

Thursdays  
1:30 - 4:45pm  
CDM 00708 (Loop)  
F2F

# DOC 224

DOCUMENTARY PRODUCTION 1

SPRING 2022  
Current as of 03/30/22



Cody Curtis walks on the beach hand-in-hand with her daughter in *How to Die in Oregon*.

## Course Description

This introductory hands-on course introduces and explores a wide variety of documentary styles and techniques.

Through screenings of classic and contemporary films, lecture, and discussion, students learn different styles of documentary storytelling and visualization and apply these to four exercises over the quarter.

Every student will rotate through crew roles and produce, direct, shoot, and record sound.

**PREREQ:** FILM 101 or 102

**Laura Gomez-Mesquita**  
She/Her/Hers

lgomezme@depaul.edu

Please email with any questions or concerns. I work full-time outside of DePaul, so allow at least 24 hours for a reply. Weekend emails (starting Friday after 5pm) will be answered by Monday office hours.

## Office Hours

Mon 11:30am - 1:00pm

On Zoom. You must schedule an appointment via [BlueStar](#) on Campus Connect. If these times don't work, email me for other options.

Appointment only, no drop-ins. You must make an appointment no later than 10am Monday morning.

## Grading

Letter grades will be based on the minimum percentages of total points earned. See below for assignments and grading.

## Learning Outcomes

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

- Pitch a compelling idea.
- Practice conceptualizing, producing, directing and editing short documentary work.
- Experiment with shooting and incorporate interview techniques, observational footage, and sound and images to construct narratives.
- Discuss documentary modes and terms in the context of their own documentary projects and others'.

## Required Text

Introduction to Documentary. Nichols, Bill. ISBN: 9780253026903  
Available online through the library [here](#).

## Required Materials and Equipment

This class requires use of a computer that can handle editing software. [Here](#) is a link to the Laptop Loaner Program if you need assistance.

Appropriate Hard Drive and access to recommended software for editing projects (see below).

Computer failures happen; back up your work and maintain your hardware!

## Academic Deadlines SPRING 2022

Refer to Spring dates for Add/Drop [here](#).

## Class Format

Class meetings will involve lectures, screenings, discussions, pitches, presentations, and critiques.

Slides, readings and additional media will be available on D2L each week.

Students should expect to spend 4 to 6 hours per week outside of class time on course-related work including filming and editing.

## Changes to Syllabus

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter. If a change occurs, it will be thoroughly addressed during class, posted under Announcements in D2L and sent via email.

*“Documentary filmmaking was a way to engage with the world, it was a way to engage visually. I love to look at the frame. I love to look at the world. It was a way to hold a mirror to whatever concerns us as a people, as a society.”*

Mira Nair, *The Laughing Club of India, Children of a Desired Sex, So Far from India*

---

## COVID INFORMATION

### UNIVERSITY:

DePaul University will continue to update the [COVID-19 Updates and Guidance page](#). Please visit that page for the most current information and a list of [university FAQ](#).

## TECHNICAL ISSUES

If you're having any tech issues this quarter, please email [scaavsupport@depaul.edu](mailto:scaavsupport@depaul.edu).

This resource is for general tech support and will serve as a unified point of contact for various issues. This includes any issues with your

This email address will be monitored during the following hours:

Mon - Fri: 8:30am – 8:30pm  
Sat: 10:00am – 6:00pm  
Sun: 12:00pm – 6:00pm

---

## EQUIPMENT

The equipment cage is open and you will have access to equipment. However, the check-in and check-out times will be limited. For more info, visit their [page](#).

You may use any equipment you have. This can include your phone camera, webcam and other prosumer/professional equipment you have access to.

## SOFTWARE

### Adobe Premiere:

This [link](#) contains instructions for you to access Adobe Premiere. Use your [@depaul.edu](#) email address to sign up.

## ASSIGNMENTS

The class assignments have been modified to allow you to create the best work possible, within the context of COVID-19. All assignments are due on Sunday by midnight.

## GROUP PROJECTS

This class incorporates group work in a flexible and safe way. You will have many options and resources to complete your assignments. If you have concerns about the assignments or group dynamics, please reach out to me immediately so we can work towards a resolution.

