

COURSE CONTENT

Course Code	DF5001 (DF3002)
Course Title	DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING
Pre-requisites	NIL
No of AUs	3
Contact Hours	39 hours

Course Aims

This is an introductory-level course combines the theory and practice of documentary filmmaking. You will learn about the history of documentary as a distinct aspect of film practice, and the various forms and types of documentary with key examples of films and filmmakers. You will then apply this knowledge in the ideation and production of a documentary project, which will allow you to practice and develop essential practical and conceptual skills. This learning will form the foundation for further, more advanced studies and projects in the field of documentary.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Describe the history of documentary as a medium, using key examples of films and filmmakers.
2. Identify and describe ethical precepts, as well as aesthetic and intellectual approaches to the documentary form.
3. Apply your knowledge of documentary filmmaking, in order to make your own documentary.
4. Present and develop concepts and ideas for documentary material.
5. Collaborate with documentary team members and effectively participate in class discussions and critiques.

Course Content

Consisting of a series of lectures, film viewings and workshops, Documentary Filmmaking explores the different genres and practices of the cinematic non-fiction film form. The course covers a brief history and theory of the documentary as political propaganda, investigative essay, personal journal, and cinema verite observation, through the study of documentary auteurs. You will develop an understanding of the ethical precepts, as well as an appreciation of the aesthetics and intellectual rigour of the documentary form.

Through practice, you will be exposed to the fundamentals of documentary filmmaking. The course seeks to develop your ability to identify, conceptualise and research a topic, negotiate access to characters or events, manage a production through efficient budgeting and scheduling, and create a short non-fiction cinematic narrative with coherent artistic vision and intellectual purpose.

Assessment will take the form of:

Documentary Film project

Working in groups of 2, teams will write, shoot, direct and edit a video documentary. You may shoot no more than 60 minutes of video per group and the finished films should be 4-6 minutes long, complete with titles and credits. Includes oral pitches. The films are to be submitted as self-contained MOV files.

Continuous Assessment

Continuous assessment components include both written and studio-based exercises.

Assessment (includes both continuous and summative assessment)

Component	ILO Tested	Programme LO	Weighting	Team/ Individual
Continuous Assessment Written work Studio exercises	1,2,5		30	Individual
Final Project: Short Documentary Production <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-production (Concepts, developing material, preparation) 15% • Production (Realisation, editing, presentation of final work) 35% 	2,3,4,5	--	50	Team
Continuous Assessment: Participation	4,5	--	20	Individual
Total			100%	

Reading and References

Rabiger, M. *Directing the Documentary 5th edition*, Focal Press 2009
 Renov, Michael *The Subject of Documentary*, University of Minnesota Press 2004
 Barnouw, E. *A history of the non-fiction film*, Oxford University Press 1993
 Aufderheide, P. *Documentary Film*, Oxford University Press 2007
 Nichols, Bill *Representing Reality: Issue and Concepts in Documentary*, Indiana University Press 1992

Course Policies and Student Responsibilities

(1) General

You are expected to complete all assigned readings, activities, assignments, attend all classes punctually and complete all scheduled assignments by due dates. You are expected to take

responsibility to follow up with assignments and course related announcements. You are expected to participate in all project critiques, class discussions and activities.

(2) Punctuality

You are expected to be punctual for all classes. If you are more than 30 minutes late, you will be deemed as absent and will not be able to sign on the attendance register.

(3) Absenteeism

In-class activities make up a significant portion of your course grade. Absence from class without a valid reason will affect your participation grade. Valid reasons include falling sick supported by a medical certificate and participation in NTU's approved activities supported by an excuse letter from the relevant bodies. There will be no make-up opportunities for in-class activities.

(4) Inappropriate and offensive material

You will be exposed to aesthetic, cultural, political, and theoretical expressions that may be contrary to your own set of beliefs. I encourage you to keep an open mind and a healthy willingness to hear out the positions in question.

(5) Students with disabilities

I would like to hear from anyone who has a disability which may require some modification of seating, testing or other class requirements so that appropriate arrangements may be made. Please see me after class or during my office hours.

(6) Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs whenever you use someone else's ideas or words as your own. If you copy materials from any source – published or unpublished – and do not properly use quotation marks and cite your source, that is plagiarism. If you use ideas from a source or paraphrase it closely without acknowledgement, that is plagiarism. If you present another student's paper as your own, that is plagiarism. Penalties for plagiarism include academic probation, suspension, and expulsion from the university. If you decide to plagiarize, you will fail not only the assignment, but also the course, and face disciplinary action before the university.

Academic Integrity

Good academic work depends on honesty and ethical behaviour. The quality of your work as a student relies on adhering to the principles of academic integrity and to the NTU Honour Code, a set of values shared by the whole university community. Truth, Trust and Justice are at the core of NTU's shared values.

