

**Instructor**

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 Office Hours: Mon/Tue 11am – 1:00 pm and by appointment.

**Course Information**

DOC 482 Section 401  
 Class Time: Tuesday 1:30 – 4:45pm  
 Room: 14 E. Jackson, Rm 214

**Course Website**

D2L

**Course Overview**

This course examines the aesthetic and production of personal **and** 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.

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.

**Requirements and Evaluation**

Look at assignment guidelines for detailed breakdown.

| PROJECT                          | TOTAL POINTS |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Creative Media Projects          | 45%          |
| Documentary Proposal             | 20%          |
| Writing & Presentations          | 20%          |
| Attendance & Class Participation | 15%          |
| <b>Total Points</b>              | <b>100%</b>  |

Letter grades will be based on the minimum percentages of total points earned

|    |     |              |
|----|-----|--------------|
| A  | 93% | Excellent    |
| A- | 90% |              |
| B+ | 87% | Very Good    |
| B  | 83% |              |
| B- | 80% | Good         |
| C+ | 77% |              |
| C  | 73% | Satisfactory |
| C- | 70% |              |
| D  | 60% |              |
| F  | 0%  |              |

**Class Format**

Class meetings will involve screenings, discussions, hands-on activities, lectures, critique, and presentations. Students should expect to spend 4 to 8 hours per week on outside of class time on course-related work.

**TEXT:**

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

- **Readings on D2L**

**Recommended Texts**

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

**Required Materials and Equipment**

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

**Withdrawal and Drop Deadlines Fall Quarter:**

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| September 17 | Last day to add classes (11:59pm deadline)                                      |
| September 24 | Last day to drop classes with no penalty<br>Last day to select pass/fail option |
| September 25 | Grades of "W" assigned for classes dropped on or after this day                 |
| October 29   | Last day to withdraw from classes   |



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

| ASSIGNMENT   | POINTS      | DUE        |
|--|-------------|------------|
| <b>CREATIVE MEDIA PROJECTS (Individual or team projects)</b> | <b>45%</b>  |            |
| <b>Diary (individual)</b>                                    | 15%         |            |
| Pitch, Synopsis OR Voiceover                                 | 5%          | Week 2     |
| Fine Cut   | 10%         | Week 4     |
| <b>Final Film (individual)</b>                               | 30%         |            |
| Rough cut (10%)  |             | Week 8 & 9 |
| Fine Cut (15%)   |             | Week 10    |
| <b>PERSONAL DOCUMENTARY PROPOSAL</b>                         | <b>20%</b>  |            |
| Ideas – 3 ideas, 3 sentences                                 | 5%          | Week 3     |
| Pitch, Synopsis and Logline                                  | 5%          | Week 5     |
| Treatment & Proposal   | 10%         | Week 6     |
| <b>WRITING / PRESENTATIONS (Equal points)</b>                | <b>20%</b>  |            |
| Turning Point – Timeline & Survey                            |             | Week 2     |
| Memory / Photograph  |             | Week 3     |
| Rituals  |             | Week 5     |
| Autobiographical Survey                                      |             | By Week 5  |
| <b>ATTENDANCE &amp; PARTICIPATION</b>                        | <b>15%</b>  |            |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>100%</b> |            |

