Course Outline

FILM 3230

Documentary Cinema:
Rendering the Real

Semester 1, 2010

Course Coordinator: Dr Hamish Ford
Room: GP.2.25, General Purpose Building, Callaghan
Ph: 02 4921 7821
Fax: 02 49216933
Email: hamish.ford@newcastle.edu.au
Consultation hours: By appointment – Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesday.

Course Outline Issued and Correct as at: Week 1, Semester 1 - 2010

CTS Download Date: 12.2.10
**FILM3230 - Course Overview**

**Course Coordinator**  
Dr Hamish Ford

**Semester**  
Semester 1 - 2010

**Unit Weighting**  
10

**Teaching Methods**  
Laboratory (screening); Seminar

**Brief Course Description**  
Involves a critical and historical survey of documentary as a reportorial, experiential, persuasive, and aesthetically diverse form of film.

**Contact Hours**  
Laboratory (Film Screening) for 2 Hours per Week for the Full Term  
Seminar for 2 Hours per Week for the Full Term.  
(A seminar combines lecture material and group discussion.)

**Learning Materials/Texts**  
Course Reader (available from Uprint n week one).  
*It is essential that you acquire this text, as it contains all the primary readings for the course.*

**Course Objectives**  
Upon completion of this course students will be able to demonstrate:  
1. An understanding of the history and different forms of documentary film.  
2. Knowledge of the major theoretical positions and aesthetic debates in the area  
3. The ability to relate questions of ethics and interpretation to the functioning of the media in the contemporary world.

**Course Content**  
This course involves an examination of the various styles, aims, and methods of the documentary approach to filmmaking. In doing so it explores such topics as:  

- a) the relationship between documentary film, memory, history, politics and social reality;  
- b) usage and function of experts, witnesses, archive footage and narrators;  
- c) the responsibility of the filmmaker to his/her filmed subjects as existing within a specific social context, and, the relationship between 'the public's right to know' and the individual on-screen subject's right to privacy; and  
- d) ways by which new forms and technologies erode traditional boundaries between documentary, narrative, and experimental film, in the process undermining documentary's traditional claims to truth-telling.

**Assessment Items**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essays / Written Assignments</th>
<th>Film analysis of 1000 words, featuring a close analysis of a film within the course, worth 20%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essays / Written Assignments</td>
<td>Major essay of 2500 words, featuring extensive research beyond primary course materials, 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>Weekly journal assessing students' engagement with films and readings, total 40%</td>
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**Assumed Knowledge**  
20 units 1000 level film courses

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<tr>
<th>Callaghan</th>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Timetable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FILM3230 Documentary Cinema</td>
<td>Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester 1 - 2010</td>
<td>Film Screen Monday 16:00 - 18:00 [MC132]</td>
<td>and Seminar Monday 18:00 - 20:00 [MC132]</td>
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IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity, honesty, and a respect for knowledge, truth and ethical practices are fundamental to the business of the University. These principles are at the core of all academic endeavor in teaching, learning and research. Dishonest practices contravene academic values, compromise the integrity of research and devalue the quality of learning. To preserve the quality of learning for the individual and others, the University may impose severe sanctions on activities that undermine academic integrity. There are two major categories of academic dishonesty:

Academic fraud is a form of academic dishonesty that involves making a false representation to gain an unjust advantage. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it can include:

- falsification of data;
- using a substitute person to undertake, in full or part, an examination or other assessment item;
- reusing one's own work, or part thereof, that has been submitted previously and counted towards another course (without permission);
- making contact or colluding with another person, contrary to instructions, during an examination or other assessment item;
- bringing material or device(s) into an examination or other assessment item other than such as may be specified for that assessment item; and
- making use of computer software or other material and device(s) during an examination or other assessment item other than such as may be specified for that assessment item.
- contract cheating or having another writer compete for tender to produce an essay or assignment and then submitting the work as one's own.

Plagiarism is the presentation of the thoughts or works of another as one's own. University policy prohibits students plagiarising any material under any circumstances. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it may include:

- copying or paraphrasing material from any source without due acknowledgment;
- using another person's ideas without due acknowledgment;
- collusion or working with others without permission, and presenting the resulting work as though it were completed independently.

Turnitin is an electronic text matching system. During assessing any assessment item the University may -

- Reproduce this assessment item and provide a copy to another member of the University; and/or
- Communicate a copy of this assessment item to a text matching service (which may then retain a copy of the item on its database for the purpose of future checking).

Submit the assessment item to other forms of plagiarism checking

RE-MARKS AND MODERATIONS

Students can access the University's policy at: http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000769.html

MARKS AND GRADES RELEASED DURING TERM

All marks and grades released during term are indicative only until formally approved by the Head of School.
SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AFFECTING ASSESSMENT ITEMS

Extension of Time for Assessment Items, Deferred Assessment and Special Consideration for Assessment Items or Formal Written Examinations items must be submitted by the due date in the Course Outline unless the Course Coordinator approves an extension. Unapproved late submissions will be penalised in line with the University policy specified in Late Penalty (under student) at the link above.

Requests for Extensions of Time must be lodged no later than the due date of the item. This applies to students:

- applying for an extension of time for submission of an assessment item on the basis of medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment; or
- whose attendance at or performance in an assessment item or formal written examination has been or will be affected by medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment.

Students must report the circumstances, with supporting documentation, as outlined in the Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure at:

Note: different procedures apply for minor and major assessment tasks.