## THE DEAN OF STUDENTS

**OFFICE (DOS)** helps students in navigating the university, particularly during difficult situations, such as personal, financial, medical, and/or family crises. Absence notifications to faculty, personal or medical administrative withdrawals, and Community Resource Referrals, support students both in and outside of the classroom. DOS is committed to your success as a student. Please visit [DOS](#).



Teacher Janet Mino with her student in *Best Kept Secret*.



Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg works out with her trainer in RBG

**GRADING**

PROJECT	TOTAL POINTS
<b>A Day in the Life / Process</b>	30%
Pre-production	
Fine Cut	
<b>Final Project – Archival/ Interview</b>	40%
Pitch	
Preproduction Package	
Interview	
Rough Cut	
Fine Cut	
<b>Quizzes (D2L)</b>	10%
<b>Attendance &amp; Class Participation</b>	20%
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Scale**

A	94%	Excellent
A-	90%	
B+	87%	Very Good
B	83%	Good
B-	80%	
C+	77%	Satisfactory
C	73%	
C-	70%	Below Expectations
D	60%	
F	0%	

Refer to the assignment guidelines on D2L for detailed breakdown. Letter grades will be based on the minimum percentages of Total points earned. Assignments must be completed by the due date as indicated on the syllabus. Late work will not be accepted without prior consent of the instructor.

**Late Assignments**

Completing assignments on time and being ready for discussion and critique in class is an expectation for this class. Late assignments will not receive credit unless reasons for lateness documented and communicated to me at least 24 hours before the due date, and I accept them. Assignments that are more than 2 weeks late will not be graded.

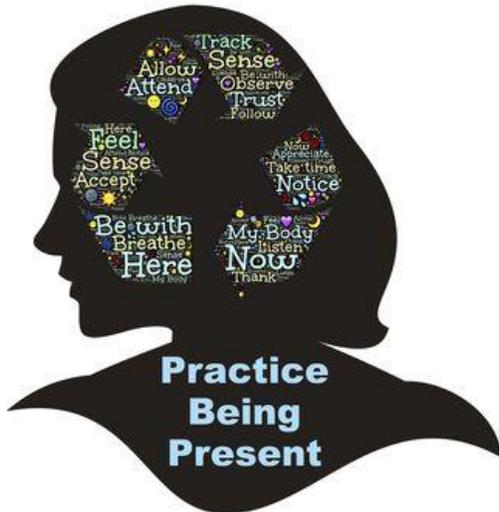
**Incomplete Grades**

An incomplete grade is a special, temporary grade that may be assigned by an instructor when unforeseeable circumstances prevent a student from completing course requirements by the end of the term and when otherwise the student had a record of satisfactory progress in the course. All incomplete requests must be approved by the instructor of the course and a CDM Associate Dean. Only exceptions cases will receive such approval. Information about the Incomplete Grades policy can be found [here](#).

*“You will face situations like this in your life very often,” my father said. “People will give you advice. They will tell you what they think is right and wrong. But every opinion they give is based on their own experience. You need to think independently and critically. Don’t take what others say for the truth.”*

*Nanfu Wang, One Child Nation, Hooligan Sparrow*

## COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS



### Academic Policies

All students are required to manage their class schedules in accordance with the deadlines for enrolling and withdrawing as indicated in the University Academic Calendar. Information on enrollment, withdrawal, grading, and incompletes can be found [here](#).

### Attendance

Students are expected to attend all classes, including any online classes via Zoom. If you're unable to attend due to technical difficulties, please let me know asap.

Your active participation and engagement in class is expected and is required to get credit for this portion of the course grade. This includes online discussions and comments, as well as completing group work on time.

### Presence

Your physical and mental presence is important in class. Many sessions are centered around analyzing films, presenting ideas, and receiving feedback. We rely on each other to ask questions, make observations, and learn together. Electronic devices should be used for note-taking and class work. Avoid rabbit holes and off-task distractions.

### Absences

In order to petition for an excused absence, students who miss class due to illness or personal circumstances should complete the Absence Notification process through the Dean of Students office. The form can be accessed [here](#). Students must submit supporting documentation alongside the form. I reserve the right whether to offer an excused absence.

### Preferred Name and Gender Pronouns

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the quarter so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. Please also note that students may choose to identify within the University community with a preferred first name that differs from

their legal name and may also update their gender. The preferred first name will appear in University related systems and documents except where the use of the legal name is necessitated or required by University business or legal need. For more information and instructions on how to do so, please see the [Student Preferred Name and Gender Policy](#).