| Week Date    | Activities Topics   | Assignments Due   |
|--------------|---|---|
| 1<br>9/17    | <b>Defining documentary forms / modes</b><br>Introductions - Course, Syllabus and Assignments<br>Modes of Documentary<br>Forms of 'Personal' Documentary<br>Things you will need this quarter<br>In Class Writing Exercise<br><b>Screen: Various Shorts/Clips</b> | <b>Assign:</b> - Theme/Synopsis/VO (Diary Film) Guidelines on D2L<br>- Turning Point Exercise<br>- Journal: Autobiographical Survey (on D2L)<br><b>Reading:</b> - Required: Handouts on D2L<br>Other: Rascaroli Ch1, Ch 5<br><br><b>Listen: Podcast Link</b>  |
| 2<br>9/24    | <b>Defining first-person and personal documentary</b><br>Ideas / Development / Process<br><br><b>Memory and Recollection</b><br>In-Class Writing Exercise<br><br><b>Stories We Tell: Sarah Polley</b>   | <b>Due:</b> - Theme/Synopsis/VO (Diary Film)<br>- Turning Point<br><b>Assign:</b> 3 one sentence ideas for your personal documentary<br>Memory/Photograph (Guidelines on D2L)<br><b>Reading:</b> Required: Handouts on D2L<br>Other: Rascaroli Ch 3<br><b>Listen: Podcast link on D2L</b><br><br><b>Watch: Waltz with Bashir (Ari Folman)</b> |
| 3<br>10/1    | <b>Diary / Notebook Films</b><br>Proposals / Documentary treatments<br>In Class Writing Exercise<br><br><b>Screen: The Gleaners and I: Agnes Varda</b>  | <b>Due:</b> - 3 Ideas for a final personal documentary (Upload to D2L)<br>- Memory/Photograph (Guidelines on D2L)<br><b>Assign:</b> Synopsis Logline (Final Film)<br>- Rituals<br><b>Reading:</b> Handouts on D2L<br>Other: Rascaroli Ch 6<br><b>Watch: Tarnation (Jonathon Caouette)</b><br><b>Sherman's March (Ross McElwee)</b>            |
| 4<br>10/8    | <b>SCREEN: DIARY FILMS</b><br><br>Attendance Required for film screening and panels.<br><br><b>SCREENING:-- Friday, October 11<sup>th</sup> 5:00pm</b><br><b>One Child Nation, Nanfu Wang</b><br><b>(Verité Documentary Conference – Director in person)</b>      | <b>Due:</b> Diary Films<br><b>Assign:</b> - Pitch, Synopsis & logline for Final Film<br>Proposal – Final Film, Due Week 6<br><br><b>Reading:</b> Other: Rascaroli Ch 7<br><br><b>Watch: One Child Nation (Nanfu Wang) Friday, October 11<sup>th</sup> 5:00pm</b>  |
| 5<br>10/15   | <b>Pitch - Synopsis and Logline (Final Film)</b><br><b>Locations and Situations</b><br>Framing the narrative / Story and structure<br>Patterns.<br><br>In Class Writing Exercise<br><b>Screening: Various Shorts</b>  | <b>Due:</b> Synopsis and Logline (Final Film)<br>- Rituals<br><b>Assign:</b> Proposal   Individual Conferences<br>Final Film Rough Cuts due Week 8<br><b>Reading:</b> Handouts on D2L<br>Other: Rascaroli Ch 8<br><b>Watch: Dear Zachary, A Letter To A Son About His Father (Kurt Kuenne)</b>  |
| 6<br>10/22   | <b>Bringing it all together.</b><br><b>Screening: TBD (The Ballad of Ramblin' Jack: Aiyana Elliot)</b>  | <b>Due: Final Film Proposals</b><br><b>Schedule individual conference bw 10/22 – 10/25</b><br><b>Watch: Stevie (Steve James)</b>  |
| 7<br>10/29   | <b>Individual Conferences between 10/22-25</b><br><b>Final Films – Updates, Feedback</b>  | <b>Individual Conferences // WORK ON FINAL FILM</b><br><b>Assign: Rough Cuts</b>  |
| 8<br>11/05   | <b>SCREEN Rough Cuts – Group 1</b>  | <b>Due: Rough Cuts</b><br><b>Assign: Fine Cuts</b>  |
| 9<br>11/12   | <b>SCREEN Rough Cuts – Group 2</b>  |   |
| 10<br>11/19  | <b>Fine Cuts - Everyone</b>   | <b>Due: FINAL FILMS</b><br><b>Schedule Individual Conferences.</b>  |
| 11/<br>19-26 | <b>Individual Conferences</b>   | <b>Due: Updated final films.</b>  |

## **Course Policies and Expectations**

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

### **Attendance**

Students are expected to attend each class and to remain for the duration. Attendance will be taken and is reflected in the Class Participation and Attendance portion of the course grade. Your active participation and engagement in the class is expected and is required to get credit for this portion of the course grade.