Students should be aware of the following important deadlines:

- Special Consideration Requests must be lodged no later than 3 working days after the due date of submission or examination.
- Rescheduling Exam requests must be received no later than 10 working days prior the first date of the examination period.

Late applications may not be accepted. Students who cannot meet the above deadlines due to extenuating circumstances should speak firstly to their Program Officer or their Program Executive if studying in Singapore.

STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR CHRONIC ILLNESS

University is committed to providing a range of support services for students with a disability or chronic illness. If you have a disability or chronic illness which you feel may impact on your studies please feel free to discuss your support needs with your lecturer or course coordinator.

Disability Support may also be provided by the Student Support Service (Disability). Students must be registered to receive this type of support. To register contact the Disability Liaison Officer on 02 4921 5766, email at: student-disability@newcastle.edu.au. As some forms of support can take a few weeks to implement it is extremely important that you discuss your needs with your lecturer, course coordinator or Student Support Service staff at the beginning of each semester. For more information on confidentiality and documentation visit the Student Support Service (Disability) website:

CHANGING YOUR ENROLMENT

Students enrolled after the census dates listed in the link below are liable for the full cost of their student contribution or fees for that term.

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/fees/censusdates.html

Students may withdraw from a course without academic penalty on or before the last day of term. Any withdrawal from a course after the last day of term will result in a fail grade.

Students cannot enrol in a new course after the second week of term, except under exceptional circumstances. Any application to add a course after the second week of term must be on the appropriate form, and should be discussed with staff in the Student Hubs or with your Program Executive at PSB if you are a Singapore student.

To check or change your enrolment online go to myHub: https://myhub.newcastle.edu.au
STUDENT INFORMATION & CONTACTS

Various services are offered by the Student Support Unit:
www.newcastle.edu.au/service/studentsupport/

The Student Hubs are a one-stop shop for the delivery of student related services and are the first point of contact for students studying in Australia. Student Hubs are located at:

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<tr>
<th>Callaghan Campus</th>
<th>Port Macquarie students</th>
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<tr>
<td>Shortland Hub: Level 3, Shortland Building</td>
<td>contact your program officer or</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hunter Hub: Level 2, Student Services Centre</td>
<td><a href="mailto:EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au">EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>City Precinct</td>
<td>Phone 4921 5000</td>
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<tr>
<td>City Hub &amp; Information Common, University House</td>
<td>Singapore students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Coast Campus (Ourimbah)</td>
<td>contact your PSB Program Executive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Hub: Opposite the Main Cafeteria</td>
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OTHER CONTACT INFORMATION

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<th>Faculty Websites</th>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/business-law/">www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/business-law/</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/education-arts/">www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/education-arts/</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000311.html">www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000311.html</a></td>
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<th>General enquiries</th>
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<tr>
<td>Callaghan, City and Port Macquarie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone: 02 4921 5000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au">EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au</a></td>
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<th>Ourimbah</th>
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<tr>
<td>Phone: 02 4348 4030</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au">EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au</a></td>
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Dean of Students Office
The Dean of Students and Deputy Dean of Students work to ensure that all students receive fair and equitable treatment at the University. In doing this they provide information and advice and help students resolve problems of an academic nature.
http://www.newcastle.edu.au/service/dean-of-students/
Phone:02 4921 5806
Fax: 02 4921 7151
Email: Dean-Of-Students@newcastle.edu.au

University Complaints Managers Office
The University is committed to maintaining and enhancing fair, equitable and safe work practices and promoting positive relationships with its staff and students. There is a single system to deal with all types of complaints, ranging from minor administrative matters to more serious deeply held grievances concerning unfair, unjust or unreasonable behaviour.
http://www.newcastle.edu.au/service/complaints/
Phone:02 4921 5806
Fax: 02 4921 7151
Email: Complaints@newcastle.edu.au

Campus Care
The Campus Care program has been set up as a central point of enquiry for information, advice and support in managing inappropriate, concerning or threatening behaviour.
Phone:02 4921 8600
Fax: 02 4921 7151
Email: campuscare@newcastle.edu.au

This course outline will not be altered after the second week of the term except under extenuating circumstances with Head of School approval. Students will be notified in advance of the change.
Administrative Details

Online Tutorial Registration:

Students are required to enrol in the Lecture and a specific Tutorial time for this course via the Online Registration system. Refer - [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/enrolment/regdates.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/enrolment/regdates.html)

NB: Registrations close at the end of week 2 of semester.

Studentmail and Blackboard: Refer - [www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/](http://www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/)

This course uses Blackboard and studentmail to contact students, so you are advised to keep your email accounts within the quota to ensure you receive essential messages. To receive an expedited response to queries, post questions on the Blackboard discussion forum if there is one, or if emailing staff directly use the course code in the subject line of your email. Students are advised to check their studentmail and the course Blackboard site on a weekly basis.

