

DC 471 Documentary Production
Spring Quarter 2018
Tuesday 5:45-9PM CDM 924

COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor: Susanne Suffredin Office: CDM 459
Phone: 312-362-1305 Office Hours: 2-5PM Monday
Email: ssuffre1@depaul.edu (best way to reach me)
Email will be answered within 24 hours; Saturday emails by Monday

Course Overview and Learning Goals

Course Website D2L

Course Overview

This course will explore the documentary filmmaking process by viewing a range of documentary films and discussing them in class. Students will also work in groups of 2 to each create a short subject documentary over the course of the quarter.

Learning Goals:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Verbally pitch a compelling idea
- Critique and assess documentary work-in-progress
- develop skills in conceptualizing, directing and editing a short documentary film.
- understand and incorporate interview techniques, visualizing and shooting observational footage, and construct narratives through the integration of sound and images.
- define their own personal directorial approach to documentary filmmaking, through screening and discussing a variety of documentary films.

- PREREQUISITES: DC 210 and DC 220 or equivalent.

Required Text

Rabiger, Michael. *Directing the Documentary*. Sixth Edition. Boston: Focal Press, 2014.

Required Materials and Equipment Firewire or USB 3.0 Hard Drive and access to adequate software for editing projects.

Grading: Assignment Guidelines and Evaluation Criteria will be posted in D2L

PROJECT	POINTS
Vox Pop	15
Documentary Portrait	
Pitch	5
Pre-production Package	10
Scene #1 – Event Unfolding	10
Scene #2 – Interview or Observation	10
Rough Cut	10
Fine Cut	15
Participation	15
Attendance	10
Total Points	100

A = 100-93 A- = 92-90 B+ = 89-88 B = 87-83 B- = 82-80
C+ = 79-78 C = 77-73 C- = 72-70 D+ = 69-68 D = 67-63 D- = 62-60 F = 59-0.

A indicates excellence (all assignments are graded excellent and submitted on time), B indicates good work, C indicates satisfactory work, D indicates unsatisfactory work, and F is a failure to demonstrate an understanding of course concept

Class 1 3/27 **Intro to class, assignments**

Review Documents posted in D2L
Communication/ Posting Cuts
Documentary today: Skill Sets: your skill sets
Screen: Various Clips
Assign: **Vox Populi – On the street interviews DUE: 4/10**
Two ideas for Documentary PORTRAIT (individual or organization) DUE: 4/3
Reading: Rabiger: Story Elements and Film Grammar Part 2, Ch. 5 pg. 75-93
Capturing Sound, Lighting, Camera Part 4, Ch. 10-12., pg.141-197
Developing and Pitching a Short Documentary Part 3 Ch. 8 and 9, pg.127-136

Class 2 4/3 **Visualizing the Documentary**

Camera and Sound overview
Screen: Cameraperson
Review: Reading
Equipment List
Vox Pop ideas
Present: **Ideas for Portraits: Written ideas DUE: ideas decided on in class**
Assign: Rabiger: Part 7 Chapter 31 Conducting and shooting Interviews
Directing Part 4 Ch. 13, pp. 199-203.

Class 3 4/10 **Developing Story Ideas**

Interviews – preparing and research
Review: Production Checklists (posted in D2L)
Present: **Vox Pop exported file DUE to screen in class**
Introduce: Pre-production Package for Documentary
Reading: Rabiger: You and Film Authorship, The Nature of Documentary,
Documentary History Part 1, Chapters. 1-4, pp. 1-64
Developing Story Ideas Part 3, Chapter 6, pp. 97-117

Class 4 4/17 **Portrait ideas Presentation**

Introduce: Story Structures
Present: **Pre-production package DUE**
provide status updates on final documentary Portrait
Assign: Scene #1 Events Unfolding
Reading: Rabiger: Research Part 3 Ch. 7.