### Respect for Diversity and Inclusion at DePaul University as aligned with our Vincentian Values

At DePaul, our mission calls us to explore "what must be done" in order to respect the inherent dignity and identity of each human person. We value diversity because it is part of our history, our traditions and our future. We see diversity as an asset and a strength that adds to the richness of classroom learning.

In my course, I strive to include diverse authors, perspectives and teaching pedagogies. I also encourage open dialogue and spaces for students to express their unique identities and perspectives. I am open to having difficult conversations and I will strive to create an inclusive classroom that values all perspectives. If at any time, the classroom experience does not live up to this expectation, please feel free to contact me via email or during office hours.

College is supposed to challenge assumptions and to provide new and sometimes uncomfortable ways of looking at issues, so if you feel uncomfortable regarding ideas that are presented or discussed by me, guest speakers, or other students, I encourage you to reflect on the nature of your discomfort and contact me to discuss it.

### Class 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 these issues.

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 class topic. Secondly, students will be called upon by the instructor to offer comments related to the reading assignments. Students must keep up with the reading to participate in class discussion.

## Students with Disabilities

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling them to access accommodations and support services to assist with their success. There are two office locations:

- Loop Campus (312) 362-8002
- Lincoln Park Campus (773) 325-1677
- Email: [csd@depaul.edu](mailto:csd@depaul.edu)

Students who register with the Center for Students with Disabilities are also invited to contact Dr. Gregory Moorhead, Director of the Center, privately to discuss how he may assist in facilitating the accommodations to be used in a course. This is best done early in the term. The conversation will remain confidential to the extent possible.

Please see <https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/csd.aspx> for Services and Contact Information.

## 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. Please see <https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching/Pages/online-teaching-evaluations.aspx> for additional information.

---

## 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.

To schedule a Written Feedback by Email, or Online Appointment, visit <http://www.depaul.edu/writing>.

You can also call the 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.

## Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. All students are expected to abide by the University's Academic Integrity Policy which prohibits cheating and other misconduct in student coursework. Publicly sharing or posting online any prior or current materials from this course (including exam questions or answers), is considered to be providing unauthorized assistance prohibited by the policy. Both students who share/post and students who access or use such materials are considered to be cheating under the Policy and will be subject to sanctions for violations of Academic Integrity.

More information can be found at <https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching/academic-integrity/Pages/default.aspx>.

*Posting work on online sites, such as Hero*

All students are expected to abide by the University's Academic Integrity Policy which prohibits cheating and other misconduct in student coursework. Publicly sharing or posting online any prior or current materials from this course (including exam questions or answers), is considered to be providing unauthorized assistance prohibited by the policy. Both students who share/post and students who access or use such materials are considered to be cheating under the Policy and will be subject to sanctions for violations of Academic Integrity.

---

*Narrative justice demands that those closest to the problem define that problem. This necessarily means a rearrangement of who stands behind the camera, but also requires tools to advance responsible, accountable filmmaking no matter the filmmaker.*

