

CULS 5411 (2nd Term, 2023-24)

Documentary Media

(Draft)

Since this course will be taught in conjunction with related courses at UCL, there is a possibility that three of the classes may be rescheduled to other times and taught online. The details will be announced at the end of Dec 2023.

Day and Time: Thur, 6:00pm–9:00pm

Classroom: Leung Kau Kui Building 310

Teacher: Dr. Li Tiecheng

Email: tcli@cuhk.edu.hk

Office Hour: Tue, 10am-12pm

Office: Room 313, Leung Kau Kui Building

Description:

This course emphasizes history, theory and practice of documentary films, and combines visual culture with art creativity by lectures, screenings, readings, discussions, workshops, and hands-on practice. General concepts, aesthetics, ethics, modes of documentary will be introduced. It helps students to know how to discover and represent the cultural phenomenon in daily life by using visual method and to finish their short documentary films at the end of this semester.

Part One:

It acquaints students with a history of the development of documentary film to examine various styles and techniques of it, analyzes the culture in documentary film, and finds out the idea and character of each production, inspires students to consider with the culture theory they have learned.

Part Two:

It teaches basic shooting and editing technical skills for students to complete a short documentary video.

COURSE CONTENT & SCHEDULE

• **Classic Works**

1. What Gives Documentary Films a Voice of Their Own?
2. Man with a Movie Camera
3. The Theories of Cinéma vérité & Direct Cinema

• **Concepts & Skills**

1. Definition and Types of Documentaries
2. Documentary Editing
3. Documentary Interview

• **Workshops**

1. Before Shooting/Knowing the Equipment
2. How to Develop an Idea & Research
3. How to Edit and Structure Your Documentary
4. Sound Recording

Week 1. Jan 11

Introduction to the Course

Concepts & Skills 1: Definition and Types

- ♣ Course Schedule and Assessment
- ♣ How to Define a Documentary
- ♣ Types of documentaries

Films:

1. The early works of The Lumiere Brother.
2. Robert J. Flaherty, *Nanook of the North* (1922)
3. Former students' works

Readings:

Bill Nichols, "How Can We Define Documentary," in *Introduction to Documentary*. (Bloomington, Ind. : Indiana University Press, 2010), 1-41.

李道明,「紀錄片的定義」在 紀錄片:歷史、美學、製作、倫理。(台北市:三民書局, 2013), 107-118。

李道明,「紀錄片的種類」在 紀錄片:歷史、美學、製作、倫理。(台北市:三民書局, 2013), 118-123。

Week 2. Jan 18

Classic Works 1: What Gives Documentary Films a Voice of Their Own?

- ♣ The Elements of Documentary
- ♣ Time and Space
- ♣ Film Language 1

♣ Point of View

♣ Grouping

Films:

1. Walter Ruttmann: Berlin: *Symphony of a Great City* (1927)
2. Du Haibin, *1428* (2009)

Reading:

Bill Nichols, "What Gives Documentary Film a Voice of Their Own," in *Introduction to Documentary*. (Bloomington, Ind. : Indiana University Press, 2010), 67-93.

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

Week 3. Jan 25

Workshop 1: Before Shooting/Knowing the Equipment

- Introduction to Video Production Equipment
- Documentary Shooting Technology
- Editing & Software Adobe Premiere
- ♣ Film Language 2 ♣ Grouping

Week 4. Feb 1

Classic Works 2: Man with a Movie Camera

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.

Submission: Practice 2: Time and Environment (5min video, by group) (10:30am-11:00am @Lab)

Week 5. Feb 8

Concepts & Skills 2: Documentary Editing

Workshop 3: How to Edit and Structure Your Documentary

♣ Film Montage

♣ Transitions

Films:

1. 范立新, 《歸途列車》 (Last Train Home) (2009)
2. Joris Ivens, *Rain* (1929)

3. Selected Short Documentaries

Reading:

1. Louis Giannetti, "Editing" in *Understanding Movies*, (Boston: Pearson, 2005)

Week 6. Feb 15

Lunar New Year

Week 7. Feb 22

Concepts & Skills 3: 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

Submission: Practice 3: A Complete Action (5min video, by group) (10:30am-11:00am @Lab)

