

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course #: DC 351_451-701 Name: Editing The Documentary (16714-16715)

Quarter: Autumn Wed 5:45-9:00 PM

Location: DePaul Center Room C106C

Instructor: Susanne Suffredin Office: CDM 459

Phone: 312-362-1305 Office Hours: Monday 01:00-04:00PM

Email: ssuffre1@depaul.edu

Email will be answered within 24 hours; Saturday emails by Monday



“Don’t worry, in documentary you always miss 99% of everything you think you need. You always miss the best things, but just keep going and when you get back to the editing room you’ll find a way to make it work and you’ll be amazed at how much you do have.”

Barbara Kopple
Harlan County USA



Director Raoul Peck wanted his documentary “I Am Not Your Negro” to be about James Baldwin — and only James Baldwin.

“How do I respect him?” Peck says he asked himself early on, when mapping out his film about the acclaimed African-American writer. “I didn’t want talking heads [interviews] because I didn’t want anybody to be the interpreter. I didn’t want to be an interpreter — I wanted to be a messenger.



Filmmaker Gianfranco Rosi takes a hard empathetic look at reality which contains wonders as well as horrors. He doesn’t bear witness, an often over used and presumptuous idea. He observes with humility and precision. Instead of raising awareness, he cultivates alertness.

About the film Fire At Sea



Reality is a superficial layer and what we should be looking out for is a deep strata of truth. I’ve always been after what I call an ecstatic truth.

Werner Herzog

Course Management System:

D2L

<https://d2l.depaul.edu>**Course Summary:**

Editing the Documentary will expose students to the specialized post production work flow of documentary film. Utilizing a workshop atmosphere in combination with lectures and projects, students will gain an appreciation of the art and craft of documentary film editing.

This course will cover an overview of current documentary trends and styles, explore various workflows to find the story in documentary footage, the ethical role of editor in shaping the stories of real people and events, how to apply the visual language of fiction to documentary film, use of archival media in a contemporary way, how to structure the story scene to scene and where to start and end the story.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understanding the role of the editor in a documentary post-production workflow
- Learn the fundamental story telling skills needed to start, edit and finish a documentary in today's media environment
- Understand the unique relationship between production and post production in documentary
- Understand the unique way that the documentary story is shaped in post-production
- Acquire broad knowledge to create compelling stories by placing them within a social and historical context that informs story content

Required Materials/Equipment:

1 500GB or 1 TB external hard drive with USB3 and/or Thunderbolt ports for storing project data files and media assets

1 USB flash drive for project data file backup

Required Text

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

PROJECT	TOTAL POINTS
#1 Editing Analysis of Doc scene	10
#2 Interview Edit	20
#3 Short Film	55
Part 1 – Paper Edit/First Assembly	10
Part 2 – Interview or Observation Scenes cut	10
Part 3 - Rough Cut	10
Part 4 - Fine Cut	25
Participation	15
Attendance	5
Self and Group Evaluations	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 concepts

Week by Week**Week 1****Course Overview****What is documentary to you?****Brief Overview of documentary film: styles and structures**

Current trends and historical turning points

The evolution of the genre; how technology influenced the way stories were and are told

Steps to setting up your documentary project for post

1. Technology/ editing software/ ongoing problems to solve

2. Project and media Organization

Raw material to project organization

Off-loading Cards/Programs to use

Divinci Resolve

Catalyst Browse

How to Organize raw media

By Day

By Card

Naming conventions/ make sure information relates to original media

Bins should mirror organization on drive

Redundancy/ Back up

3. Creative editorial

Conversations first before cutting

Keep asking what is driving the story in the footage

Be prepared to add/ change the plan at any point along the way

General Rules

The challenge: Idea into a story

Remember good editing starts in production

Give the editor enough elements to build story

Talk before you start

As editor, be prepared/certain and then be flexible

To assign:

Reading: Pg. 79- 83 Pg. 90-94

Assignment #1 Editing Analysis of Doc scene

Week 2

To cover:

Not too tight not too loose/**Working with transcripts and interview****Cutting the life out of something or totally meandering**