As a student, it is important that you recognize your responsibilities in understanding and applying the principles of academic integrity in all the work you do at NTU. Not knowing what is involved in maintaining academic integrity does not excuse academic dishonesty. You need to actively equip yourself with strategies to avoid all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, academic fraud, collusion and cheating. If you are uncertain of the definitions of any of these terms, you should go to the [academic integrity website](#) for more information. Consult your instructor(s) if you need any clarification about the requirements of academic integrity in the course.

Planned Weekly Schedule*

*Subject to adjustment by instructor according to the teaching situation, students' progress, public holidays and unforeseeable circumstances. A revised schedule will be issued to students at the start of the semester.

Week	Topic	Course LO	Readings/ Activities
1	<p>Introduction to Key Concepts in Documentary Film I.</p> <p>How reality is represented and constructed in filmmaking will be explored, by discussing various forms of that genre: Direct Cinema, Performative Documentary, Hybrid Film, and Essay Film</p>	1,4,5	<p>Assignment:</p> <p>Developing a concept for your own film, present and group discussion</p>
2	<p>Introduction to Key Concepts in Documentary Film II.</p> <p>Different concepts and methods are to be introduced Direct Cinema, Performative Documentary, Hybrid Film, and Essay Film.</p>	1,4,5	<p>Assignment:</p> <p>Developing a concept for your own film, present group discussion</p>
3	<p>Introduction to the technical possibilities for making a documentary film.</p> <p>Testing of different cameras and audio devices and editing short sequences. Discussing the role of sound in Documentary film.</p>	2,3,5	<p>Assignment:</p> <p>Practicing Documentary Filmmaking: Take 2 Minutes film about 'Home', using found footage, newspaper, photos, home videos</p>
4	<p>Documentary Genealogy: Workers Leaving the Factory.</p> <p>Since the beginning of cinema, there has always been need to manipulate reality in order to create a narrative. Discussing the impact of the first films produced by The Lumière Brothers, and its contemporary interpretations, such as Harun Farocki.</p>	1,2,3,5	<p>Assignment:</p> <p>Reading Hito Steyerl, In Defense of the Poor Image</p> <p>Practicing Documentary Filmmaking: Take a 2 minutes observational film related to your topic.</p>
5	<p>Performing Documentary</p> <p>Documentary's claim over the real and manipulations to create a narrative, and introduce Grierson's Documentary Movements, the concept of creative treatment of actuality, Direct Cinema and</p>	1,2,3,5	<p>Assignment:</p> <p>Practicing Documentary Filmmaking: Create 2 minutes of a reenactment.</p>

	Observational Film and Robert Flaherty, 'Nanook of the North'.		
6	<p>The Kino-eye.</p> <p>Abstract Cinematic truth created through the camera and montage techniques. 'Man with a Movie Camera'. Dziga Vertov and Kino-Pravda.</p>	1,2,3,4,5	<p>Assignment:</p> <p>Developing and writing concepts for your own documentary. Pitch your film. Reading Dziga Vertov's Manifesto</p>
7	<p>Films on Cities.</p> <p>Discussing the nature of documentary and the significance of socio-political domain of everyday life through spatial practice and psycho-geography. Ruth Beckermann 'Homemade', Chantal Ackerman 'Notes from Home'</p>	1,2,3,4,5	<p>Assignment: Start shooting for your own documentary.</p> <p>Reading: Michel de Certeau, 'Walking the City,' in: <i>The Practice of Everyday Life</i>. Steve Rendall. Berkely, LA: University of California Press, 1984, pp.91-130</p>
8	<p>Films on Singapore.</p> <p>How is Singapore represented in Documentary Filmmaking? Discussing and watching film excerpts of Tan Pin Pin and The making of 'Shirkers'.</p>	1,2,3,5	<p>Assignment: Shooting for your own documentary.</p> <p>Watching Tan Pin Pins "In time to come" (2017)</p>
9	<p>Narration in documentary: Fact, Fiction and Performance</p> <p>How to use voice and voice over, and the problems of talking heads. Werner Herzog 'The Blue Yonder'. Jean Rouch 'The Human Pyramid'</p>	1,2,3,5	<p>Assignment:</p> <p>Watch Jean Rouch 'The Human Pyramid' and write about the narrative concept.</p> <p>Shooting/editing for your documentary film</p>
10	<p>Narration in documentary: The Essay Film</p> <p>Narrations create a dialectic of seeing in Essay Film. Chris Marker, Agnes Varda and contemporary filmmakers</p>	1,2,3,5	<p>Assignment:</p> <p>Shooting/editing for your documentary film</p>
11	<p>Narration in documentary III. Reflexivity in Cinema.</p> <p>What is real? How is reality constructed? Exploring Meta Cinematic Narratives.</p>	1,2,3,4,5	<p>Assignment: Experiment with a different narration in your film. The making-of your own film.</p>
12	<p>Editing your Documentary Film.</p> <p>Creating dramatic arc.</p>	3,4,5	<p>Assignment: Experiment with a different montage in your film.</p>
13	<p>Finishing the Documentary</p> <p>Group critique on the finished film</p>	4,5	<p>Assignment: Present your film</p>