

**UMBC UGC New Course Request: ART 316 Intermediate Documentary Production**

Date Submitted: 5/4/17

Proposed Effective Date: SP18

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**COURSE INFORMATION:**

Course Number(s)	ART 316
Formal Title	Intermediate Documentary Production
Transcript Title (≤30c)	Int. Documentary Production
Recommended Course Preparation	ART 324 AND/OR ART 325
Prerequisite NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, a prerequisite is assumed to be passed with a "D" or better.	ART 306 with "B" or better AND Visual Arts Milestone
# of Credits Must adhere to the <u>UMBC Credit Hour Policy</u>	3
Repeatable?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Max. Total Credits	3 This should be equal to the number of credits for courses that cannot be repeated for credit. For courses that may be repeated for credit, enter the maximum total number of credits a student can receive from this course. E.g., enter 6 credits for a 3 credit course that may be taken a second time for credit, but not for a third time. Please note that this does NOT refer to how many times a class may be retaken for a higher grade.
Grading Method(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reg (A-F) <input type="checkbox"/> Audit <input type="checkbox"/> Pass-Fail

**PROPOSED CATALOG DESCRIPTION** (Approximately 75 words in length. Please use full sentences.):

In this class we will immerse ourselves in documentary cinema as both makers and appreciators/critics. Students will familiarize themselves with documentary filmmaking as both a genre and as a mode of production. Students will have hands-on experiences with all facets of non-fiction filmmaking and will consider aesthetic and conceptual issues particular to documentary films. Students will leave the class with a completed documentary film of their own making

**RATIONALE FOR NEW COURSE:**

Cinematic Arts is revising the three core courses in our curriculum to provide a more in-depth study of narrative and documentary filmmaking in order to highlight the technical and conceptual concerns that are specific to each genre. Currently the curriculum tries to cover documentary, narrative, and experimental film practices and histories in one introductory level course. We believe that parsing these out into two intermediate level courses will provide a more in-depth and complex course of study for students, allowing them to master more filmmaking practices. This course is a requirement for our BFA majors, and is one of two courses (the other being Intermediate Narrative Production) that our BA students along with those taking the Cinematic Arts Minor can choose from. Students are required to take Introduction to Cinematic Arts before taking this course, where they will learn about film/video as an artistic medium, as well as gaining basic production and post-production skills. Intermediate Documentary Production will build on that foundation, and expose students to techniques and methodologies that are specific to the area of Documentary film production. This course will be taught every Fall semester.

## **ART 316, Intermediate Documentary Production**

Time, Location

Professor: Cathy Cook

Office: 324 E-mail: ccook@umbc.edu

Office Hours: by appointment

Pre-Req: ART 306 Introduction to Cinematic Arts

In this class we will immerse ourselves in documentary cinema as both makers and appreciators/critics. Class time will be equally divided between practical issues germane to documentary film production (the term “film” as used here includes video) and a theoretical-critical analysis of documentary as a film genre. On the production side we will consider questions of lighting, sound recording, hand held camera work, interview techniques, legal issues and other matters specific to working in non-fiction filmmaking. These technical questions will be made concrete through a series of in-class assignments. These exercises will serve to provide all students with in-class, hands-on experience with all phases of documentary film production. On the theoretical/critical side, we will engage in analysis of a variety of documentaries and consider questions of truth telling, ethics, ideology and politics as they have played out in the history of the genre. We will also attempt to come to some understanding of the effects of reality TV, cell phone recordings, YouTube and the internet on this genre.

Each student will produce a short 8 – 15 min. documentary on a subject of his or her choice. Each student will also write a paper on a documentary film of their choice and make two oral presentations on assigned documentary films.

**COURSE GOALS:** Students will familiarize themselves with documentary filmmaking as both a genre and as a mode of production. Students will have hands-on experiences with all facets of non-fiction filmmaking and will consider aesthetic and conceptual issues particular to documentary films. Students will leave the class with a completed documentary film of their own making.

**Required READINGS - BOOK:** Directing the Documentary, Michael Rabiger, Focal Press, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, 2014.

**CELL PHONES AND LAPTOPS:** Cell phones should be turned off for the duration of class. Laptops are permissible for note taking only. If you are discovered using your laptop for any other purpose, you will lose the privilege of using your laptop in class.

**ATTENDANCE:** Students are expected to attend all classes and to arrive on time. If you need to miss a class you must email me *in advance* with a medical or other serious reason for missing class. Three unexcused absences will lower your grade by one full point. Additional absences will further lower your grade. Habitual late arrivals will also negatively affect your grade. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. If you arrive late, it will be your responsibility to see me at the end of class to have your presence recorded.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:** By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC's scholarly community in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty, and they are wrong. Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, suspension or dismissal. To read the full Student Academic Conduct Policy, consult the UMBC Student Handbook, the Faculty Handbook, or the UMBC Policies section of the UMBC Directory.