**Sonya Childress (Color Congress) & Natalie Bullock Brown (StoryShift, *Hazing*)**

WK	Topics / Activities – In Class	Readings and Screenings	Assignments ( <i>subject to change, check D2L</i> )
1	<p><b><u>DEFINING DOCUMENTARY</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intro to class, assignments, and expectations</li> <li>- Overview: D2L, Zoom Office Hours</li> <li>- Communication / Posting Projects</li> <li>- Screen / Analyze: Short docs</li> <li>- Personal Values Intro</li> </ul>	<p><b>READ: Chapter 1</b> “How Can We Define Documentary Film?”</p> <p><b>WATCH: <a href="#">Parts and Labor</a></b> Prep one discussion question or topic</p> <p><b>Due: Next Class</b></p>	<p>Assign: <a href="#">Survey</a> Self Portrait:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not show your face</li> <li>• True + Only You</li> <li>• Visual + Audio</li> <li>• 1 hour or less to make</li> </ul> <p><b>Due: Wed 4/6 @ 12pm</b></p>
2	<p><b><u>DOCUMENTARY MODES</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Doc Modes Overview</li> <li>- Screen / Analyze: Short docs</li> <li>- Discuss Day in the Life assignment</li> <li>- Presentation from The Production Office (TBC)</li> <li>- Discuss ideas with group, decide roles</li> </ul>	<p><b>READ: Chapter 6</b> “How Can We Differentiate Among Documentary Models and Modes? What are Poetic, Expository, and Reflexive Modes?”</p> <p><b>WATCH: <a href="#">Ghost Bikes</a></b> Think about: which mode of doc is this? What stays with you?</p> <p><b>Due: Next Class</b></p>	<p>Assign: Day in Life Pre-Production Package + Secure Access</p> <p><b>Due: Wed 4/13 @ 12pm</b></p>
3	<p><b><u>DOCUMENTARY MODES (CONT.)</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Storytelling</li> <li>- Elements</li> <li>- Screen / Analyze: Short docs</li> <li>- Visualizing the Documentary</li> <li>- Preparing and Research</li> <li>- Group work: DITL Production package</li> </ul>	<p><b>READ: Chapter 7</b> “How Can We Describe the Observational, Participatory, and Performative Modes?”</p> <p><b>WATCH: <a href="#">Mother’s Day</a></b> Think about: which mode of doc is this? What stays with you?</p>	<p>Assign: Day in Life Filming</p>
4	<p><b><u>DOCUMENTARY ETHICS</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Subjects, or Participants</li> <li>- Ethics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Power</li> <li>• Representation</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Community Agreement for pitches</li> </ul>	<p><b>READ: Chapter 2</b> “Why Are Ethical Issues Central to Documentary Filmmaking?”</p> <p><b>WATCH: <a href="#">Firsthand Segregation</a></b> (choose one video)</p> <p><b>Due: Next Class</b></p>	<p>Assign: Day in the Life Editing</p> <p><b>Due: In class next week</b></p>
5	<p><b><u>PERFECTING THE FEEDBACK</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review Community Agreement</li> <li>- Best Practices of Critique</li> </ul> <p><b><u>SCREEN DAY IN LIFE / PROCESS</u></b></p>	<p><b>READ: <a href="#">The Documentary Future: A Call for Accountability</a></b></p> <p><b>WATCH: <a href="#">Single Mother, Only Daughter</a></b></p>	<p>Assign: ONLINE QUIZ: Modes &amp; Ethics   D2L</p> <p>Idea Development for Project 2: Archival + Interview</p> <p><b>Due: Wed 4/27 @ 12pm</b></p>
6	<p><b><u>PERFECTING THE PITCH + INTERVIEWS</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What makes a good pitch?</li> <li>- Work on Pitches in Small Groups</li> <li>- Groups Pitch to the Class for feedback</li> <li>- Interview Overview</li> <li>- Peer feedback</li> </ul>	<p><b>READ: Chapter 10</b> “I Want to Make a Documentary, Where Do I Start?”</p> <p><b>WATCH: <a href="#">A Concerto is a Conversation</a></b></p> <p><b>Due: Next Class</b></p>	<p>Assign: Archival + Interview Pre-Production Packages</p> <p><b>Due: In class next week</b></p>

7	<b>ARCHIVAL + INTERVIEW</b> - Group Work Time: Final Project pre-production - Professor + Group Meetings	<b>READ: Chapter 3</b> “What Gives Documentaries a Voice of Their Own?”  <b>WATCH: <a href="#">My Dead Dad’s Porno Tapes</a></b>  <b>Due: Next Class</b>	Assign: Interview Production  <b>Due: Wed 5/11 @ 12pm</b>
8	<b>STRUCTURING A NARRATIVE</b> - Structuring a narrative - Analyze / Break down structure of shortdoc - Organizing footage, Transcription and Logging	<b>READ: Chapter 4</b> “What Makes Documentary Filmmaking Engaging and Persuasive?”  <b>Due: Next Class</b>	Assign: Archival + Interview Rough Cut  <b>Due: In class next week</b>
9	<b>POST-PRODUCTION</b> <b>SCREEN: Interview / Rough Cuts</b> - Assembly to rough cut to fine cut - Work on final film.	<b>READ: Chapter 8</b> “How Have Documentaries Addressed Social and Political Issues?”	Assign: Archival + Interview Fine Cut  <b>Due: In class next week</b>
10	<b>SCREEN: Archival Fine Cut</b> Attendance is <u>mandatory</u> . An absence = a grade of ‘F’.		Assign: Archival + Interview Final Cut  <b>Due: Wed 6/1 @ 12pm</b>
11	No class.		