Important Additional Information

Details about the following topics are available on your course Blackboard site (where relevant). Refer - [www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/](http://www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/)

- Written Assignment Presentation and Submission Details
- Online copy submission to Turnitin
- Penalties for Late Assignments
- Special Circumstances
- No Assignment Re-submission
- Re-marks & Moderations
- Return of Assignments
- Preferred Referencing Style
- Student Representatives
- Student Communication
- Essential Online Information for Students

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Grading guide

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<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>49% or less</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>An unacceptable effort, including non-completion. The student has not understood the basic principles of the subject matter and/or has been unable to express their understanding in a comprehensible way. Deficient in terms of answering the question, research, referencing and correct presentation (spelling, grammar etc). May include extensive plagiarism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>50% to 64%</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>The work demonstrates a reasonable attempt to answer the question, shows some grasp of the basic principles of the subject matter and a basic knowledge of the required readings, is comprehensible, accurate and adequately referenced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65% to 74%</td>
<td>Credit</td>
<td>The work demonstrates a clear understanding of the question, a capacity to integrate research into the discussion, and a critical appreciation of a range of different theoretical perspectives. A deficiency in any of the above may be compensated by evidence of independent thought. The work is coherent and accurate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% to 84%</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>Evidence of substantial additional reading and/or research, and evidence of the ability to generalise from the theoretical content to develop an argument in an informed and original manner. The work is well organised, clearly expressed and shows a capacity for critical analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85% upwards</td>
<td>High Distinction</td>
<td>All of the above, plus a thorough understanding of the subject matter based on substantial additional reading and/or research. The work shows a high level of independent thought, presents informed and insightful discussion of the topic, particularly the theoretical issues involved, and demonstrates a well-developed capacity for critical analysis.</td>
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</table>
Welcome to Documentary Cinema: Rendering the Real. This course examines the historical developments of what has come to be known as ‘documentary cinema’ in all its diversity of subject matter, politics, aesthetic form and experiential impact. The course will consider some landmark films central to the documentary tradition as well as examining some of its more radical and hybrid trajectories, both in terms of content (for example, we’ll be looking at films extolling or evidencing radical and less obvious right-wing and left-wing ideas), and aesthetics – everything from conventional linear ‘story-telling’ techniques to avant-garde approaches and forms that self-consciously ask how to best render the world on film. This will enable us to discuss the extent to which reality can in fact be filmed, and the extent to which the act of filming itself transforms or even ‘constructs’ reality in the process.
Through a consideration of films exemplifying diverse incarnations of documentary form, we should be able to openly consider the question: ‘what is documentary film?’ Indeed, many of the films ask this difficult question quite directly or more insidiously (the question of their authors’ ‘intent’ – whether s/he ‘means’ to ask such questions – is quite besides the point here) in very different ways. As a result, we should be able to discuss how documentary is, for all its familiarity on TV etc., a rather unstable form in regard both to any authenticity or 'truth' claims it might assert, but hence also vis-à-vis the maintaining of any sustainable documentary/fiction distinction. Indeed some of the films we will look at are highly debatable as to their ‘status’ in this regard. But rather than this being a reductive process or conceptual outcome, a kind of smarty-pants ‘game’, such a ‘muddying of the waters’ between fiction and documentary, creativity and reality, can productively open up our understanding of moving images' complex co-dependent relationship to the social reality they record, render, transform or construct. Amongst other things, this raises all manner of complex political and conceptual issues that we will explore in engagement with both the readings’ various accounts of the films and attendant ideas and through reflecting on our own addressing of personal responses and our communal reactions as a group.

In the process of examining the various styles, aims, ideological colour, and overall ‘methods’ of the documentary approach to filmmaking across different historical periods, cultural contexts, political situations and aesthetic philosophies, issues we will explore include:

- the relationship between documentary film, personal and cultural memory, history and social/political reality;
- the use and function of experts, witnesses, other on-screen human figures, the crucial effects and power of 'voice of god' narration, and particular uses of various archive footage;
- the ethical responsibility of the filmmaker to his/her filmed subjects, the historical period, reality and phenomena being charted by the film, and the contemporary social real in which the film is being made and which will ‘consume’ it;
- the perennial question of ‘bias’ and ideology in rendering the real world on screen, and whether a film seeks to simply ‘record’ reality or ‘change’ it;
- the ways in which new forms and technologies, as they have been incorporated into documentary films over the decades, erode traditional boundaries between documentary, narrative and experimental film;
- and, vice versa, the importation of documentary techniques into fiction films, and the way in which documentary’s traditional truth claims become undermined in the process (but likewise also, therefore, the idea that fiction is ‘fiction’);
- and overall, the extent to which we can maintain a viable distinction between documentary and other film forms in regard to story-telling and truth-telling.

I hope you enjoy the course! ~ Hamish Ford.
Weekly Participation

Each week, you are expected to attend the film screening and do the set readings from the Course Reader in time to attend the seminar – and then, ideally, contribute therein. All written work must show genuine, consistent engagement with the course material, and show regular attendance. If you do attend and engage regularly, your work will show this as a matter of course; if you do not, your work will show it, and will suffer accordingly. This is a participatory process: inquire away with a spirit of ‘leave your pride at the door’, because any questions and comments you have about a film, readings, theoretical paradigm, assessment item, etc., will undoubtedly be shared by many others in the room. In fact, the ‘smartest’ students (including postgraduates, and even Course Co-ordinators!) – the ones who learn the most, and get the best results – are those who readily admit what they don’t know.

It is essential for your participation in the course that you see the films each week. Many of them are commercially unavailable in Australia (you will only find one or two at your local video store, and only if it is a very good one with a decent ‘foreign’ section). The films are all available on DVD through Short Loans in Auchmuty Library – very important for your written assignments as you’ll want to watch these films more than once, many of them gaining immeasurably on subsequent viewings (not to mention sometimes valuable supplementary DVD extras). However, it will be a problem on a weekly basis for students to individually watch the films in the library instead of attending the official screening time. Most importantly though, some of these films are remarkable aesthetic experiences: to watch them as projected on a big screen is the way to see such movies, rather than on a small monitor in the library or on a laptop. So come to the screening, but turn your phones – and any compulsive desire to talk during the film – off!...