Finding the visual and audio rhythm of a character

Keeping reality dramatic

Building out story with additional footage

Helping to determine what that footage could be

To review:

Reading Assignment

To present:

Assignment #1 Editing Analysis of Doc scene

To assign:

Assignment #2 Interview edit

Week 3**The personal and the professional: the unique balance in documentary**

Exploring the ethics of telling someone's story

Discussing the privilege of being let into someone's world

Teasing out a character's unique story line; real life and cinematic life

what stays in and what goes out and why

Where to draw the line

To assign:

Reading: Pg. 211-228 Creating the First Assembly

To present:

Assignment #2 Interview edit/ exported file posted to Box

Week 4	<p>Where is the story?</p> <p>Short is better</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helping to make the tough decisions Find the center of the story Helping to shape the style of the film (Interview driven, verite, animation, combo) Deciding what works best for the story <p>You've got to grab people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People get bored easily (should we care?) People have judgements about documentaries/ what to do about this <p>Types of stories told</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event has happened Event is unfolding Exploration of an idea
To review:	Reading assignment Creating the first Assembly
To assign:	<p>Assignment # 3 Short Film</p> <p>Decide on project to work on</p> <p>Media I provide or your own</p> <p>Reading: Pg. 229-240 Editing for Refinement</p>
Week 5	<p>The creative process in documentary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding the film's pace and length How to get into a scene Identifying the best shot/ what will anchor the scene/ what will drag it down Helping to identify what are the details that build the story, what feels the most true When to abandon large pieces of the story When to leave the story What part of the story are you trying to tell? And why? Are you trying to change an existing perception or create a new one? <p>How to give and receive Creative feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What to do with the information you've received. When to push and when to allow the director to explore an idea Listening: important role as a doc editor
To review:	Reading: Pg. 229-240 Editing for Refinement
To assign:	Pg. 241-253 Editing from Fine Cut to Festival
Week 6	<p>How editing influences production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How character relationship changes from production to post production having distance helps Shaping a scene with a beginning middle and end/ integrating that scene into the larger film Recreating spontaneity <p>Your commitment to the film as an Editor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the work is yours and not yours at the same time
To review:	Pg. 241-253 Editing from Fine Cut to Festival
To Present:	Assignment #3 Paper Edit/ First Assembly
Week 7	<p>What happens when the director becomes a part of the story?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How story structure changes Moral and Ethical questions What gives you the right to tell and be a part of this story? Your role as an editor with these questions Determining the emotional tone of a piece
To assign:	Pg. 471- 502 Advanced Editing
To Present:	scene or scenes rough cut

Week 8 **Using the visual vocabulary of fiction in documentary**
Hoop Dreams
Pacing of verite scenes
Cutting for drama and story
Transitions between scenes, the connective tissue that ties the story together
The addition of music and montage and how it impacts authenticity

To Review: **Pg. 471- 502 Advanced Editing**
To Present: **First assembly of cut**

Week 9 **Using archival in a modern way**
Best of Enemies
Grizzly Man
Working with badly shot footage: how to evaluate and prioritize
Never think of B roll as b roll
making the decision to use certain footage
What feels real, authentic, what feels contrived

To present: **rough cuts**

Week 10 **How to start the film**
Examining a variety of ways to start the story, one of the hardest parts of shaping a film in documentary
Life Itself

To Present: **fine cuts**

FINAL EXAM Final projects due – Documentary Fine Cuts Attendance is mandatory. An absence = grade of ‘F’ for the class. If you are ill, I’ll need a doctor’s note.

Changes to Syllabus

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

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

DePaul CDM Important Dates • Autumn 2017 Quarter

September 13 Last day to add (or swap) classes to AQ2017 schedule

September 19 Last Day to drop classes with no penalty

November 14 End AQ2017 Day & Evening classes

FINAL EXAM DATE: Your exam is on November 15, 2017, from 6:00 PM to 8:15 PM

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, name 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 be 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.

Plagiarism – Plagiarism on assignments or cheating on exams are serious offenses and earn the student a failing grade for the class. This course will be subject to the academic integrity policy passed by faculty. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>