

Semester at Sea, Course Syllabus
Colorado State University, Academic Partner

Voyage: Spring 2017

Discipline: Communication and Journalism

Course Number and Title: *LB 456–Documentary Film as a Liberal Art*

Division: Upper

Faculty Name: Dr. Pete Seel

Semester Credit Hours: 3

Schedule: The course meets on “B” Days from 1210-1330 in the Kino/Cinema

PREREQUISITES

None, but having completed a university-level film history course would be helpful.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students will view entire films or selected segments of thought-provoking documentaries (via the ship’s closed-circuit television system) to sharpen their critical assessment of how individuals, cultures, and events are depicted in these programs. In class sessions, students will view segments of these films to analyze a variety of documentary genres and examine the varied roles of the documentary producer as a historian, explorer, social activist, entertainer, muckraker, journalist, and creative troublemaker. The field class will provide an opportunity to meet with broadcast journalists and documentary filmmakers and discuss the research and production process with them.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The course will use documentary film as a vehicle for students to integrate various perspectives represented in the liberal arts disciplines. Specific objectives of the course are:

- students will develop critical and visual literacy perspectives appropriate to educated film audiences;
- students will learn to engage and evaluate documentary films from various perspectives ranging from the aesthetic to the ethical;
- students will engage social issues in a variety of global societies through the narratives of films we view, as well as through comparison among films;
- students will consider the multiple roles documentary films play in society: as a medium of communication, as an important cultural artifact, and as a form of art, popular culture, and social protest;
- students will analyze the differences between filmed, written, and oral history.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

AUTHOR: Nichols, B.

TITLE: *Introduction to Documentary* (2nd edition)

PUBLISHER: Indiana University Press

ISBN #: 978-0-253-22260-2

DATE/EDITION: 2010

SCHEDULE (may be revised *with notice* during the term at the discretion of the instructor)

Day	Date	Lecture Topics	Read these assignments <u>before</u> class	Film viewing assignments	Discussion Leaders
B1	Jan. 8	Course Introduction.	For today, please read pages xi to xviii in the <i>Introduction to Documentary</i> text.	For day 3, please watch the film <i>180 Degrees South</i> .	No student discussants today
B2	Jan. 10	Defining the Film Documentary.	Please read the first half of	Complete the Film	1, 2

			Chapter 1, pp. 1 to 20 on definitions.	Viewing Notes for 180 Degrees South.	
	Jan. 12	<i>In Honolulu, Hawaii</i>			
Day	Date	Lecture Topics	Read these assignments <u>before</u> class	Film viewing assignments	Discussion Leaders
B3	Jan. 13	Discuss 180 Degrees South (2010) as a classic expository quest film.	<i>Read three reviews for this film before class meeting.</i>	Online on the ship's Intranet.	3, 4
B4	Jan. 15	Documentary conventions, periods, movements and modes. Watch segments from <i>Nanook of the North</i> (1922).	Please read second half of Chapter 1, pp. 21 to 41. Introduction to documentary modes.	For day 6, please watch <i>Jiro Dreams of Sushi</i> .	5, 6
B5	Jan. 18	Writing about the Documentary. Watch and discuss segments from <i>The Cove</i> (2009) in class. <i>No classes on January 19</i>	Read Ch. 8, pp. 253-271, Writing about the documentary.	Complete your F.V.N. for <i>Jiro Dreams of Sushi</i> .	7, 8
B6	Jan. 21	View segments from <i>Jiro Dreams of Sushi</i> (2011) and discuss them.	<i>Read three reviews for this film before class meeting. Study for Quiz #1 on Day 7.</i>	Online on the ship's Intranet -	9, 10
B7	Jan. 23	Documentary Ethics. How do documentaries re-present their subjects and the world? Quiz #1 <i>In Kobe, Japan – Jan. 24-28</i>	Read first section of Chapter 2 on Documentary Ethical Issues, pp. 42 to 58.	For day 8 please watch <i>China from the Inside – pt. 1</i> and do the F.V.N.	11, 12
B8	Jan. 30	View segments from <i>China from the Inside</i> (2007) and discuss them. The documentary triad: Subject, Filmmaker & Audience. <i>In Shanghai, China – Jan. 31-Feb. 5</i>	Read the second part of Chapter 2, pp. 59-66 about the documentary triad. <i>Read three online reviews for this film.</i>	For day 9, please watch <i>Vietnam's Unseen War</i> and complete F.V.N.	13, 14
B9	Feb. 7	View segments from <i>Vietnam's Unseen War</i> (2002) and discuss.	<i>Read three reviews for this film before class meeting.</i>	For day 12, please watch <i>They Call It Myanmar</i> (2012)	15, 16
B10	Feb. 9	Qualities of Voice in the Documentary. <i>In Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam</i>	Please read first section of Ch. 3, pp. 67 to 76 on Voice. Study for Quiz #2 on Day 8. <i>Feb. 10-14</i>	Complete the F.V.N. for <i>They Call It Myanmar</i>	17, 18
B11	Feb. 16	Presenting Evidence in the Documentary. Quiz #2. <i>No classes on February 17</i>	Please read 2 nd section of Ch. 3, pp. 67 to 76, on the MAIDS.		19, 20
B12	Feb. 19	View segments from <i>They Call It Myanmar</i> (2012) and discuss. <i>In Yangon, Myanmar – Feb. 20-24</i>	<i>Read three reviews for this film before class meeting.</i>	Online on the ship's Intranet	21, 22
B13	Feb. 26	Engagement and Persuasion in the Documentary.	Please read the first part of Chapter 4, pp. 94 to 103.	Complete the F.V.N. for <i>Born into Brothels</i> .	23, 24
B14	Feb. 28	View segments from <i>Born into Brothels</i> (2004) and discuss. <i>In Cochin, India – Mar. 1-6</i>	<i>Read three reviews for this film before class meeting.</i>	Online on the ship's Intranet	25, 26
B15	Mar. 8	Making a Persuasive Case.	Please read last part of Chapter 4, pp. 103 to 119, on evidence and use of metaphor.	For day 17, please watch <i>Baraka</i>	27, 28

