

CURE 4033 (1st Term, 2023-24)

DRAFT

Documentary Studies: Theories and Practices

Time: 10:30am-1:15 pm, Thu.

Classroom: KKB 310

Teacher: Dr. Li Tiecheng

Office Hour: Tue 10:00am-12:00pm

Office: KKB 313

Description:

The course explores the history and basic theory of documentary film. General concepts, aesthetics, ethics, and different forms of documentary will be introduced to develop students' critical understanding and appreciation of the documentary form through lectures, screenings, workshops, and hands-on practice. Students will learn how to use this visual medium innovatively to discover, comprehend, and represent social and cultural phenomena in daily life. Students are required to analyze in depth a topic of their choice, find problems related to it and research them, design visual methods individually and collectively by brainstorming and team-working, and finally, produce a documentary film at the end of the semester. The learning tasks include defining goals and identifying the audience, researching content, formulating strategies/action plans, amassing resources, employing visual techniques including interviewing, on-location shooting, post-production editing, and developing deliverables. The ultimate aim is to help students develop enterprising skills, such as creativity, initiative, perseverance, self-confidence, judgment, and networking, and to transfer this educational experience into social relevance as they confront the complexities of global reality.

Learning Outcomes:

- To equip students with general knowledge of documentary film concepts and history.
- To analyze the close connection between history and culture in documentary films.
- To apply knowledge and technical skills in producing students' documentaries.
- To develop students' ability of critical thinking.
- To use digital media as a tool in research and as a method of presenting research outcomes.
- To improve students' collaborative skills during teamwork and filmmaking.

Learning Activities

- Lecture
- Discussion in class / with the professional filmmakers
- Screening and talk
- Workshop
- Hands-on practice
- Field trip and interview
- Group project
- Film festival visiting

COURSE CONTENT & SCHEDULE

Week 1. Sept 7

Introduction to the course

- (1) How Can We Define Documentary Film?
- (2) Six Types/modes of documentary

Films:

1. The early works of The Lumiere Brother.
2. Robert J. Flaherty, *Nanook of the North* (1922)
3. Clips of Michael Moore's films.
4. Clips of Ai Weiwei's films.

Reading:

1. Kevin J. Lindenmuth, "Finding a Subject and Style," in *The Documentary Moviemaking Course* (London: Methuen Drama, 2010), pp. 8-39

Week 2. Sept 14

History and Theory of world documentary 1:

- (1) Elements of Documentaries
- (2) **Workshop 1: Knowing Cameras**
 - a. How to develop an idea and research before shooting
 - b. How to use cameras
 - c. Shooting practice

Films:

1. Leni Riefenstahl, *Triumph of the Will* (1935)
2. Walter Ruttmann: *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* (1927)
3. John Grierson, *Drifters* (1929)

Readings:

1. Bill Nichols. *What Gives Documentary Film a Voice of Their Own*, in *Introduction to Documentary*, 67-93. Bloomington, Ind. : Indiana University Press, 2010.
2. Michael Rabiger, "Camera," in *Directing the Documentary* (New York and London: Focal Press, 2015), pp.173-198

Submission: Practice 1: Discover Myself (2min video, by individual)

Week 3. Sept 21

History and Theory of world documentary 2: Cine-eyes Theory.

Films:

1. Dziga Vertov, *Man With A Movie Camera* (1927)
2. Alain Resnais, *Night and Fog* (1955)

Readings:

1. Dai Vaughan, Lewis Jacobs ed.. *Man with a Movie Camera*, in *The Documentary Tradition*, 53-59. New York: W. W. Norton, 1979.
2. William Rothman, *Night and Fog*, in *Documentary Film Classics*, 39-68. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Readings:

Alan Rosenthal, "Editing," in *Writing, Directing, and Producing Documentary Films and Videos* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002), pp. 199-218

Week 4. Sept 28

History and Theory of world documentary 3

Classic Works 3: The Theories of Cinéma vérité & Direct Cinema

Films:

1. Edgar Morin, Jean Rouch, *Chronicle of a Summer (1961)*
2. Robert Drew, *Crisis: Behind a Presidential Commitment (1963)*
3. Ju Anqi, *There's a Strong Wind in Beijing (北京的風很大) (1999)*

Reading:

Ellen Freyer, Lewis Jacobs ed.. *Chronicle of a Summer—Ten Years After*, in *The Documentary Tradition*, 437-443. New York: W. W. Norton, 1979.

Week 5. Oct 5

Workshop 2: Editing

1. Editing Technology.
2. Working with Adobe Premiere

Week 6. Oct 12

Workshop 3: Sound Recording

1. Introduction to Sound Production Equipment
2. Documentary Sound Recording Technology
3. Working with Adobe Premiere

Submission: Practice 2: A Space and an Action (5-8min video, by group)

Week 7. Oct 19

Workshop 4: Documentary Interview

Films:

1. 張贊波, 《有一種靜叫莊嚴》 (2010)
2. Errol Morris, *The Thin Blue Line* (1988)
3. Chang Weihua (江偉華), *The Right Thing*(廣場) (2008)
4. Du Haibin, *1428* (2009)

Reading:

Ann Gray, "Location Instances and Generating Material" in *Research Practice for Cultural Studies: Ethnographic Methods and Lived Cultures*. (London; Thousand Oaks;

New Delhi: SAGE, 2003). 79-106

Week 8. Oct 26

How to structure the documentary.

1. Opening and Ending
2. Editing Conceptions

Week 9. Nov 2

Proposal Presentation

Each group will present their proposals and discuss with the class.