Class 5 4/24 **Doc Production**

Review: Filming
Sensitive to environment
Thinking visually
Good sound/(practice!)
Steady camera
Creating content
Look for what helps tell the story
Reading: Rabiger: Documentary Aesthetics Part 6, Chapters 17-20., pg.257-325

Class 6 5/1 **Structuring a narrative**

SCREEN: **Scene #1: Events Unfolding DUE**
Assign: Scene #2: Interview
Reading: Editing Part 5, Chapters 14 and 15, pp. 211-240.
Review: Reading

Class 7 5/8 Editing – Organizing footage, Transcription and Logging

Introduce: Integrating interview and observational scenes, building a flow
Post Production in Documentary
SCREEN: **Scene#2: Cut Interview DUE**

Class 8 5/15 The first rough assembly

Making the cut coherent and manageable
Length
Assembly to rough cut to fine cut
SCREEN: **Cuts not screened in previous class**

Class 9 5/22 Rough Cut Screening and Critique | Documentary Portrait

Attendance is mandatory. An absence = grade of 'F' for the assignment

Class 10 5/29 Rough Cut Screening and Critique | Documentary Portrait

Attendance is mandatory. An absence = grade of 'F' for the assignment

6/5 FINAL 6-8:15 PM

Final projects – Documentary Portrait. Screen Final Exported cuts
Attendance is mandatory. An absence = grade of 'F' for the class.

Changes to Syllabus

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter.

Depending on time factors and guest artist opportunities, the assignments projected for the term may require slight alteration or rescheduling.

If a change occurs, it will be addressed during class or posted in News in D2L.

Course Policies

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

Attendance – Classes will consist of lecture, screenings, discussion, and creative exercises. **Attendance is mandatory.** An absence is defined as not showing up for class, or showing up 15 minutes or more late. Any absences, late arrivals or early departures will result in a reduction of the attendance/participation grade.

Assignments – Assignments must be completed by the due date as indicated in the syllabus. Late work will not be accepted without prior consent of the instructor. Exported files of projects should have a slate **labeled with title, assignment, crew names and running time.**

Screenings – Film screenings and assignment screening discussions are an integral part of the course participation grade. Selected films will be analyzed for specific conceptual and stylistic choices. We will apply the same standards to the analysis of group projects. Be open to being challenged and honest as there will be differing ideas and points of view expressed. These discussions are important in the development of your ability to collaborate.

Crew Responsibilities – You will form production groups of three at the beginning of the quarter and remain with that group for the duration of the quarter. Each person in the group will rotate through the major creative roles as producer/director, camera operator/shooting sound and editor for each assignment. You are expected to participate in all aspects of the production/post process for each project. Peer feedback will be assessed at the end of each assignment and will be counted toward the participation grade.

Equipment Use Policies – Policies for checking out equipment and reserving the CDM “Stage” are posted on the D2L Course website. A list of equipment used in this class is also provided.

School Policies

Online Instructor Evaluation: 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 two weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation.

Email: Email is the primary means of communication between faculty and students enrolled in this course outside of class time. Students should be sure their email listed under "demographic information" at <http://campusconnect.depaul.edu> is correct.

Academic Integrity Policy: This course will be subject to the academic integrity policy passed by faculty. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>

Plagiarism: The university and school policy on plagiarism can be summarized as follows: Students in this course should be aware of the strong sanctions that can be imposed against someone guilty of plagiarism. If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic F in the course and possible expulsion. The strongest of sanctions will be imposed on anyone who submits as his/her own work any assignment, which has been prepared by someone else. If you have any questions or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials be sure to consult the instructor.

Incomplete: An incomplete grade is given only for an exceptional reason such as a death in the family, a serious illness, etc. Any such reason must be documented. Any incomplete request must be made at least two weeks before the final, and approved by the Dean of the College of Computing and Digital Media. Any consequences resulting from a poor grade for the course will not be considered as valid reasons for such a request.