

**Creating the Personal Documentary**  
**DC 470-901 Winter Quarter 2014**  
**Wed : 5:45pm – 9:00pm**  
**CDM 708, Loop**  
**D2L**

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I am always very precisely implicated in my films,  
not through narcissism but through honesty in my approach.

*Agnès Varda*

### **COURSE INTRODUCTION:**

This course examines the aesthetic and production of first-person documentary films. The class trains students to articulate their identities and express personal perspectives that reflect issues in their lives. Students use journal writing, video and audio recording, observational techniques, and other research methods to develop or record inner processes and personal self-reflection. Students develop and structure a short, personal documentary and produce a short final film.

### **Course rationale:**

This class is designed to help students identify their personal voices through a variety of techniques, styles and tools of non-traditional documentary filmmaking. Students explore their relationships to their subject matter and express themselves in creative and authentic ways through video. Although the class is process oriented, students are expected to finish a short personal documentary and to develop a proposal for future work.

## Goals and Objectives:

By the end of this course, you should be prepared to:

- **Distinguish** between various approaches to personal documentary filmmaking and the filmmakers' intentions and techniques
- **Explore and analyze** first person documentary filmmaking
- Introduce the personal documentary work of others and **lead** discussion
- **Identify, research and shape** a personal subject into a documentary
- **Outline and demonstrate** how subject, form and voice reflect your personal choices
- **Identify** your personal interests, explore them internally and **execute** them externally through documentary
- **Design a proposal** for a personal documentary emphasizing your approach
- **Create** a short personal documentary to attach with your proposal.

## BOOKS: No required text.

### Recommended:

**The Personal Camera:** Subjective Cinema and the Essay Film; Laura Rascaroli  
ISBN-10: 1906660123

**Directing the Documentary;** Michael Rabiger  
ISBN-10: 0240810899

## Readings on D2L

## GRADING:

### GRADING SCALE

Excellent (exceeds expectations):	A = 100–94	A- = 93–90	
Above Average (meets expectations):	B+ = 89–88	B = 87–83	B- = 82–80
Satisfactory (acceptable level of growth):	C+ = 79–78	C = 77–73	C- = 72–70
Poor (does not meet basis requirements):	D+ = 69–68	D = 67–63	D- = 62–60
Failure (inadequate achievement):	F = 59–0		

## COURSE POLICIES:

In addition to the DePaul University course policies (see student handbook), the following policies apply to this course:

### CONTENT CHANGES

This syllabus may be amended as the course proceeds. You will be notified of all changes via email. As the semester progresses, some items may change at the instructor's discretion, but the overall workload will not. Make sure you pace yourself accordingly and ensure that you check the email listed on D2L.

### STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Each student is responsible for their time management and meeting the expectations in the syllabus. The instructor is not responsible for reminding students of assignment deadlines in class. In the event of an absence it is the student's responsibility to contact

the instructor for details of the homework. If an assignment is listed on the syllabus, you are responsible for completing the assignment on time.

## **DEADLINES**

Late assignments will not be accepted. You will not be eligible for an 'A' in the class unless you turn in all assignments on time.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Students are expected to attend each class and to remain for the duration. Coming 15 minutes late or leaving 15 minutes early constitutes a 'Late' notation. Two 'Late' notes constitute an absence for the student. The overall grade for participation drops one-third after any absence. Three absences for any reason, whether excused or not, may constitute failure for the course.

As long as I am aware of your situation and you take an active role in catching up, absences may be excused and extensions may be granted. Every situation will be handled according to individual circumstance at the instructor's discretion. Absolutely no consideration will be given for those who request special treatment without advanced notice.

**INCOMPLETES** – No incompletes will be given.

## **COMPUTER USE**

Using the computer during class time for any reason other than taking notes will have a negative impact on your participation grade. Phones should be in your bag. If you are texting during class, you are not participating. No computer use during film screenings.

## **ONLINE COURSE EVALUATIONS**

Evaluations are a way for students to provide valuable feedback regarding their instructor and the course. Detailed feedback will enable the instructor to continuously tailor teaching methods and course content to meet the learning goals of the course and the academic needs of the students. They are a requirement of the course and are key to continue to provide you with the highest quality of teaching. The evaluations are anonymous; the instructor and administration do not track who entered what responses. A program is used to check if the student completed the evaluations, but the evaluation is completely separate from the student's identity. Since 100% participation is our goal, students are sent periodic reminders over three weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Students complete the evaluation online in [CampusConnect](#).

## **PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism on assignments or cheating on exams are serious offenses and earn the student a failing grade for the class and can lead to an Academic Integrity Violation. Students are expected to understand what constitutes original research and how to use proper citation methods. All papers are automatically run through anti-plagiarism software turnitin.com.

## **FINAL FILMS & PRESENTATIONS**

Students who are not prepared to present during the regularly scheduled time will receive a failing grade for the final unless they have contacted the instructor in advance to arrange to present early. Students contacting the instructor after the final presentation will not be allowed to make-up the points for any reason.

## **CLASS DISCUSSION**

Student participation in class discussions will be measured in two ways. First, students are highly encouraged to ask questions and offer comments relevant to the day's topic. Participation allows the instructor to "hear" the student's voice when grading papers. Secondly, students will be called upon by the instructor to offer comments related to the reading assignments or the films screened in class. Students must keep up with the reading to participate in class discussion.

## **ATTITUDE**

A professional and academic attitude is expected throughout this course. Measurable examples of non-academic or unprofessional attitude include but are not limited to: talking to others when the instructor is speaking, mocking another's opinion, cell phones ringing, emailing, texting or using the internet whether on a phone or computer. If any issues arise a student may be asked to leave the classroom. I will work with the Dean of Students Office to navigate such student issues.

