

**FILM STUDIES 3312F: Community Service Learning**

Wednesday 9:30-12:30pm, Arts and Humanities Building Room 3B02

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Office Hours: Wednesday 1-2:30pm

**Course Description:**

The study of documentary and documentary-making will be approached through a community-based, intersectional lens. In groups of two, students will select a London not-for-profit, charitable organization from the list provided on the first day and will then produce a short documentary on this community partner. Through an approximate two-hour a week commitment (for up to eight weeks) students will immerse themselves in the everyday happenings of their organization. During this learning process they will evaluate the narrative potential of their experiences for their documentary (not simply just re-tell the organization's mission or mandate) and look to represent stories that are provocative or challenging. Through this partnering, the students will learn about community engagement and collaboration while they develop their project. In class, they will read texts that range from theoretical to technical that will support both the way they think about documentary and community, as well as informing the way they approach making. Furthermore, students will participate in discussions and critiques that address their own work, historical and contemporary documentaries as well as the readings in order to situate their own research and filmmaking style within the lineage of documentary creation. Support material will be obtained from diverse sources and represent marginal practices with an emphasis on queer, feminist and individuals from diverse socio-economic, racial and ethnic backgrounds. The classroom will be a creative and collaborative environment where students will share their own works and experiences during different stages of production as they develop and hone their own filmmaking style.

**Course Objectives:**

Through class participation and community partnering, students will gain a better understanding of the importance of storytelling, collaboration and community through this unique learning experience. During the course, students will acquire the theoretical background and technical skills that are necessary for the creation of a short documentary video. In-class learning and fieldwork will allow them to identify and develop narratives with interesting on-screen potential as they attain a better historical understanding of community-based documentary filmmaking. Students will develop a critical language to discuss their work (and others') and provide feedback to their fellow students during presentations and critiques. They will apply the knowledge they acquire from the support material and feedback from critiques and will successfully integrate this into their final projects. Ultimately, students will leave with a better understanding of real-life documentary production and the skills needed to create compelling community-based moving image works.

## Weekly Schedule:

### **Week 1: September 16, 2015**

Community Engaged Learning Introduction by Anne-Marie Fischer  
Technical Services Lending Policy Introduction by Alyssa Evetts  
Course Introduction and Final Project Overview  
Organization Introduction and Selection  
Previous Examples of CSL Documentaries

### **Week 2: September 23, 2015**

LECTURE: Documenting Communities: Representing Reality, Ethics and Empathy

READING: Deirdre Boyle, *From Portapak to Camcorder: A Brief History of Guerilla Television* (67-79)

Broderick Fox, *Reimagining Documentary* (1-19)

VIEWING: Mike Hoolboom, *Mark*, 2009, 70 min.

David LaChapelle, *RIZE*, 2005, 86 min.

ASSIGNMENT INTRODUCTION: Interview Questions (due September 30, 2015)

READING: Sheila Curran Bernard, *Interviews* (183-186)

Michael Rabiger, selections from *Interviewing* (329-347)

Paula J. Massood, *Spike Lee's 4 Little Girls: The Politics of the Documentary Interview* (475-493)

VIEWING: Spike Lee, *4 Little Girls*, 1997, 102 min.

Kami Chisholm, *A Conversation with Elizabeth's Father*, 2004, 7 min.

ASSIGNMENT INTRODUCTION: Treatment (due October 14, 2015)

READING: Sheila Curran Bernard, selections from *Outlines, Treatments and Scripts* (149-157)

Michael Rabiger, selections from *Initial Research and Draft Proposal* (207-224)

### **Week 3: September 30, 2015**

WORKSHOP: Cameras, Lighting and Audio Recording for Documentary

READING: Michael Rabiger, selections from *Camera Equipment and Shooting Procedure* (287-328)

Sheila Curran Bernard, selections from *Shooting* (174-176)

Leipzig, Weiss and Goldman, selections from *Image and Sound*, (149-247)

Broderick Fox, selections from *Capturing Reality: Production Strategies* (128-154)

LECTURE: Introduction to Storytelling and Narrative

READING: Bill Nichols, *Telling Stories with Evidence and Arguments* (107-133)

Broderick Fox, *Crafting Your Story* (49-74)

VIEWING: Hank Rogerson, *Shakespeare Behind Bars*, 2005, 93 min.

ASSIGNMENT INTRODUCTION: Rushes (due October 28, 2015)

DUE: Interview Questions

**Week 4: October 7, 2015**

LECTURE: Documentary Modes

READING: Bill Nichols, *Documentary Modes of Representation* (107-133)

Barry Keith Grant, *Ethnography in the First Person: Frederick Wiseman's Titicut Follies* (253-270)

VIEWING: Frederick Wiseman, *Titicut Follies*, 1967, 84 min.

Albert and David Maysles, *Grey Gardens*, 1975, 95 min.