It is also essential to keep up to date with the set readings contained in the Course Reader (available from UPrint). As with the screenings and seminars, if you fall behind you will find the course very dull indeed and your grades will plummet. Make sure to allow enough time to read each week in preparation for the seminar, as there are some lengthy and challenging readings, which may also require some re-reading. In the Weekly Screening and Reading Program below, I have also included some recommended suggestions for further viewing and reading. You are not expected to have utilised this material each week. This is optional material can be utilised when your interest leads you on to further investigation; or where you are struggling with the concepts in the primary readings and need some more background coverage; and certainly when it comes to writing your Film Analysis and Major Research Essay.

Assessment

* ALL ASSESSMENT TASKS MUST BE COMPLETED IN ORDER TO SUCCESSFULLY PASS THE COURSE *

1. Film Analysis:
This involves two steps, both of which are essential to complete the assessment task:
1): Each week one or two students will be responsible for generating some discussion and analysis of the week’s film and reading. In Week 2 we will assign weeks for this process.

2): The following week, you must hand in a written essay-style analysis of the film in question, informed by the set readings – perhaps using a small amount of secondary research, utilizing the ‘recommended readings’ for that week – and class discussion.

**Length** – 1,500 words

**Weighting** – 20%

**Due** – The week following your leading of class discussion.

*{Both in-class hard copy and Turnitin submission is necessary for this assignment.}*

~ **NB: Your Film Analysis and major Essay cannot be on the same film/topic ~**

**Journal:**

In place of an end of term test, you are required to submit a Journal containing brief analyses of films viewed within the weekly screening schedule, and informed by the set readings. You will submit two instalments of entries – *not* including the week covered by your Film Analysis.

**Length** – each entry should be approximately 300 words

**Weighting** – 40% overall (20 % each installment)

**Due** – 10 pm. Wednesday, week 7, thru Turnitin; and

10 pm. Wednesday, week 13, thru Turnitin.

*{NB: No hard copy submission is necessary for this assignment, just Turnitin.}*

**Major Essay:**

This is your major research-based project for the course, with substantial research contributing to a piece of writing with a clear argument – as opposed to bald assertion of opinion – at its core, communicated and developed via sustained, rigorous analysis. Though we will have discussed this in relation to the Research Exercise, let be said straight up here substantial research involves more than a quick Google search, and there will be a ban on using Wikipedia as a quoted source.

*For this assignment it is essential to do substantial research beyond each week’s set readings.*

Certainly *utilize* material in the Course Reader (to ignore these readings is silly, and shows lack of engagement with the course per se), plus the further reading recommendations for each week’s topic listed later in this Outline certainly – but do not rely exclusively on such sources for your essay. In addition to extensive reading, you should also watch other films relevant to your topic where possible. There will be at least one essay question for each week/film/topic, as well as some comparative ones across specific weeks, and some more generally framed questions around the issue/s of Documentary cinema. Marking the essays, I will take into account the standard of writing, sophistication of argumentation; correct citing of sources, as well as substantive content. You should re-read and proof-
read your work many times to ensure you are not marked down for careless mistakes. (See the section at the end of this Outline for some useful essay writing guidelines.)

**Length** – 2,500 words  
**Weighting** – 40%  
**Due** – 5pm. Monday, week 14.  
*NB: Both hard copy (thru the Hub) & Turnitin submissions are required for this assignment.*

Please read the above sections on plagiarism and essay submission, plus the advice on essay writing at the end of this Outline, before submitting all written work. There are serious penalties for plagiarism. Marks will be deducted for poor presentation and incorrect referencing, as well as late submission of work.

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**The Course at a Glance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture Topic</th>
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| 1    | 1/03/2010  | **Introduction: What is Documentary Cinema?**  
(Screenings: Darwin’s Nightmare + Night Mail, Sea Urchins, Rain) |
| 2    | 8/03/2010  | **Symphonies of Reality – ‘Nature’ and the Revolutionary City**  
(Nanook of the North, Man with a Movie Camera) |
| 3    | 15/032010  | **The Art of Propaganda: the Mythic Father & Nation on Film**  
(Triumph of the Will, Listen to Britain) |
| 4    | 22/032010  | **‘Who is Responsible?’ – Documenting the Holocaust**  
(Night and Fog, Shoah: First Era) |
| 5    | 29/032010  | **On the Street, Mobile Reality: Cinéma Vérité & Direct Cinema**  
(Chronicle of a Summer, Don’t look Back)  
| 6    | 12/042010  | **Documentary Essays & The Political Turn: The Camera as Chisel**  
(... à Valparaiso, The Hour of the Furnaces) |
| 7    | 19/042010  | **Pseudo-Documentary, Speculative Recreation, War Games**  
(Punishment Park, The 17th Parallel [excerpt])  
*1ST INSTALLMENT OF JOURNAL DUE (Wednesday)* |
| 8    | 03/05/2010 | **‘A Very Bizarre Story’, Told Straight – the Mockumentary**  
(Zelig, David Holzman’s Diary) |
| 9    | 10/05/2010 | **A True Story, Reality Told Through Cinematic Lies**  
(Close Up) |
| 10   | 17/05/2010 | **Truth Reclaimed – by an Invisible Line**  
(The Thin Blue Line) |
| 11   | 24/05/2010 | **Analog-Digital Affect: The Skin of the Subject/Thing, Film/World**  
(The Gleaners & I + Liquid Crystals; The Sea Horse; The Love Life of the Octopus; ACERA, or The Witches’ Dance) |
| 12   | 31/05/2010 | **Documentary Blockbuster: the Case of Michal Moore**  
(Fahrenheit 9/11)  
*2ND INSTALLMENT OF JOURNAL DUE (Wednesday)* |
| 13   | 7/16/2010  | **MAJOR ESSAY DUE (Monday)**  
(Both hard copy at the Shortland Hub & thru Turnitin) |
Week-by-Week Screening and Reading Details

