Cinema 4, History of Documentary Film
Mission College, Spring 2013
Wednesday, 5:45-10:00 PM
LRC TCR

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Office hours: Wednesday 5:00-5:40 PM or by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The course examines the development of the documentary motion picture from the 1890s to the present. Types of non-fiction and documentary films studied will include historical, propaganda, educational, commercial, diary, cinema verité and direct cinema. Students will develop critical standards for judging documentary films.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Analyze the aesthetic and theoretical elements of documentary films.
2. Assess the development of documentary films in terms of film content, technology, and technique.

REQUIRED TEXT: Introduction to Documentary, Second Edition, Bill Nichols, 2010.

GRADING

- Paper 1 (analysis of film technique as observed in one film screened in class), 4-6 pages, 30%
- Paper 2 DUE MAY 2 (treatment for original documentary), 4-6 pages, 30%
- Final Exam 30%
- Reading comprehension quizzes OR short written assignments (weekly) 10%

The two papers and final will be graded on an A-F scale. Students may rewrite the first two papers in order to improve the grade initially assigned as many times as they wish until the last day of class, May 30.)

The reading comprehension quizzes and short written assignments will be graded pass (), no pass (-), or extra credit (+). At the end of the semester each student will receive one point for each passed quiz or written assignment, zero points for each no pass. If there are ten quizzes, 9-10 points = A, 8 points = B, 7 points = C, 6 points = D, 5 points or below = F. Extra credit will count for one point per quiz/assignment. It will be applied first to raise your comprehension score up to an A (9 out of 10 in the example above), after which it will augment your grades for your other papers. The quizzes will last for 10 minutes and be given at the beginning of class. There will be no make ups. Written assignments (1-2 pages) will be due at the beginning of class.

Expect 10-12 quizzes/written assignments.

All written work for the class is to be submitted typed, double spaced, and page numbered, in 12 point Times or Times New Roman. Please note that a three page minimum paper does not end when the third page has begun, but when you have written to the end. Students may exceed the page count within reason (seven pages is fine; 12 pages is almost certainly too long).

Class participation can help improve your grade. Your participation in discussions is necessary for this class to function properly.

FOOD AND BEVERAGES ARE NOT PERMITTED IN THE CLASSROOM.

CELL PHONE USE IS NOT PERMITTED IN THE CLASSROOM.

ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY. To receive credit for attendance you must arrive on time, return from break at the designated time, and remain until the end of the class. Cell phone, tablet, and computer use during class will count as an absence, unless used solely for taking notes. Students not watching films during the screenings will be marked absent and asked to leave and will be counted as absent. Checking your cell phone or other electronic device counts as not watching the film. Please refrain from packing your belongings and getting ready to leave until the class is over. Not only is it disrespectful, the noise created almost always delays the end of the class.

All students are permitted two (2) unexcused absences. Each additional unexcused absence will result in a 1/3 reduction of the student's final grade. Remember that arriving late and leaving early both count as absences.

I try to teach the class at a high level, and I hope you intend to work accordingly. If you feel overwhelmed, TALK TO ME. I want you to learn as much as you can, and I don't expect you to memorize every word I say or every word you read. The class is, however, UC and CSU transferable, so I try to do the best I can to teach in a manner that I believe will be helpful to those of you who transfer to a four-year college.

This class may be taken for honors credit. Talk to me if you are interested.

SCREENINGS:

The screenings in this class will depend in part on availability. The majority of films screened will be chosen from the list below:

LUMIERE AND OTHER ACTUALITY FILMS
NANOOK OF THE NORTH
CHANG
THREE SONGS ABOUT LENIN
MAN WITH A MOVIE CAMERA
SONG OF CEYLON
THE PLOW THAT BROKE THE PLAINS
NIGHT MAIL
RAIN
BERLIN: SYMPHONY OF A GREAT CITY
TRIUMPH OF THE WILL
OLYMPIA
THE BATTLE OF SAN PIETRO
THE NEGRO SOLDIER
THIS IS SPINAL TAP
CATFISH
NIGHT AND FOG, SHOAH
THE SORROW AND THE PITY
OPERATION OVERLORD
EVERY DAY EXCEPT CHRISTMAS
TITTICUT FOLLIES
SALESMAN
PRIMARY
WALTZ WITH BASHIR
GIMME SHELTER
THE LAST WALTZ, THE BEATLES FIRST U.S. VISIT
THE THIN BLUE LINE

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MR. DEATH
NOBODY'S BUSINESS
OF TIME AND THE CITY
SOY CUBA
SI SE PUEDE
TOUNGES UNTIED
HARLAN COUNTY USA
HARVEST OF SHAME
BLACK HISTORY LOST, STOLEN, STRAYED
GUILTY BY REASON OF RACE
MARJOE
JESUS CAMP
DAUGHTER FROM DANANG
BORN INTO BROTHELS
MAI'S AMERICA
BOWLING FOR COLUMBINE
FARENHEIT 9/11
SUPERSIZE ME
BHOPALI
SELECTIONS FROM YOUTUBE, THE REAL WORLD, SURVIVOR, and INTERVENTION
CLOSE UP
SANS SOLEIL
GRIZZLY MAN

We are all here as students of documentary. Watch every motion picture screened in class as if your life depended on it; your grade may.