Submission: 5-10min footage of interview and presentation ppt

Week 10. Nov 9

Documentary of Taiwan

Films:

1. Wou Yifeng (吳乙峰), *Moon Children (月亮的小孩)*(1990)
2. Yang Lizhou (楊力州), *The Long Goodbye (被遺忘的時光)*(2011)
3. Chang Weihua (江偉華), *The Right Thing (廣場)* (2008)

Reading:

林木材, *台灣紀錄片群像*, 台灣市: 遠流出版公司, 2012

Week 11 Nov. 16

Documentary of Hong Kong

Films:

The short films from APA.

Tammy Cheung (張虹), *Secondary School (中學)* (2002)

Lam Sum(林森), *Beyond the Queen (人在皇後)* (2008)

Lo Chun Yip (盧鎮業), *Days After n Coming (那年春夏.之後)* (2011)

Reading:

張美君, 編寫 (Esther M. K. Cheung ed. & written), *客觀紀實、若即若離——張虹, 尋找香港電影的獨立景觀 (In Pursuit of Independent Visions in Hong Kong Cinema)*, 97-107. Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Co. Ltd.,2010

Submission: Rough Cut (10min documentary, by group)

Week 12. Nov 23

Rough Cut Discussion

Week 13. Nov 30

Documentary of Mainland China & Course Review

Films:

1. Yang Tianyi (楊天乙), *Old Men (老頭)* (1999)
2. Xu Xin(徐辛), *Karamay (克拉瑪依)* (2010)

3. Qiu Jiongjiong(邱炯炯), *萱堂閒話錄* (2011)

Reading:

1. 王慰慈, *紀錄與探索：與大陸紀錄片工作者的世紀對話*, 455-475, 台北：遠流出版事業股份有限公司, 2000
2. 《今天》131 期 (No. 3/2021) :
 - (1) 王小魯: 《中國紀錄影像：建立一個新的獨立文化傳統》
<https://www.artda.cn/yingxiangdangan-c-11876.html>
 - (2) 蔣悅: 《我要對“紀錄片”這個詞保有尊重》

Week 15. Dec 14

Submission: Final Work (10-20min documentary, by group)

Assessment :

- Attendance and participation -----10%
- Practice 1: Discover Myself (2min video, *individual*) -----10%
- Practice 2: Discover a Place + an Action (5-8min video, *group*) ----- 20%
- Proposal Presentation (*group*) + Fine Cut + Final Work
(10-20min documentary, *group*) ----- 40%
- Report (>2000 words in either Chinese or English, *individual*)----- 20%

Details:

1. Practice:

(1). Discover Myself: to introduce students themselves by using all kinds of methods, including video, pictures, music, flash, and animation. This part will discover students' visual creativity and help them to know each other.

(2). Discover a Place + an Action: to finish a 5-8 minute video to express an environment, showing the characters of it. And document a person's action (from beginning to end)

2. Proposal Presentation:

The proposal describes the story of the final short documentary and clarifies who the documentary will talk about, how the story will be told, and what kind of issue the film intends to explore.

3. Final Work & Presentation:

The completed films (10-20 minutes documentary films) will be screened and discussed during the final lesson. We'll focus on an overview of the documentary process, including documentary form, style, shooting, and editing.

4. Report:

To report the process of doing the final work and which documentary concept or

knowledge you have further improved during the filmmaking, less than 2000 words (En/Cn).

Practice 1 and the final report are individual assignments; others are team works made by groups.

Production Rubric:

Items	excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Incomplete
The characters and conflict were well introduced.	20	16	12	8	0
The image is excellent quality, and the story flows well.	20	16	12	8	0
The structure and editing, including transitions and cuts are well executed.	20	16	12	8	0
Sound additions and music were well planned and enhance the video.	20	16	12	8	0
The documentary explores the social problems well with deep critical thinking.	20	16	12	8	0
Total	100	81	60	40	0

Selected Reference:

- Barnouw, Erik(ed). Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Barsam, Richard Meran. Nonfiction Film: A Critical History. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.
- Bernard, Curran Sheila. Documentary Storytelling for Film and Videomakers. Burlington, MA: Focal Press, 2004.
- Corner, John. The art of record: a critical introduction to documentary. New York: Manchester University Press, 1996.
- Liz Stubbs, Documentary Filmmakers Speak, Allworth Press, 2002.
- Patricia Aufderheide, Documentary Film: A Very Short Introduction, Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Rabiger, Michael. Directing the Documentary. Burlington, MA: Focal Press/Elsevier, 2009.
- Robert Coles, Doing Documentary Work, Oxford, 1997.
- Sturken, Marita, Cartwright, Lisa. Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Honesty in Academic Work: A Guide for Students and Teachers

The Chinese University of Hong Kong places very high importance on honesty in academic work submitted by students, and adopts a policy of zero tolerance on cheating and plagiarism. Any related offence will lead to disciplinary action including termination of studies at the University. All student assignments in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes should be submitted via VeriGuide with effect from September 2008: <https://veriguide2.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/cuhk/>

Although cases of cheating or plagiarism are rare at the University, everyone should make himself/herself familiar with the content of this website and thereby help avoid any practice that would not be acceptable.

Section 1 What is plagiarism

<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p01.htm>

Section 2 Proper use of source material

<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p02.htm>

Section 3 Citation styles

<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p03.htm>

Section 4 Plagiarism and copyright violation

<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p04.htm>

Section 5 CUHK regulations on honesty in academic work

<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p05.htm>

Section 6 CUHK disciplinary guidelines and procedures

<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p06.htm>

Section 7 Guide for teachers and departments

<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p07.htm>

Section 8 Recommended material to be included in course outlines

<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p08.htm>

Section 9 Electronic submission of assignments via VeriGuide

<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p09.htm>

Section 10 Declaration to be included in assignments

<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p10.htm>