Below are the week-by-week details of the course. Included are not only the required screenings and readings, which constitute the basic expectation re your engagement and attendance each week and around which our discussions will hinge, but also a series of ‘recommended’ material. These secondary readings and films are listed for your benefit at the end of each week’s details so that when beginning an assignment centered on a particular topic you can get a start on some relevant research and film watching beyond the primary sources. This material is also for those students who would like to be able to prepare more widely for a given week due to particular interest, or if you are struggling with some of the course content. Such additional preparation is also recommended if you are leading the discussion for that week (and certainly for your ensuing Film Analysis), and doubly so for your major essay as a casting-off point for further research. (The additional readings and films should be available in the Auchmuty library by the time of your assignments.) I also recommend some books for general assistance with your work at the end.

Week 1
Introduction: What is Documentary Cinema?

Screening:
- *Darwin’s Nightmare* (Hubert Sauper, Austria/Belgium/Canada/France/Finland/Sweden, 2004)
- *Night Mail* (Harry Watt & Basil Wright, UK, 1936); *Sea Urchins* (Jean Painlevé, France, 1954); *Rain* (Joris Ivens, Netherlands, 1929)

Set reading:

Week 2
Symphonies of Reality – ‘Nature’ and the Revolutionary City

Screening:
- *Nanook of the North* (Robert Flaherty, France/USA/Canada, 1922)
- *Man with a Movie Camera* (Dziga Vertov, USSR, 1928)

Set Reading:
- Jean Rouch, 'The Camera and the Man', in Steven Field (Ed. & trans.), *Ciné-ethnography*, University of Minneapolis, 2003, pp. 29-33.

Recommended Films:
- [Nanook:] Tabu (F.W. Murnau, USA, 1931); Earth (Aleksandr Dozvhenko, USSR, 1930); A Propos de Nice (Jean Vigo, France, 1930); Manhatta (Paul Strand & Charles Sheeler, USA, 1921); Lisbon Story (Wim Wenders, Germany/Portugal, 1994)
- [Man with a Movie Camera:] Berlin, Symphony of a Great City (Walter Ruttmann, Germany, 1927); Strike (Sergei Eisenstein, USSR, 1925); The Battleship Potemkin (Eisenstein, USSR, 1925);

Recommended Reading:
- Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, Introduction & Chapter 5 [electronic resource]

Recommended Reading [Man with a Movie Camera:] Jonathan Dawson, 'Dziga Vertov', *Senses of Cinema*; Vlada Petric, *Constructivism in Film: The Man with the Movie Camera, a Cinematic Analysis*; Annette Michelson (Ed.) *Kino-eye: the writings of Dziga Vertov*.

__Week 3__

**The Art of Propaganda: the Mythic Father & Nation on Film**

**Screening:**
- *Triumph of the Will* (Leni Riefenstahl, Germany, 1935)
- [in class:] *Listen to Britain* (Humphrey Jennings & Stewart McAllister, UK, 1942)

**Set Reading:**
- Jim Leach, 'The Poetics of Propaganda: Humphrey Jennings and *Listen to Britain*', in Grant & Sloniowski (Eds.), *Documenting the Documentary*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1998.

**Recommended Films:**
- Olympia (Riefenstahl, Germany, 1938); October (Eisenstein, USSR, 1928); Prelude to War: Why We Fight, Part 1 (Frank Capra, USA, 1943-44); The Secret Country: The First Australians Fight Back (John Pilger, UK/Australia, 1985).

**Recommended Reading:**

__Week 4__

**‘Who is Responsible?’ – Documenting the Holocaust**

**Screenings:**
- *Night and Fog* (Alain Resnais, France, 1955)
- *Shoah: First Era* (Claude Lanzmann, France, 1986)

**Set Reading:**

Recommended Films:
- The Sorrow and the Pity (Marcel Ophuls, France, 1969); Hiroshima, mon Amour (Alain Resnais, France/Japan, 1959); Schindler's List (Stephen Spielberg, USA, 1993); The Pianist (Roman Polanski, France/Germany/UK/Poland, 2002); Images of the World and the Inscription of War (Harun Farocki, Germany, 1989).

Recommended Reading:

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--- Week 5 ---

**On the Street, Mobile Reality-Rendering: Cinéma-Vérité & Direct Cinema**

**Screenings:**
- Chronicle of a Summer (Edgar Morin & Jean Rouch, France, 1960)
- Don't look Back (D. A. Pennebaker, USA, 1967) [excerpt]

**Set Reading:**
- Jeanne Hall, "'Don't You Ever Just Watch?": American Cinema Vérité and Don't Look Back", in Grant & Sloniowski (Eds.), Documenting the Documentary, Wayne state University Press, Detroit, 1998, pp. 223-235.