Week 8. Feb 29

Workshop 4: Sound Recording

- 1 Introduction to Sound Production Equipment
- 2 Documentary Sound Recording Technology

Week 9. Mar 7

Proposal Presentation (with group video footage and interview footage)

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

Submission: Practice 4: Interview + other footage (5-10min, by group)

Week 10. Mar 14

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 11. Mar 21

Rough Cut Discussion

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

Week 12. Mar 28

Documentary of Hong Kong and Taiwan

Film:

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)

Chang Weihua (江偉華), *The Right Thing(廣場)* (2008)

Reading:

1. 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
2. 林文淇, 陳德齡編 (Lin Wenqi, Chen Deling ed.), 生命的影像: 台灣紀錄片的七堂課 (*Images of Life: Seven Lessons on Taiwan Documentary Films*), 台灣桃園縣: 國立中央大學電影文化研究室, 2007

Week 13. Apr 4

Documentary of Mainland China

Film:

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: 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

Week 14. Apr 11

Shooting day

Week 15. Apr 18

Course Review

Submission: Fine Cut (20 min documentary, by group)

May 2

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

Assessment

- Attendance and participation -----10%
- Practice 1: Discover Myself (2min video, individual) -----5%
- Practice 2: Time and Environment (3-5min video, group) -----10%
- Practice 3: A Complete Action (3-5min video, group) ----- 10%
- Practice 4: Interview (5-10min video, group) -----10%
- Proposal Presentation (group) +Dairy + Rough Cut + Fine Cut + Final Work (10-20min documentary, group) -----40%
- Report (>2000 words in either Chinese or English, individual) -----15%

Project 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 creativities and help them to know each other.

(2). Time and Space: to finish a 3-5 minutes' video to present an environment.

(3). A Complete Action: to present a person's action (from beginning to the end).

2. Proposal Presentation: the proposal describes the story of the final film, and makes clear whom the film will talk about, how the story will be told, and what kind of issues the film intends to explore.

3. Final Work: 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 final work, no less than 2000 words.

Practice 1 and the report are individual works; others are group ones.

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge & Skill:

Students are expected to get the ability to examine the technical, stylistic, aesthetic, and representational dynamics involved in documentary, and acquire the technical skills needed to complete a documentary film.

Attitude:

Aware of multicultural communities and respect for the other; being confident in expressing ones ideas; board-minded but strong in critical evaluation.

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.

Grade Descriptor:

A	Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
A-	Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.
B	Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.
C	Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.
D	
F	Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes
	Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.

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:

http://veriguide1.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/portal/plagiarism_detection/index.jsp

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/Eng_htm_files_\(2013-14\)/p01.htm](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_(2013-14)/p01.htm)

Section 2 Proper use of source material

[http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_\(2013-14\)/p02.htm](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_(2013-14)/p02.htm)

Section 3 Citation styles

[http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_\(2013-14\)/p03.htm](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_(2013-14)/p03.htm)

Section 4 Plagiarism and copyright violation

[http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_\(2013-14\)/p04.htm](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_(2013-14)/p04.htm)

Section 5 CUHK regulations on honesty in academic work

[http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_\(2013-14\)/p05.htm](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_(2013-14)/p05.htm)

Section 6 CUHK disciplinary guidelines and procedures

[http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_\(2013-14\)/p06.htm](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_(2013-14)/p06.htm)

Section 7 Guide for teachers and departments

[http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_\(2013-14\)/p07.htm](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_(2013-14)/p07.htm)

Section 8 Recommended material to be included in course outlines

[http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_\(2013-14\)/p08.htm](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_(2013-14)/p08.htm)

Section 9 Electronic submission of assignments via VeriGuide

[http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_hm_files_\(2013-14\)/p09.htm](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_hm_files_(2013-14)/p09.htm)

Section 10 Declaration to be included in assignments

[http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_hm_files_\(2013-14\)/p10.htm](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_hm_files_(2013-14)/p10.htm)