B16	Mar. 11	Documentary styles and modes: Classic expository and poetic films.	Please read Ch. 6 on the expository and poetic modes, pp. 142-171.	Complete the F.V.N. for Baraka for day 17.	29, 30
	Mar. 12	<i>In Mauritius</i>			
Day	Date	Lecture Topics	Read these assignments before class	Film viewing assignments	Discussion Leaders
B17	Mar. 14	View segments from Baraka (2001) and discuss how it exemplifies the poetic mode.	<i>Read three reviews for this film before class meeting.</i>	For day 18, please watch Searching for Sugar Man	1, 2
		<i>No classes on March 15</i>	<i>Sea Olympics</i>		
B18	Mar. 18	View segments from Searching for Sugar Man (2012) and discuss.	<i>Read three reviews for this film before class meeting.</i>	Complete F.V.N. for Searching for Sugar Man	3, 4
	Mar. 20	<i>In Cape Town, S.A. – Mar. 19-24</i>	Monday, March 20 (day 2 there) – Field Class		
B19	Mar. 25	Observational and participatory documentaries. Course film review papers are due today.	Please read the first part of Ch. 7, pp. 172 to 194, on the observational and participatory modes.	None – finish your film review papers	5, 6
B20	Mar. 27	The Reflexive and Performative Documentary Modes. View segments in class from Stories We Tell (2013) and discuss the performative mode.	Please read the second half of Ch. 7, pp. 172 to 194, on the reflexive and performative modes.	For day 21 please watch Blackfish . <i>Read three online reviews before the class meeting.</i>	7, 8
		<i>No classes on March 29</i>	<i>King Neptune and Court arrive</i>		
B21	Mar. 30	Addressing Social and Political Issues in the Documentary. View segments in class from Blackfish (2013) and discuss its social effects.	Please read pp. 212 to 228, first half of Chapter 8. Addressing global social, environmental & political issues. <i>The Field Class reflective essay is due today.</i>	For day 23, please watch The Salt of the Earth .	9, 10
		<i>In Tema, Ghana – Mar. 31-Apr. 3</i>			
B22	Apr. 5	Documentaries about Subcultures and Unique Groups. Quiz #3 on Modes.	Please read the second half of Ch. 8, pp. 228 to 252, on exploring subcultures and unique groups.	Complete the F.V.N. for The Salt of the Earth .	11, 12
B23	Apr. 7	View segments from The Salt of the Earth (2014) and discuss.	<i>Read three reviews for this film before class meeting.</i>	Online on the ship's Intranet	13, 14
B24	Apr. 9	Review for the Final Exam			
	Apr. 10	Study day for finals			
		<i>Casablanca, Morocco - Apr. 11-14</i>			
B25	Apr. 16	Final Exam			
	Apr. 19	<i>Arrive in Hamburg, Germany</i>			

FIELD WORK

Field Class attendance is mandatory for all students enrolled in this course. Do not book individual travel plans or a Semester at Sea sponsored trip on the day of your field class. Field Classes constitute at least 20% of the contact hours for each course, and will be developed and led by the instructor.

Field Class and Assignment

The Field Class for this course will take place on Monday, March 20th in Cape Town, South Africa.

Searching for Segarman in Cape Town

In the morning, we'll travel by ferryboat from Cape Town to nearby Robben Island to visit the prison where future president Nelson Mandela was held as a prisoner for 18 years. In the process we'll learn about the rise of the African National Congress (ANC) as a powerful political force in ending apartheid. On our return after lunch in the port we will travel by bus to Mabu Vinyl, the Cape Town record store owned by Steven "Sugar" Segarman, to discuss with him his search for the now-famous American rock singer and musician Sixto "Sugar Man" Rodriguez. The discussion will focus on how the music created by Rodriguez became widely popular in South Africa as anthems for the anti-apartheid movement in the 1970s and 1980s. Finally, we will meet with several South African journalists and discuss how imagery (in photographs, film and video) from the Apartheid era in South Africa helped create internal and international pressure to end it.