## **CIVIL DISCOURSE**

DePaul University is a community that thrives on open discourse that challenges students, both intellectually and personally, to be [Socially Responsible Leaders](#). It is the expectation that all dialogue in this course is civil and respectful of the dignity of each student. Any instances of disrespect or hostility can jeopardize a student's ability to be successful in the course. I will partner with the Dean of Students Office to assist in managing such issues.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Plagiarism on assignments or cheating on exams are serious offenses and earn the student a failing grade for the class. Please read the Academic Integrity Policy (AIP) at: <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/handbook/code16.html>. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>.

## **READING ASSIGNMENTS**

The assigned readings offer an opportunity for independent learning that supplements the lectures. Lectures will introduce material that may not be available in the readings or that may be explored further in the readings. The readings will explore concepts not mentioned in class.

## **HANDOUT & ASSIGNMENT COPIES**

Handout and assignment copies are available on [d2l.depaul.edu](http://d2l.depaul.edu)

## **FILM VIEWING**

Students are required to watch the films in class. Leaving early or sleeping through a film will result in an absence. In the event of illness, assignment or in the event that you are looking for entertainment, films are available on Netflix and at the DePaul Library.

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential.

To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at: [csd@depaul.edu](mailto:csd@depaul.edu).

Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd.

Phone number: (312)362-8002

Fax: (312)362-6544 / TTY: (773)325.7296

## **ADDITIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS**

This course includes instructional content delivered via audio and video. If you have any concerns about your ability to access and/or understand this material in its default format, please notify me within the first week of the course so accommodations can be made. Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate reasonable accommodation based on your needs, contact me as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted: The Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD).

## **INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY**

Please email or text if you have a question or concern about the class. During the week, I respond promptly to emails. If you do not hear back from me within 24 hours, it means I did not receive your message so please check the address or phone number and contact me again.

If you are emailing with a question the night before an assignment is due, do not expect an extension on the assignment. No late work will be accepted.

## **Withdrawal and Drop Deadlines Spring Quarter 2014:**

April 11, 2014	Last day to drop classes with no penalty Last day to select pass/fail option
April 12, 2014	Grades of "W" assigned for SQ2013 classes dropped on or after this day
May 16, 2014	Last day to withdraw from SQ2013 classes

ASSIGNMENT	POINTS	DUE
<b>CREATIVE MEDIA PROJECTS</b> (Individual projects)	<b>45%</b>	
Evocative Spaces	10%	Week 4
Diary	15%	Week 7
Final Film	15%	
Rough cut (5%)		Week 9
Fine Cut (10%)		Week 11
<b>PERSONAL DOCUMENTARY PROPOSAL</b>	<b>30%</b>	
Pitch	5%	Week 2
Synopsis and Logline	5%	Week 3
Treatment	5%	Week 6
Background and Research	5%	Week 9
Proposal	10%	
Draft (3%)		Week 8
Final (7%)		Week 10
<b>IN-CLASS WORK (Equal Weight)</b>	<b>15%</b>	
Show and Tell		Week 5
Timeline		Week 3
Journal		Weekly
<b>ATTENDANCE &amp; PARTICIPATION</b>	<b>10%</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Week #1:                    Defining first-person and personal documentary**

TOPIC	Course, Syllabus and Assignments Introductions Modes of Documentary Forms of 'Personal' Documentary Things you will need this quarter
SCREEN	Various Shorts/Clips
ASSIGN	Five one sentence ideas for your personal documentary

**Week #2:                    Ideas / Screening**

DUE	5 Ideas
TOPIC	First Pitches  Writing Assignment – Guidelines Provided
SCREEN	<b>The Gleaners and I: Agnes Varda</b>
ASSIGN	Synopsis and Logline  Video #1

**Week #3:                    Proposals and Treatments**

DUE	Pitch #2 - Synopsis and Logline
TOPIC	Ideas / Development / Process  In-Class Exercise #1 'My mother in three photographs" (guidelines provided)  Writing Proposals / Documentary treatments
SCREEN	<b>Sans Soleil: Chris Marker</b>
ASSIGN	Reminder - Video #1

**Week #4:                    Video #1**

DUE	Evocative Spaces
TOPIC	Memory/ Interviews  Creative Prompt based on A timeline of your life .
SCREEN	<b>Video #1 – Evocative Spaces</b>
ASSIGN	- Timeline (Guidelines on D2L) - Show and Tell

Week #5:

DUE & TOPIC	<b>Show and Tell</b>
ASSIGN	Diary film Guidelines on D2L

Week #6: **Pitch /Screening**

DUE	Treatment
TOPIC	Pitch #3 – Check In  Background / Research
<b>SCREEN</b>	<b>Stories We Tell: Sarah Polley</b>
ASSIGN	Background and Research

Week #7: **Video #2**

DUE	Diary Films
SCREEN	<b>Video #2 – Diary</b>  Creative Exercise (Guidelines Provided)
ASSIGN	Proposal Draft

Week #8:

DUE	Proposal Draft
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TOPIC	Creative Prompt – Guidelines provided
	GUEST
SCREEN	Who is Harry Nilsson?
ASSIGN	Rough Cuts

Week #9:

DUE	Rough Cuts Background and Research
SCREEN	Rough Cut Screenings – Final Film
ASSIGN	Final Proposal / Fine Cut  Schedule Individual Conferences

Week #10:

DUE	FINAL PROPOSAL
TOPIC	Individual Conferences

Week #11: June 11<sup>th</sup> 5:45 – 9:00pm

SCREEN : FINAL FILMS