## Selected FILMS FOR STUDENT ORAL PRESENTATIONS

(this is a preliminary list to be enhanced later)

*War Comes to America*, Frank Capra, 1945.  
*The War at Home*, Glen Silber, 2003  
*Primary*, Richard Leacock, 1960.  
*Salesman*, Maysles Bros., 1968  
*Buena Vista Social Club*, Wm Wenders, 1999.  
*Gimme Shelter*, Maysles Bros., 1970  
*Nobody's Business*, Alan Berliner, 1996.  
*Tongues Untied*, Marlon Riggs, 1991  
*Song of Ceylon*, Basil Wright, 1935.  
*Koyaanisqatsi*, Godfrey Reggio, 2002  
*High School*, Frederic Wiseman, 1968  
*David Holtzman's Diary*, Jim McBride, 1968.  
*Grizzly Man*, Werner Herzog, 2005  
*Burden of Dreams*, Les Blank, 1982  
*We Fight*, 2005  
*Harlan County*, Barbara Kopple, 1967.  
*Roger and Me*, Michael Moore, 1989  
*Madonna: Truth or Dare*, Alex Keshishian, 1991.  
Barbara Hammer Documentaries  
Ken Burns Documentaries  
Su Friedrich Documentaries  
*Hurricane Katrina*, UMVID 2411  
*Land without Bread* UMVID 4427  
*Triumph of the Will* UMDVD 1087  
*Night and Fog* UMDVD 643  
*Crumb* UMDVD 912  
*War Comes To America* UMDVD 320  
*Hoop Dreams* UMDVD 1098  
*Burden of Dreams* UMDVD 1367  
*The War Game* UMDVD 2578  
*Why We Fight* 2005 UMDVD 2197  
*Harlan County* UMVID 1311  
*This is Spinal Tap* UMDVD 696  
*Koyaanisquatsi* UMDVD 392  
*Hoop Dreams* UMDVD1098  
*David Holzman's Diary*  
*Thin Blue Line* UMDVD 1310  
**(Addition Documentaries by approval)**

**GRADES** Final grades will be determined according to the following point system:

Total possible points = 100

3-5 page paper .....	20%	TBA
First oral presentation.....	15%	TBA
Second oral presentation.....	15%	TBA
Final Film Project.....	30%	<u>final</u> screening TBA
Class participation.....	20%	

**FINAL GRADE** based on total points:

90-100 = A

80-89 = B

70-79 = C

60-69 = D

0 - 69 = F

## **ASSIGNMENTS:**

### **Final Film Project**

Each student will make a short documentary film (video) on a subject of the student's choosing. This project can be of any reasonable length and in any style and will be graded on ambition, clarity of goals as articulated by the film, technical realization and effort. This project will constitute the main work students will be doing outside of the classroom. It is expected that students will be actively engaged in work on this project across the duration of the semester. Films which are started late and rushed to completion in the last few weeks of the semester will be graded accordingly.

### **Paper on documentary film of student's choice**

Each student will write a 3-5 page paper analyzing a documentary film of the student's choice. The analysis should describe the intentions and methods of the documentary, the historical context that gave rise to the film and how the cinematic techniques employed are used to realize the film's goals. Comparisons with other documentary films can be explored as well as an evaluation of the success of the film in realizing its intended goals.

### **Oral presentations**

Each student will make two oral presentations to the class on assigned documentary films. Film #1 - Students should be prepared to discuss the themes and methods of the assigned films and show selected clips from the film to illustrate their analysis.

Film # 2 should relate to the students' individual subject / project for the semester. The presentation should draw on similarities and differences they would like to focus on for their project.

### **Work - in - Progress**

**Each student is required to screen work-in-progress for class critiques.**

**Dates TBD**

### **Internet Surfing**

In most classes we will dedicate a portion of time to surfing the internet for examples of contemporary digital videos or other media content that in some way reconfigures, challenges, or undermines fundamental premises of documentary filmmaking. Each student will be asked to "find" one such example (on their own time) and then guide us to it on the internet during class time. Students will not be directly graded on this assignment, but it will be part of the "class participation" grading component.

### **ART 316 Course SCHEDULE: Meet in class time: 3 hours 50 minutes**

**Aug. 30th** - Introduction to class. Basic equipment demonstration and hands-on equipment check out. Schedule student presentations.

Screening and discussion: *Capturing the Friedmans*. (What is Truth? – Discussion)

**Sept. 6** - Clip screenings and lecture on the history of documentary cinema, part 1.  
Reading: Chapter 1, *The Directors Role, Directing the Documentary*, Michael Rabiger, Focal Press, 2014

**Sept 13** - Cinematography for documentary films. In-class shooting exercise #1: shooting interviews. Clip screenings and lecture: The history of documentary cinema, part 2  
Reading: Chapter 24, *Interviewing, Directing the Documentary*, Michael Rabiger.

**Sept. 20** - Production sound recording for documentaries. In-class shooting exercise #2: Voice recording exercises for both indoors and outdoors setups.  
Clip screenings: *Triumph of the Will*, 1935, Leni Riefenstal and *Night and Fog*, 1955, Alain Renais. Reading: Susan Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism," *A Susan Sontag Reader*, NY Vintage, 1982 (available on E-Reserve)

**Sept. 27** - Lighting for documentaries (studio A) and shooting exercise #3: handheld techniques. Screening: *WTC-The First 24 Hours*, *Warhol Screen Test: Dylan, Patti Smith Film*.

**October 4** - Presentation #1 - Due In Class.  
Discuss each students' Documentary idea and progress.  
Writing Proposals, budgets and schedules.

**Oct 11** - Screenings: *Guest Documentarian*.  
Post production issues, part 1. Preparing the footage, finding a structure, editing.  
Screenings: 2 student doc. presentations

**Oct 18** - Screening: # 2 student doc. presentations - Due In Class.

**October 25** - Postproduction issues part 2: editing, sequence transitions, finding the flow.

**Nov 1** - Postproduction Sound Design: Working in the sound studio: adding effects, music and voiceover narration.

**Nov 8.** - Screenings: *The Plow that Broke the Plains*, Pare Lorentz, 1936, *Land Without Bread*, Luis Bunuel, 1933.

**Nov 15.** - Screen student projects.

**Nov. 22.** - Rough Cuts due. Screen and critique rough cuts

**Nov. 29.** - Work in Progress Screening

**Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>** - Final Student Documentary Film Projects due. Final exam.