

Creating the Personal Documentary
DC 370-901 Fall Quarter 2015
Thurs : 5:45pm – 9:00pm
214, 14 E. Jackson, 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
- Demonstrate an understanding of first person documentary filmmaking
- Introduce personal documentary work of others and **lead** discussion
- **Identify, research and shape** a personal subject into a documentary
- **Outline** how subject, form and voice reflect your personal choices
- Discover your personal interests and learn to explore them both internally and externally through non-fiction
- **Draft a proposal** for a personal documentary emphasizing your approach
- **Create** a short personal documentary.

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

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.

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:

September 22, 2015 Last day to drop classes with no penalty
Last day to select pass/fail option

September 23, 2015 Grades of "W" assigned for FA2015 classes dropped on or after this day

October 27, 2015 Last day to withdraw from FA2015 classes

ASSIGNMENT	POINTS	DUE
CREATIVE MEDIA PROJECTS	55%	
Evocative Spaces	10%	Week 5
Diary	15%	Week 7
Final Film	30%	
Rough cut (10%)		Week 10
Fine Cut (20%)		Week 11
PERSONAL DOCUMENTARY PROPOSAL	20%	
5 one-line ideas	P / F	Week 2
Pitch, Synopsis and Logline	5%	Week 3
Treatment	5%	Week 4
Proposal	10%	Week 6
Writing / Presentations (Equal Weight)	15%	
Personal Influences		Week 2
Timeline		Week 3
Show and Tell		Week 4
Writing / Journal		Weekly
ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION	10%	
TOTAL	100%	

Week #1: Defining documentary forms / modes

TOPIC	Course, Syllabus and Assignments Introductions Modes of Documentary Things you will need this quarter – Journals! In Class Writing Exercise
SCREEN	Various Shorts/Clips
ASSIGN	Complete Autobiographical Survey - Guidelines on D2L Five one-sentence ideas for your personal documentary

Week #2: Defining first-person and personal documentary

DUE	5 Ideas (upload to D2L)
TOPIC	Forms of 'Personal' Documentary Writing Exercise
SCREEN	The Gleaners and I: Agnes Varda
ASSIGN	Synopsis and Logline Timeline (Guidelines on D2L)

Week #3: Proposals and Treatments

DUE	Pitch Synopsis and Logline
TOPIC	Ideas / Development / Process In-Class Exercise Writing Proposals / Documentary treatments
SCREEN	Sans Soleil: Chris Marker
ASSIGN	Video #1 – Evocative Spaces (Memory) Show and Tell

Week #4: Screening

DUE & TOPIC	Show and Tell Treatment
SCREEN	Stories We Tell: Sarah Polley
ASSIGN	

Week #5: Video #1

DUE	Evocative Spaces
TOPIC	Memory/ Interviews Writing exercise
SCREEN	Video #1 – Evocative Spaces
ASSIGN	Diary film. Guidelines on D2L

Week #6: Updates

DUE	Proposal
TOPIC	Final Films – Check In, Updates, Feedback Creative Exercise (Guidelines Provided)
ASSIGN	Diary Film

Week #7: Video #2

DUE	Diary Films
SCREEN	Video #2 – Diary

Week #8:

TOPIC	GUEST Framing the narrative / Story and structure
ASSIGN	Schedule Individual Conferences

Week #9:

TOPIC	Individual Conferences
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Week #10:

DUE	Rough Cuts
SCREEN	Rough Cut Screenings – Final Film
ASSIGN	Fine Cut

Week #11:

TOPIC	SCREEN : FINAL FILMS
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