**Recommended Films:**
- [Cinéma-Vérité:] Le joli mai/The Lovely Month of May (Chris Marker, France, 1962); Les Maîtres Fous/The Mad Masters (Jean Rouch, France, 1955); Pour la suit du Monde/For Those who will Follow (Pierre Perrault, Canada, 1963);
- [Direct cinema:] - Gimme Shelter (Albert & David Maysles, USA, 1969); Primary (Robert Drew, USA, 1960); Titicut Follies (Frederick Wiseman, USA, 1967); Monterey Pop (Pennebaker, USA, 1968); Winter Soldier (USA, 1972)

**Recommended reading:**

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~ Semester Break ~

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--- Week 6 ---
Documentary Essays & The Political Turn: The Camera as Chisel

Screenings:
- *The Hour of the Furnaces – Part One: Neocolonialism and Violence* (Fernando Solanas and Octavio Gettino, Argentina, 1968)
- ... *à Valparaiso* (Joris Ivens [with Chris Marker], Chile/France, 1962)

Set reading:

Recommended films:
- *The Battle of Chile* (Patricio Guzmán, Cuba/Chile/France, 1975-79); *Frontline* (David Bradbury, Australia, 1983); *I am Cuba* (Mikheil Kalatozishvili, USSR/Cuba, 1964); *The Journey* (Solanas, Argentina/Mexico/Spain/France/UK, 1992); *The Battle of Algiers* (Gillo Pontecorvo, Italy/Algeria, 1966); *Sans Soleil/Sunless* (Chris Marker, France, 1982); *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (Jean-Luc Godard, France, 1966).

Recommended readings:

Week 7

Pseudo-Documentary, Speculative Recreation and War Games

Screening:
- *Punishment Park* (Peter Watkins, UK/USA, 1971)
+ *The 17th Parallel* (Joris Ivens & Marceline Loridan, France/North Viet Nam, 1968) [excerpt]

Set reading:

Recommended films:
- *The War Game* (Peter Watkins, UK, 1966); *Culloden* (Peter Watkins, UK, 1964); *Peter Watkins Reflects on The War Game and the Media*, a seminar at the Australian Film and Television School (October, 1982); *Grin without a Cat* (Chris Marker, France,1977); *La Commune (Paris, 1871)* (Peter Watkins, France, 2000).

Recommended reading:

Week 8: No Class [Anzac Day holiday]

Week 9
A Very Bizarre Story, told Straight – the ‘Mockumentary’

Screening:
- Zelig (Woody Allen, USA, 1983)
- David Holzman's Diary (Jim McBride, USA, 1967)

Set reading:

Recommended Films:
- This is Spinal Tap (Rob Reiner, USA, 1984); Mr Arkadin (Orsen Welles, USA, 1955); Bob Roberts (Tim Robbins, USA, 1992); The Blair Witch Project (Daniel Myrick & Eduardo Sanchez, USA, 1999).

Recommended Reading:

Week 10
A True Story: Reality Told Through Cinematic Lies

Screening:
- Close-Up (Abbas Kiarostami, Iran, 1990)

Set Reading:

Recommended Films:
- Ten (Kiarostami, Iran/France, 2001); Taste of Cherry (Kiarostami, Iran, 1996); The Five Obstructions (Jørgen Leth/Lars von Trier, Denmark, 2003); F is for Fake (Welles, France/Iran/West Germany, 1974); A Moment of Innocence (Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Iran, 1996).

Recommended Reading:
- Mehrnaz Saeed-Vafa, 'Abbas Kiarostami', Senses of Cinema; Kerry Brougher (ed.), Hall of Mirrors: Art and Film Since 1945; Gilberto Perez, The Material Ghost; Bill Nichols, Introduction to Documentary, Chapter 2 [electronic resource].
Week 11

Truth Reclaimed – by an Invisible Line

Screening:
- The Thin Blue Line (Errol Morris, USA, 1988)

Set Reading:

Recommended Films:
- The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara (Morris, USA, 2003); Mr. Death: the Rise and Fall of Fred A. Lecher, Jr. (Morris, USA, 1999); Grizzly Man (Werner Herzog, Germany/USA, 2003); Little Dieter Needs to Fly (Herzog, Germany/Viet Nam, 1996); Waco: The Rules of Engagement (William Gazecki, USA, 1997).

Recommended reading:

Week 12

Analog-Digital Affect – The Skin of the Subject/Thing, Film/World

Screenings:
- The Gleaners and I (Agnès Varda, France, 2000)
- Liquid Crystals; The Sea Horse; The Love Life of the Octopus; ACERA, or The Witches’ Dance (Jean Painlevé, France, 1978; 1933; 1967; 1972)

Set Reading:

Recommended Films:
- The Gleaners and I: Two Years Later (Varda, France, 2002 [on the Gleaners and I DVD as an extra]); Cleo from 5 to 7 (Varda, France, 1962); Capturing the Friedmans (Andrew Jarecki & Marc Smerling, USA, 2003); Tarnation (Jonathan Caouette, USA, 2003).