Field Class Objectives:

- Students can explain the rise of the African National Congress (ANC) as a political force in South Africa and Nelson Mandela's role in its creation – and how he was prosecuted and imprisoned for it
- Students can explain the power of music to mobilize public opinion about key social issues and bridge diverse global cultures
- Students can explain how images of apartheid circulated around the world (as photos and film) created pressure on the South African government to end these discriminatory policies
- Students can explain the power of the filmed documentary to inform publics around the world about issues formerly unknown to them

Field Class Assignment – Each student will write a five-page reflective essay detailing what they observed at these sites, their analysis of the role that Rodriguez' music played as anthems for the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, and a discussion of the power of the documentary as a story-telling medium. This essay is due at the start of class on **Thursday, March 30th**.

METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING SCALE

The following Grading Scale is utilized for student evaluation. Pass/Fail is not an option for Semester at Sea coursework. Note that C-, D+ and D- grades are also not assigned on Semester at Sea in accordance with the grading system at Colorado State University (the SAS partner institution).

Pluses and minuses are awarded as follows on a 100% scale:

<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Satisfactory/Poor</u>	<u>Failing</u>
97-100%: A+	87-90%: B+	77-80%: C+	Less than 60%: F
93-97%: A	83-87%: B	70-77%: C	
90-93%: A-	80-83%: B-	60-70%: D	

Grading – There will be three quizzes, an analytical film critique paper, a field class essay, and a final examination:

Points	assignment or exam
90	Quizzes on readings and films (3 X 30 points)
60	Film critique paper – Due March 25th
30	Class participation, including online discussions about the films (six postings minimum during the voyage)
60	Field class reflective essay (20% of course grade) – Due March 30
<u>60</u>	Final exam
300	Total points possible

points	%	grade
290	97	A+
280	93	A
270	90	A-
260	87	B+
250	83	B
240	80	B-
230	77	C+
210	70	C
180	60	D
below 180	<60	F

ATTENDANCE/ENGAGEMENT IN THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Attendance in all Semester at Sea courses is mandatory. Students must inform the instructor prior to any unanticipated absence and take the initiative to make up missed work in a timely fashion.

Tips for success in this course:

- **Complete the readings, watch the assigned films outside of class, attend the course lectures, and take notes as you do** -- you will need to cite specific course lectures and readings to meet the midterm and final examination requirements.
- **Be prepared for your assigned discussion date.** You and a partner will lead the in-class discussion with a list of prepared insightful questions and additional information gathered from the reserve readings.

LEARNING ACCOMMODATIONS

Semester at Sea provides academic accommodations for students with diagnosed learning disabilities, in accordance with ADA guidelines. Students who will need accommodations in a class, should contact ISE to discuss their individual needs. Any accommodation must be discussed in a timely manner prior to implementation. A memo from the student's home institution verifying the accommodations received on their home campus is required before any accommodation is provided on the ship. Students must submit this verification of accommodations pre-voyage as soon as possible, but no later than December 15, 2016 to academic@isevoyages.org.

STUDENT CONDUCT CODE

The foundation of a university is truth and knowledge, each of which relies in a fundamental manner upon academic integrity and is diminished significantly by academic misconduct. Academic integrity is conceptualized as doing and taking credit for one's own work. A pervasive attitude promoting academic integrity enhances the sense of community and adds value to the educational process. All within the University are affected by the cooperative commitment to academic integrity. All Semester at Sea courses adhere to this Academic Integrity Policy and Student Conduct Code.

Depending on the nature of the assignment or exam, the faculty member may require a written declaration of the following honor pledge: "I have not given, received, or used any unauthorized assistance on this exam/assignment."

FILMS FOR THE LIBRARY

All the films to be shown in the course will be provided as DVDs by Professor Seel.

Please make 20 copies of this page for your film viewing notes.

LB 456 Film Viewing Notes

Viewing Dates _____

Title _____

Director _____

Theme(s) of the film –

Subtext(s) of the film (what is not voiced directly, but implied) --

Key social actors in the film – list at least three

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Qualities of Voice:

Is there Narration? Voice of God? Voice(s) of Authority? Describe --

Stylistic *visual elements* in the production -- Handheld camera? Lighting used? Editing – pacing, transitions, and transparency?

Stylistic *audio elements* in the soundtrack -- Music used? If yes, describe. Sound effects used?

Types of evidence used to support the case made:

Inartistic (facts and data) and/or Artistic (ethical, emotional, or demonstrative evidence)

Use of rhetoric in the film: deliberative, ceremonial, or judicial/historical?

Documentary Modes – check all that apply

- Expository Poetic
- Observational Participatory
- Reflexive Performative

Structure of the film -- Is there a hook? If yes, describe it. Is there tension or rising interest? What is the climax of the film? Is there a resolution?