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.

### **Excused Absence**

In order to petition for an excused absence, students who miss class due to illness or significant personal circumstances should complete the Absence Notification process through the Dean of Students office. The form can be accessed at <http://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/support-services/academic/Pages/default.aspx>. Students must submit supporting documentation alongside the form. The professor reserves the sole right whether to offer an excused absence and/or academic accommodations for an excused absence.

### **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. Submit your creative work and any required written paperwork online on D2L on the due date. If you would like to play a higher resolution of your project, bring in a hard drive for class screening. If you choose this option you must still submit a version of the film online.

### **Late Assignments**

Completing assignments on time and having them ready for discussion and critique in class is essential for this class. Thus, to encourage accountability, late assignments will not receive credit unless acceptable reasons are documented (sickness, family emergency) and communicated to me within 24 hours of the due date (before, not after).

**Screenings** – Film screening 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.

### **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

### **Class Behavior**

- Food and drink during class is ok. Clean up after yourself.
- Internet surfing and checking email, etc. during class when your attention is expected is disrespectful and unprofessional. I am asking for your cooperation and attention during class time.
- Be a respectful participant by keeping phones in silent mode and do not text in class. If you have a need to be available by phone (sick relative, etc.), please let me know.

Be engaged in class discussions and workshop activities:

- Participate with enthusiasm
- Show genuine effort to cooperate with others
- Show leadership and take initiative in group efforts
- Frequently and eagerly offer your thoughts, perspectives, and responses to instructor/classmates
- Make contributions that reflect excellent preparation (i.e. complete required reading)

Practice professionalism

- Communicate (face-to-face, emails, etc.) with the professor and fellow students in a professional and appropriate manner.
- Use body language (ex., eyes, posture) that shows active listening during instructor/student presentations
- Be careful not to distract others (socializing, sleeping, leaving early or during class, reading unrelated material, doing homework for another class);
- Be respectful towards others.

### **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. The professor will partner with the Dean of Students Office to assist in managing such issues.

**Course Lectures/Reading Assignments:** The assigned readings offer an opportunity for independent learning that supplements the lectures. Lectures will introduce material not available in the readings, and the readings will explore concepts not mentioned in class.

### **Email Policy**

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.

On weekdays, you can expect me to return emails within 24 hours. Expect a delayed response on weekends. In the spirit of practicing professional communication, make an effort to write email messages in a more formal, professional tone (e.g., proper greeting, correct spelling, etc.).

### **Academic Integrity & Plagiarism**

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

### **Syllabus or Content Changes**

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

must keep up with the reading to participate in class discussion.

### **Equipment Use Policies**

Policies for checking out equipment and reserving the CDM “Stage” are posted on the D2L Course website.

### **Incomplete Grades**

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.

### **Visit the Writing Center**

Consider visiting the Writing Center to discuss your written assignments for this course. Writing Center Tutors are specially trained undergraduate and graduate students who can help you at any stage of your writing project. They can help you focus and develop your ideas, review your drafts, and polish your writing, as well as answer questions about grammar, mechanics, style, and citation. You may schedule appointments on an as-needed or weekly basis. In addition to Face-to-Face appointments, the Writing Center also provides written feedback by email and online appointments. Be sure to schedule your appointment with enough time to think about and incorporate the feedback you’ll receive. Bring/upload your assignment handout and/or any other relevant materials to your appointment. To schedule a Face-to-Face, Written Feedback by Email, or Online Appointment, visit [www.depaul.edu/writing](http://www.depaul.edu/writing). You can also call one of our offices: (312) 362-6726 (Loop Office, 1600 Lewis Center) or (773) 325-4272 (LPC Office, 250 McGaw Hall). When possible, the Writing Center accepts walk-in requests, but it’s always a good idea to schedule your appointment ahead of time. You may schedule tutorials on an as-needed basis or as weekly standing appointments up to 3 hours per week. All Writing Center services are free to the DePaul community.

rescheduling.

### **Resources for 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.

**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. Students complete the evaluation online at <https://mycti.cti.depaul.edu/mycti>

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