Recommended Reading:
- Amelia Jones, Self image: Technology, Representation, and the Contemporary Subject, chapter 4; Andrew Darley, Visual Digital Culture: Surface Play and Spectacle in New Media Genres [electronic
Week 13

Documentary Blockbuster: the Case of Michal Moore

Screening:
- *Fahrenheit 9/11* (Michael Moore, USA, 2004)

Set Reading:

Recommended Viewing:
- *Roger and Me* (Moore, USA, 1989); *Bowling for Columbine*, (Moore, USA, 2002); *Sicko* (Moore, USA, 2005); *Manufacturing Dissent* (Rick Caine & Debbie Melnyk, Canada, 2007); *The War on Democracy* (Christopher Martin & John Pilger, UK/Australia, 2007); *The Corporation* (Mark Achbar, Jennifer Abbott & Joel Bakan, Canada, 2003); *An Inconvenient Truth*, (Davis Guggenheim, USA, 2006).

Recommended Reading:

Primary Recommend Texts


General Secondary Bibliography
- Jim Aitken, *Film and Reform: John Grierson and the Documentary Film Movement*
- Eric Barnouw, *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film*
- Richard M. Barsam, *Non-fiction Film: A Critical History*
- Thomas Benson, *Reality Fictions: The Films of Frederick Wiseman*
- Chris Berry et al, *The Filmmaker and the Prostitute: Dennis O'Rourke's The Good Woman of Bangkok*
- John Connor, *The Art of Record: A Critical Introduction to Documentary*
- Megan Cunningham, *The Art of the Documentary : Ten Conversations with Leading Directors, Cinematographers, Editors, and Producers*
- Liz Ellsworth, *Frederick Wiseman: A Guide to References and Resources*
- John A. Gomez, *Peter Watkins*
- Barry Keith Grant, *Voyages of Discovery: The Cinema of Frederick Wiseman*
- John Grierson, *Grierson on Documentary*
GUIDELINES ON ESSAY WRITING

1. THE ESSAY
The majority of assignments you will be required to write in Film Studies will be in essay form. These guidelines address the essentials of essay design and academic style in fairly general terms. For more detailed guidance on writing specifically on film, see David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction*, 5th edition (NY: McGraw-Hill), pp. 431-436.

An essay is not a mere presentation of facts. We not only want to find out how much you know; but also what you think and how you think. A good essay argues a case and supports it with evidence.

An unsatisfactory essay structure consists of: a first paragraph that restates the topic in other words; a middle essay that quotes from what other authorities have said, or from parts of the text that might be used to support a point of view on the topic, though no point of view is argued for; and a last paragraph that restates the topic in other words again.

It is better if you can find in the essay topic: a problem that requires solution; an issue which can be argued in more than one way; a point of view that is overstated unless other considerations are taken into account. The middle of the essay then becomes a marshalling of evidence: to find an solution to the problem; to weigh up arguments pro and con before giving a final judgement; to set out what can be said in defence of the topic statement but what, in view of competing formulations, would be a better definition of the case. If you conceive of your first paragraph as the proposal of a problem for solution, your last paragraph will become non-repetitive and easier to write.

2. THE ESSAY QUESTION
a) The instructional word “discuss”

“Discuss” means “examine by argument,” and it asks you to express your opinion about, or your point of view on, the idea that follows: e.g., “Discuss Renoir’s use of nature in *The Rules of the Game*.” In the context of a Film Studies essay, “discuss” does not mean “hold a leisurely conversation” or “toss about ideas that seem relevant”. Nor does it mean “provide a survey of all possible opinions about the course”. You are being asked to take a stand: to examine an idea, to formulate an opinion about it, and to support that opinion by a reasoned, coherent
argument.

b) Other instructional words

Compare: examine similarities and differences.

Criticise: make a reasoned assessment (whether favourable or unfavourable)

Analyse: break the whole into parts so that you can interpret each part separately and examine internal relationships between parts, before reconsidering the whole.

Relate: describe connections.

Evaluate: analyse strengths and limitations, in order to pass a reasoned judgment.

c) The question

Having noted the instructional word, look carefully at the whole question: e.g., “Discuss Renoir’s use of nature in The Rules of the Game.” The question does not ask for a catalogue of natural imagery in The Rules of the Game: rather, it asks you to determine what use Renoir makes of nature — as an agent in the narrative, as a device for revealing character, as a means for creating atmosphere or as a source of imagery and recurrent motifs.

Your essay should be focused directly on the essay question. Read the question carefully, and read all of it. Do not simply seize on a few key words and use them as a launching pad for a general discussion of the text. The question should rather give you a basis for planning your essay structure.

d) The word limit

It is not there simply to tell you when to stop writing. A word limit forces you to be selective, to decide what you think are the most important issues, and to express your ideas as clearly and succinctly as possible. A 500-word essay may require less writing than a 2000-word essay, but it does not require less thought. Going substantially over the word limit indicates lack of an essay plan; falling well short of the essay limit indicates that not only forethought is lacking. You should have to plan carefully and write precisely to fit your argument into the word limit.

3. ESSAY DESIGN

Your essay will need an opening paragraph that is a deliberate beginning and not an accident: it should establish the character and tone of your argument, and its direction, telling the reader where you are going in the rest of your essay and why you want to go there. Your essay will need a substantial middle that defines and amplifies your argument, making it concrete and convincing. And your essay will need a conclusion that feels like a conclusion and not as if you have run out of steam: it should drive your point home, letting the reader know you have arrived, and precisely where. As has been suggested, conceiving of the topic as proposing a problem for solution (for the solution of which you will need to assemble data) is a more promising approach than considering the topic as indicating an area in which data needs to be assembled.

