
|------------|--|
| 90 | Three exams on readings and films (up to 30 points each) |
| 60 | Film critique paper |
| 30 | Class participation , including online discussions about the films (six postings minimum during the voyage) |
| 60 | Field class reflective essay (20% of course grade) |
| <u>60</u> | Comparative experiential documentary project |
| | |
| 300 | Total points possible |

| points | % | grade |
|-----------|--------|-------|
| 290-300 | 97-100 | A+ |
| 280-289 | 93-96 | A |
| 270-279 | 90-92 | A- |
| 260-269 | 87-89 | B+ |
| 250-259 | 83-86 | B |
| 240-249 | 80-82 | B- |
| 230-239 | 77-79 | C+ |
| 210-229 | 70-76 | C |
| 180-209 | 60-69 | D |
| below 180 | <60 | F |

ATTENDANCE/ENGAGEMENT IN THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Attendance in all Semester at Sea® classes, including the Field Class, is mandatory. Students must inform their instructors prior to any unanticipated absence and take the initiative to make up missed work in a timely fashion. Instructors must make reasonable efforts to enable students to make up work which must be accomplished under the instructor's supervision (e.g., examinations, laboratories). In the event of a conflict in regard to this policy, individuals may appeal using established CSU procedures.

CLASSROOM CLIMATE

Semester at Sea® is committed to the Voyage Community Values. Consequently, the classroom environment is founded on mutual respect, community, and an aim toward equity. The Voyage Community Values support the creation of a collaborative and vibrant community. Our community is the foundation of our learning, critical inquiry, and discovery. Each member of this course has a responsibility to uphold these values when engaging with one another.

With that, please review the following Voyage Community Values:

- **Well-Being:** We commit to the health, safety and well-being of ourselves, all members of our voyage community, *and* members of the communities we will visit.
- **Interconnectedness:** We understand our actions and attitudes have an impact locally and globally. We always seek to positively affect the planet and the people around us near and far.
- **Respect:** We honor the inherent dignity of *all people* with an abiding commitment to freedom of expression, scholarly discourse and the advancement of knowledge. We have the right to be treated, and the responsibility to treat others, with fairness and equity.
- **Inclusion:** We ensure inclusive environments that welcome, value, affirm and embrace *all people* within the shipboard community and in each country we visit.
- **Integrity:** We are honest and ethical in all of our interactions, including our academic work. We hold ourselves accountable for our actions.
- **Excellence:** We model the highest academic standards of preparation, inquiry and knowledge and consistently seek to understand complex issues and express informed opinions with courage and conviction.

LEARNING ACCOMMODATIONS

Semester at Sea® provides academic accommodations for students with diagnosed learning disabilities, in accordance with ADA guidelines. Students who will need accommodations in a class, should contact ISE to discuss their individual needs. Any accommodation must be discussed in a timely manner prior to implementation.

A letter from students' home institutions verifying the accommodations received on their home campuses (dated within the last three years) is required before any accommodation is provided on the ship. Students must submit verification of accommodations to their Student Services advisor as soon as possible, but no later than two months prior to the voyage. More details can be found within the **Course Registration Packet**, as posted to the [Courses and Field Classes page](#) no later than one month prior to registration.

STUDENT CONDUCT CODE

The foundation of a university is truth and knowledge, each of which relies in a fundamental manner upon academic integrity and is diminished significantly by academic misconduct. Academic integrity is conceptualized as doing and taking credit for one's own work. A pervasive attitude promoting academic integrity enhances the sense of community and adds value to the educational process. All within the University are affected by the cooperative commitment to academic integrity. All Semester at Sea® courses adhere to this Academic Integrity Policy and Student Conduct Code.

Depending on the nature of the assignment or exam, the faculty member may require a written declaration of the following honor pledge: "I have not given, received, or used any unauthorized assistance on this exam/assignment."

RESERVE BOOKS FOR THE LIBRARY

None

FILMS

TBA

ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS

None