

SM2719: DOCUMENTARY I

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Documentary I

Subject Code

SM - School of Creative Media

Course Number

2719

Academic Unit

School of Creative Media (SM)

College/School

School of Creative Media (SM)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

SM1006 Documentary

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course aims to enhance students' understanding of documentary as an essential film/video form other than fictional film. A selection of works from both documentary masters and young filmmakers are shown to students for the purpose of

exploring very different types of documentary filmmaking under different political and/or cultural circumstances. A series of hand-on exercises are designed for beginners to discover various means of documentation and practice the techniques of documentation through journal writing, photo taking, video shooting, and document filing. The course will introduce fundamental theories emerged from the history and development of documentary and methodologies related to the process of documentary making.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	To identify various methods of documentation;	25	x	x
2	To define the effectiveness of audio/visual evidence;	25	x	x
3	To recognize subject matters that are valuable for documentation;	25	x	x
4	To demonstrate the strength in documentation.	25	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Inviting guest directors to share their films and to conduct Q&A with our students	To explore the advantages and disadvantages of each documentation method;	1
2	Students need to film to obtain the time and space on camera	To begin documentation by making short videos of time and space, and present the video in class;	2
3	Discussions on possibility of potential filming	To discover the best possible form for the filming of a subject through in-class discussions with filmmakers;	3
4	To explore the different ways of approaching a matter, screening students' works will allow a lot of discussion	To apply theoretical notions learned through screening and presentation of video exercises.	4

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	On-line discussions after viewing sessions	1, 2, 3	30	-	No
2	A one-minute single take video of a living space; A one-minute edited video to present the passing of time	2	10	-	No
3	Short documentary (5-8 minutes): "Self Portrait" or "My Family"	3	40	-	No
4	Production plan of a short documentary of 20-30 minutes including a detailed treatment	4	20	-	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Minimum Continuous Assessment Passing Requirement (%)

0

Minimum Examination Passing Requirement (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

1. On-line Discussion Notes

Criterion

This assessment will grade on rationality, clarity and fluency of argument and comment. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's ability to negotiate a position that is informed, defensible, and standing on personal insight.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

- Rich content, excellent ability to interpret and integrate various resources
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, systematic composition
- Precision in argument, well defined and reasoned points of view grounded in insightful interpretation of existing literature
- Readiness to respond to peer opinion and other views initiated in class discussion
- Discussion shed light on new dimensions of the issue

Good (B+, B, B-)

- Adequate content, sufficient ability to integrate various resources based on demand
- Reasonable organization with balanced structure and composition

- Clear elaboration of ideas that sticks to the point, with clearly differentiated issues, ability to interpret opinions independently
- Sufficient responses to peer comments to sustain a discussion

Fair (C+, C, C-)

- Adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources based on demand
- Fair organization with adequate structure and composition
- Relevant points made to the subject matter in question
- Ability to respond to other statements and engage in class discussion

Marginal (D)

- Weak content, limited use of resources
- Poor organization, structure and composition
- Relevant points to the subject matter, marginal ability to interpret opinions
- Ability to respond to other comments in simple terms

Failure (F)

- Inadequate content, no/ irrelevant use of resources
- No organization, structure or/and composition
- Irrelevant points to the subject matter, no ability to interpret opinions
- Fail to respond to other comments

Assessment Task

2. One-Minute Videos of Time and Space

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

- Work has strong affective quality and the articulation of personal styles and signature
- Work raises questions and instill insights about the process of conception, creative strategization and production
- Efficient adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources

Good (B+, B, B-)

- Work has articulation of personal styles and signature
- Work shows important issues that requires exploration
- Proper adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources

Fair (C+, C, C-)

- Work is relatively complete and comprehensible
- Limited ability to demonstrate creative thinking or exploration
- Fair adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources

Marginal (D)

- Work is not affective at all
- Marginal ability demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- Limited adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources

Failure (F)

- No appreciation of the aesthetics and expressive qualities of the medium
- Fail to create work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- No adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources

Assessment Task

3. Short Documentary Presentation

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

- Work has strong affective quality and the articulation of personal styles and signature
- Work raises questions and instill insights about the process of conception, creative strategization and production
- Efficient adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources

Good (B+, B, B-)

- Work has articulation of personal styles and signature
- Work shows important issues that requires exploration
- Proper adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources

Fair (C+, C, C-)

- Work is relatively complete and comprehensible
- Limited ability to demonstrate creative thinking or exploration
- Fair adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources

Marginal (D)

- Work is not affective at all
- Marginal ability demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- Limited adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources

Failure (F)

- No appreciation of the aesthetics and expressive qualities of the medium
- Fail to create work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- No adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources

Assessment Task

4. Production Plan

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

- Excellent grasp of materials, ability to explain key concepts, assumptions, and debates, demonstrating sound knowledge of the field
- Rich content, exceptional ability to integrate various resources into primary and secondary levels based on demand;
- Design and conduct research which is firmly built on thorough knowledge of existing theoretical frameworks
- Evaluative judgments about existing research and demonstrate application of strong critical thinking skills
- Strong ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools
- Strong organization of research findings with effective organization and procedural clarity at the same time demonstrating the importance of the process
- Insightful suggestion of how the research findings may lead to future research

Good (B+, B, B-)

- Firm grasp of materials, ability to explain key concepts and assumptions
- Adequate content, strong ability to integrate various resources into primary and secondary levels based on demand;
- Design and conduct research which is built on thorough knowledge of existing theoretical frameworks
- Appropriate judgments about existing research and demonstrate application of critical thinking skills
- Ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools

Fair (C+, C, C-)

- Comprehensive grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts
- Adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources into primary and secondary levels based on demand
- Design and conduct research which is built on knowledge of theoretical frameworks
- Appropriate judgments about existing research
- Weak ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools

Marginal (D)

- Loose grasp of materials, cannot explain key concepts
- Weak content, with primary and secondary levels
- Design and conduct research which is appropriate for the research objective
- Marginal judgments about existing research
- Poor ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools

Failure (F)

- Poor grasp of materials
- Inadequate content, without primary and secondary levels
- Fail to design and conduct research which is appropriate for the research objective
- Fail to make reasonable judgments about existing research
- Fail to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools

Additional Information for AR

All A+/A/A- grade assignment should comply with the highest performance of Discovery-oriented learning.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

1. Early Practices of Documentary: A Way to Prolong Memory
2. Audio and Visual Evidences: Listening and Watching
3. Discover the Process: Establishing the Time and Space
4. Between Fiction and Facts, Subjectivity and Objectivity
5. Direct Cinema and Observational Documentaries
6. Cinema Varite and Participatory Documentaries
7. Between Politics and Aesthetics: Activist Documentary
8. Shooting Subject and the Delicate Matter of Moral Judgment
9. Exploring the Private Space
10. Discovering the Mind
11. Methods in Documentary Editing: Use of Sound and Visual Materials
12. Spectatorship and Represented Reality

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

	Title
1	Aufderheide, Patricia. <i>Documentary Film: A Very Short Introduction</i> . New York: Oxford UP, 2007.
2	Atkin, Ian. <i>The Documentary Film Movement: an Anthology</i> . Edinburg: Edinburgh UP, 1998.
3	Barbash, Ilisa and Lucien Taylor. <i>Cross-Cultural Filmmaking</i> . Berkeley: U of California P, 1997.
4	Barnouw, Eric. <i>Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film</i> . 2nd revised edition. New York: Oxford UP, 1993.
5	Grant, Barry Keith and Jeannette Sloniowski (eds.). <i>Documenting the Documentary</i> . Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1998.
6	---, and Jim Hillier. <i>100 Documentary Films</i>
7	Hewitt, John and Gustavo Vazquez. <i>Documentary Filmmaking: A Contemporary Film Guide</i> . New York: Oxford UP, 1020.
8	MacDonald, Kevin and Mark Cousins. <i>Imagining Reality: The Faber Book of Documentary</i> . London: Faber and Faber, 1996.
9	Nichols, Bill. <i>Introduction to Documentary</i> . Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2001.
10	---. <i>Blurred Boundaries: Questions of Meaning in Contemporary Culture</i> . Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994.
11	---. <i>Representing Reality</i> . Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1991.
12	Rabiger, Michael. <i>Directing the Documentary</i> .

13	Renov, Michael. <i>The Subject of Documentary</i> . Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2004.
14	--- (ed.). <i>Theorizing Documentary</i> . New York: Routledge, 1993.
15	Rosenthal, Alan (ed.). <i>New Challenges for Documentary</i> . 2nd edition. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2005.
16	Rothman, William. <i>Documentary Film Classics</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997.
17	Ruby, Jay. <i>Picturing Culture</i> . Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2000.
18	Waldman, Diane and Janet Walker (eds.). <i>Feminism and Documentary</i> . Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1999.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Nil