LECTURE: Constructing Meaning Through Images

READING: Michael Channan, *Rules of Evidence* (37-57)

**Week 5: October 14, 2015**

DUE: Treatment Presentation

**Week 6: October 21, 2015**

LECTURE: Documenting Diverse Communities I - Against Ethnography

READING: Brian McIlroy, *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* (172-181)

Sheila Petty, *Silence and Its Opposite: Expressions of Race in Tongues Tied* (424-437)

VIEWING: Alanis Obomsawin, *Kanehsatake*, 1993, 119 min.

Marlon Riggs, *Tongues Untied*, 1989, 55 min.

Rithy Panh, *The Missing Picture*, 2013, 93 min.

**Week 7: October 28, 2015**

DUE: Rushes

WORKSHOP: Postproduction

READING: Broderick Fox, selections from *Shaping Reality: The Postproduction Process* (155-183)

Sheila Curran Bernard, selections from *Editing* (187-204)

Leipzig, Weiss and Goldman, selections from *Production Glue* (251-296)

VIEWING: Trinh Minh-Ha, *Reassemblage*, 1983, 40 min.

ASSIGNMENT INTRODUCTION: Draft 1 (due November 18, 2015)

**Week 8: November 4, 2015**

WORK PERIOD: Draft 1

VIEWING: John Greyson, *Fig Trees*, 2009, 104 min.

**Week 9: November 11, 2015**

LECTURE: Documenting Diverse Communities II - Queering Documentary

READING: Caryl Flinn, *Containing Fire: Performance in Paris is Burning* (438-455)

Lucas Hilderbrand, *One: Got To Be Real (The Film)*, (89-118)

Thomas Waugh, *Forbidden Love, or Queering the National Film Board of Canada* (146-179)

VIEWING: Jennie Livingston, *Paris is Burning*, 1991, 78 min.

Chelsea McMullan, *My Prairie Home*, 2014, 120 min.

**Week 10: November 18, 2015**

DUE: Draft 1

VIEWING: Spike Lee, *When the Levees Broke 1 & 2*, 2006, 128 min.

**Week 11: November 25, 2015**

LECTURE: Approaching Community Through a Feminist Perspective

READING: Elizabeth Cowie, *Documentary Desire: Seeing for Ourselves and Identifying in Reality* (86-117)

Virginia Bonner, *The Gleaners and "Us": The Radical Modesty of Agnès Varda's Les glaneurs et la glaneuse* (494-506)

VIEWING: Janis Cole and Holly Dale, *Hookers on Davie*, 1984, 88 min.

Agnès Varda, *The Gleaners and I*, 2000, 82 min.

**Week 12: December 2, 2015**

WORK PERIOD: Final Project

**Week 13: December 9, 2015**

WORK PERIOD: Final Project

DUE: Final Project

Public Screening of Final Project will be held during the last week of class. Date TBA.

## Assignments:

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

10% of final mark

Due: .pdf to be sent by September 30, 2015 by 8:59 AM – submitted via e-mail

After the initial meeting with your community partner, you will research and submit a list of 10 interview questions that will be used to guide your production. These questions will later be posed towards various individuals involved within the organization. With each question, remember to include the individual's name and title/relationship to the organization in the document. During production the interviews can be conducted on camera, as audio recordings or in text depending on the situation. Refer to the articles *Interviews* by Sheila Curran Bernard, *Interviewing* by Michael Rabiger and *Spike Lee's 4 Little Girls: The Politics of the Documentary Interview* by Paula J. Massood to support the generation of questions as well as interview tactics. Final questions will be presented in class during Treatment Presentation.

Research /5

In-depth, provocative and narrative potential /5

### TREATMENT PRESENTATION

20% of final mark

Due: Presentation to be done on October 14, 2015 and final files (.mov, .jpg, .wav, .pdf, .ppt) sent by 8:59 AM – submitted via DropBox

For this 15-20 minute presentation you will present your plan for your final documentary. This presentation must include an introduction to the organization as well as the individuals and their roles within the organization that will be in your video, your initial interview questions and your plan for the focus and narrative of your production. Refer to the technical readings *Outlines, Treatments and Scripts* by Sheila Curran Bernard and *Initial Research and Draft Proposal* by Michael Rabiger for assistance. For the presentation, include any support material you have collected during your research or any initial recordings to help support your treatment. You should include stylistic influences from other documentaries. Also, give an introduction to the division of labour between you and your partner in terms of production tasks and your production plan. Finally, identify and present your approach to various challenges you may face through the process of creation or with the subject matter (this can relate to technical issues, subjects or subject matter). The presentation will be followed by a question and answer period.

Research /5

Production plan /5

Stylistic influences /5

## Presentation and Discussion Skills /5

### RUSHES

15% of final mark

Due: Presentation to be done on October 28, 2015 and .mov files sent by 8:59 AM – submitted via DropBox

For this project you will present your unedited, initial recordings for your final production. Select (approximately) five minutes of video – this can be a selection of your interviews or other footage - that you believe was successful. You will also present (approximately) five minutes of video you found unsuccessful. You will discuss your style and approach to storytelling and how these sections will fit into your final project. You will also discuss the reasons that you will not use the footage you had challenges with recording. The presentation will be followed by a question and answer period.