4. THE ARGUMENT

Your argument should not be based simply on personal taste or private belief but on reasoned judgement. The substance of your argument should consist mainly of evidence you provide to support your opinions or the approach you have taken. In a Film Studies essay “evidence” usually takes two forms:

a) Examples from the film
You should instance specific episodes, scenes, sequences, shots or lines of dialogue which support your ideas with concrete examples. When you refer to the film, avoid merely paraphrasing the plotline, or merely quoting lengthy passages of dialogue: summarise, criticise and relate. You should make clear how the example supports your argument, why it is relevant, what interpretation of the section of the film cited is suggested by your argument.

b) Use of authorities or critics

An authority or critic can provide persuasive support for an argument you have already made (or are about to make). The critic’s opinion can only be a support, never a substitute for your own argument. You should enter into dialogue with the critic’s theory or opinion; it should be placed within the structure of your own argument. Some authorities you may find good reason to disagree with. Citing a critical opinion which you are setting out to disprove valuably establishes your essay’s credentials as an argument.

Whenever you make use of a critic, whether you quote the critic directly or simply make use of his or her ideas, you must acknowledge the debt in a footnote. Where you quote directly, all the words cited should be enclosed in quotation marks. The borrowing should be introduced with an appropriate acknowledgment and the context from which the borrowing has been drawn should be noted. Consider this passage from Thomas M. Leitch, *Find the Director and Other Hitchcock Games*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991:

Although *Rear Window* has unmistakable similarities with Hitchcock’s forties films, its more accepting view of society marks a dramatic change in the relation Hitchcock establishes with his audience. Instead of inviting them to identify with an innocent hero or heroine who is threatened by a hostile environment, a villainous double, or a treacherous intimate, Hitchcock makes their identification here far more equivocal, since Jeff is anything but innocent. (Leitch 174)

This is a correct citation from the passage:

In Thomas M. Leitch’s view, where the typical protagonist of Hitchcock’s films of the forties is an innocent “threatened by a hostile environment, a villainous double, or a treacherous intimate,” *Rear Window* presents us with a hero who “is anything but innocent.” (Leitch 174)

When you make use of an authority’s ideas, even if you do not repeat him or her verbatim, you should still acknowledge the source. The following paraphrase also sufficiently acknowledges a reliance on Leitch: “According to Thomas M. Leitch, the hero of *Rear Window* is a more morally questionable figure than any of Hitchcock’s protagonists of the forties (174).”

The brief note in brackets is sufficient to identify your exact source, as long as full details of the critical text are properly entered in your bibliography (see below, The Bibliography).

Simply placing a footnote at the close of your borrowing from a critic does not indicate where the borrowing (which might extend over many sentences) begins. This is why it is essential to mark the point at which your indebtedness begins with a phrase like “In Thomas M. Leitch’s view” and to mark the point of closure with a note. The following note does not adequately acknowledge indebtedness to Leitch:

*Rear Window* demands a very different response from viewers than Hitchcock’s films of the forties both because its view of society is more positive and its hero, conversely, “anything but innocent” (Leitch 174).

Acknowledging the critic by name at the beginning of the borrowing is more than simply a courtesy. Consulting critics and acknowledging them properly raises the level of scholarship of your essay. Students who fail to note adequately where they have drawn from their critical reading are falling into habits of plagiarism, and plagiarism is taken very seriously by the School of Language and Media and by the Faculty of Education and Arts (the Faculty plagiarism policy...
5. THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

All assignments presented to the School should include a bibliography. Even if your bibliography includes no more than details of the video you have watched in order to write on a particular film, that information is of use to a marker. It informs the marker which version you have used, and it informs her or him that you have not consulted critical authorities.

You should list all the books and articles you have used in preparing an assignment, even if you have not quoted from them. Exceptions to this are a dictionary (though if you quote a dictionary’s definitions, you should name the dictionary in your essay) and the Bible (though if you quote from the Bible, you should cite book, chapter and verse in your essay).

Books and articles should be arranged alphabetically, by authors’ surnames.

Necessary publication details for a book are author, title, place of publication, publisher, date of publication and page number. Necessary publication details for an article are author, title of article, name of journal, volume number of journal, date of publication and page numbers.

Titles of films, books or periodicals may be either underlined (Citizen Kane, The Hitchcock Reader, Cinema Journal) or italicised (Citizen Kane, The Hitchcock Reader, Cinema Journal). The title of a journal article, a chapter or an essay from a book should be placed inside quotation marks.

An example of a book entry:


An example of an article in a book collection of articles:


An example of an article in a periodical:


An example of a film:

Citizen Kane (Orson Welles, 1941)

6 ESSAY PRESENTATION

Attach a cover sheet (available at the School of Language and Media office). Fasten the pages of your essay together with a single staple in the upper left-hand corner. Do NOT place it in a folder of any kind.

x

Student name:
Course name and code:
Lecturer’s name:
Date due:
Essay topic.

Please word-process or type assignments. Leave a wide left-hand margin for comments. Please double-space assignments, i.e., leave one line blank between each line of text.
A bibliography must be attached to every assignment (see previous section).

Give page numbers for the work(s) quoted. These should be keyed to your bibliography. If your essay is only about one work, or you have introduced the name of the author or critic you are discussing, you can simply enclose a page number in brackets: e.g., (206). If there is any doubt about the author or critic being referred to, include the author or critic’s surname: e.g., (Ellmann 103).

The recommended reference work to consult for further details of academic style is: Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.