Technical Skills/5

Presentation and Discussion Skills/10

### DRAFT 1

10% of final mark

Due: Presentation to be done on November 18, 2015 and .mov file sent by 8:59 AM – submitted via DropBox

Edit the first version of your final project and present it to class. This project will not be graded as if it is finished, but you should be further along in your production than a rough cut. In this work you should introduce the audience to your narrative arc, focus and “characters” that will be present in your final work.

Style /5

Narrative construction and flow /5

### FINAL DOCUMENTARY

30% of final mark

Due: .mov file to be sent by December 9, 2015 at 11:59 PM – submitted via DropBox

This final project will be the culmination of your work this semester. There will be no specific time length requirement for your video but the final project should be no shorter than five minutes and should not exceed fifteen minutes. Your video should be focused on your organization, but should not merely re-present their mandate. Use your creative documentarian skills to develop a compelling narrative as you conduct interviews and research with the individual’s involved. Marking will reflect your success in developing and presenting your story through narrative

composition and arc as well as editing and sound design. A strong and individual documentary style should be present in your final work in addition to a compelling and provocative story.

Stylistic /10  
Technical proficiency /10  
Overall quality and presentation /10

#### ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

15% of final mark

Class attendance /5  
Participation in discussions and critiques /10

#### **Aspects to be considered when reviewing projects:**

##### RESEARCH:

Factual  
Works within organization's mandate/mission  
In depth  
Reflects on readings and works shown

##### NARRATIVE:

Perspective  
Provocative  
Focused  
Content

##### STYLISTIC:

Mise-en-scene or composition  
Sound design and music  
Editing style  
Transitions

##### TECHNICAL:

Lighting  
Video recording / editing  
Sound recording / editing  
Titles

#### OVERALL QUALITY, PROFESSIONALISM, INTEGRATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ABOVE TO CONVEY STORY

## **Grading Criteria:**

### **A+ (90-100)**

Exemplary work

- Student far surpasses assignment expectations
- Student displays an extraordinary level of innovation and creativity
- Student exceeds typical comprehension of class material and can discuss it and apply knowledge easily to class discussions, projects and beyond

### **A (80-89)**

Superior work

- Student exceeds assignment expectations
- Student displays a high level of innovation and creativity
- Student shows great comprehension of class material and can discuss it and apply knowledge easily to class discussions and projects

### **B (70 to 79)**

Good work

- Student competently meets assignment expectations
- Student displays a fair level of innovation and creativity
- Student shows reasonable comprehension of class material and can discuss it and apply knowledge to class discussions and projects

### **C (60 to 69)**

Satisfactory work

- Student meets assignment expectations
- Student displays an acceptable level of innovation and creativity
- Student shows comprehension of class material and can discuss it and apply some knowledge to class discussions and projects

### **D (50 to 59)**

Acceptable work

- Student minimally meets assignment expectations
- Student displays a passable level of innovation and creativity
- Student shows basic comprehension of class material and can sometimes discuss it and can barely apply knowledge to class discussions and projects

### **F (49 and down)**

Unacceptable work

- Student does not meet assignment expectations
- Student does not display innovation and creativity
- Student does not comprehend class material and cannot discuss it or apply knowledge to class discussions and projects



## **Senate Regulations:**

**1. Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a major academic offence. Students must write their essays in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage, from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. [www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

**2. Plagiarism Checking:** If you plan to use Plagiarism checking software in your course, you must include the following passage on your syllabus: All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between the University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

**3. Prerequisites:** Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

**4. UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness:** Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and or assignments must apply to their Academic Counseling Office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

Please go to the following site for information on the university Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness:

[www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf)

For information on the examination services provided by the Student Development Centre, please visit [www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd)

**5. Mental Health:** Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/>

**6. Complaints:** If students have a complaint concerning a course in which they are enrolled, they must discuss the matter with the instructor of the course. If students are still not satisfied, they should then take the complaint to the Film Studies Office, University College, Room 80. These regulations are in place because a failure to follow these procedures creates the potential for injustices of various kinds affecting either the instructor or the students themselves, or both parties. Concerns should not be allowed to fester but should be raised with the instructor in a timely manner, so that they can be addressed in time to make a difference to the course.

**Course and programme aim (in accordance with OCAV requirements)**

1. Understanding, capacity for argument, judgement and analysis will be fostered by presentations and assignments with formative comment, and by in-class small-group and whole-class discussion.
2. Communication skills will be imparted through in-class discussion and credit given for frequency and quality of contributions, and by essays and other assignments marked in accordance with a grading scale given to the students and including benchmarks for the expectations associated with each grade, from A+ to F.
3. Awareness of the limits of knowledge will be enhanced by exploring the legitimate differences of opinion and methodology within the field, and by requiring students to negotiate the formulation of their own opinions in-class with the terms and knowledge brought to that discussion by other students and the instructor.
4. The ability to argue and decide on complex issues will be fostered by assignments and in-class discussions; that to manage time, by the need to prepare properly for class and to deliver assignments in a timely manner; and that for academic responsibility, by the need to source assignments accurately.