



Contemporary India

FILM 380: *Documentary Film*

Course Description

This course aims to equip the learner with in-depth understanding of the form of the documentary film and arms them with the relevant aesthetic knowledge and production tools to use it as a form of communication. The learner will use this tool to both interpret and communicate their understanding of contemporary India in the form of short non-fiction digital videos.

The course is designed on dual principles – to function both as an introductory course to students who are using the tool for the first time and a rigorous refresher course for students who are familiar with filmmaking and want to take it up as a vocation.

Learning Objectives

After completion of the course the learner will be able to

- Understand the power and effectiveness of documentary film as a communication tool
- Use the rudimentary knowledge of the history and aesthetics of non-fiction cinema to appreciate and interpret documentary films
- Conceptualise and create proposals for short documentary films
- Shoot, edit and disseminate short documentary films
- Apply the practical knowledge documentary films to understand societies and communities in South Asia

Course Modules

Key Sessions on the following topics will be held throughout the semester:

- Introduction to Documentary workshop
- Research methodology
- Field Work
- Field work
- Presentation
- Planning

Module A: Documentary Aesthetics 12 hours

Documentary as a form, a brief critical history of non-fiction film practice across the world, issues of subjectivity and representation, realism and hyper-realism, image and its politics, documentary in India.

Assignment

Short presentation on a documentary film of the learner's choice

SCHEDULE

Week One	10:15 to 13:00	14:00 to 17:00	17:30 to 18:00 Film Screening
Day 1	Introduction to Documentary Cinema (Lecture)	Documentary Aesthetics (Lecture)	Valparaiso (Joris Ivens)
Day 2	Screening 1.Nanook of the North (Robert Flaherty) 2. Night Mail (Basil Wright)	Documentary Aesthetics (Lecture)	Memories, Movement and a Machine (K R Manoj)
Day 3	Documentary Aesthetics (Lecture)	Documentary Aesthetics (Lecture)	Paneta Alemania (Dogfilms)
Day 4	Actuality trip		My Migrant Soul (Yasmine Kabir)
Day 5	Assignment : Presentation		

Module B Production Methodology 18 hours

I. Pre-production

Conceptualising and articulating the film, research, writing proposal, budgeting principles for independent films, choosing equipment or customising equipment to the filming requirement.

Assignment

Concept and Treatment for a 10-15 minute film

II. Production 4 hours

Outdoor and indoor shooting, interview techniques, framing and composition, getting acceptable audio quality and technical trouble shooting

Assignment

Short Interview recording of an Indian Student/Home-maker /domestic worker (By drawing of lots)

III. Post-production 4 hours

Logging the footage, the ‘paper edit’, capturing/convert into editable form, rough cut, basic ‘sound post’, mixing and mastering into DVD , quicktime and streaming video formats.

Assignment

Paper edit of an already shot footage preferably by an Indian film students

SCHEDULE

Week 2	1015 to 1300	1400 to 1700	1730 to 1800
Day 6	Screening	Production Methodology	Research and Field work
Day 7	Production Methodology	Production Methodology	
Day 8	Assignment	Assignment	
Day 9	Assignment : Presentation		
Day 10	Final Idea Pitch		

MODULE C FINAL PROJECT

IV. Dissemination 2 hours

Sharing content on World Wide Web, film festivals, community bodies/non-governmental organizations and integrating it with professional profiles and competencies.

Some information regarding the shoot:

Students are given interpreters during the preparation and for shoots. The professor looks daily at the material shot and discusses. This she does without intervening into the process the student has embarked upon by this time. Thus the teaching continues over these discussions and the student learns to read and judge her/his own images.

SCHEDULE

Weeks 3-5	1015 to 1300	1300 to 1400	1400 to 1700
Day 11	Shooting Preparation/Reconnaissance		
Day 12	Day 1 Shoot		
Day 13	Day 2 Shoot		
Day 14	Day 3 Shoot		
Day 15	Day 4 Shoot		
Day 16	Post-production (logging capturing)		
Day 17	Post-production (visual edit)		
Day 18	Post-production (visual edit)		
Day 19	Post-production (sound edit and mixing)		
Day 20	Post- production (Fine Cut)		

Day 21	Mastering and transfer
Day 22	Feedback and dissemination input; Final Submission
Day 23	Documentary Screening and Evaluation

Evaluation

- 10% Attendance
- 20% Performance in introductory classes and related assignments
- 30% Field-Based Exercises (10% each)
- 40% Final Documentary Film

What the student is required to bring:

The student brings her/his digital camera. Any camcorder, DSRL, or DV camera will do. But it must have a tape or a fire-wire output facility or a memory card (for editing purpose).

The student will come with a laptop. It is very important to note that the laptop should be checked for compatibility with the camera—which means the student should see s/he is able to dump material from the camera on the laptop.

The student may come with some editing software in their lap-top.

The student must bring a bag in which they can neatly pack the camera, the charger, the battery, the requisite wires and converters.

Grading

Alliance programs utilize the follow standard grading policy well accepted by most US institutions.

Excellent	A+	97-100%	Good	B+	87-89%	Acceptable	C+	77-79%	
	A	93-96%		B	83-86%		C	73-76%	
	A-	90-92%		B-	80-82%		C-	70-72%	
						Unsatisfactory	D+	67-69%	
							D	63-66%	
							D-	60-62%	
							Failing	F	<60%

Course Policies

Exams and Assignments

Students are required to take all regularly scheduled exams in courses for which they are registered, and to submit all assignments on time. Any compelling academic, personal, or medical reason that might justify a rescheduled exam or assignment must be brought up to the Resident Director, not program faculty. Failure to take scheduled exams or submit the requisite assignments for a course will adversely affect your grade as per the stated grading criteria for each course.

Classroom Conduct

Student punctuality is extremely important in China and India. Please do not be late for classes or other activities, as it is considered impolite to do so. It is improper to eat in class, to engage in other activities such as texting, or to slump or nap. Students are expected to be alert and engaged as a sign of respect for their professors.

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory. It is essential that the students participate fully in the coursework and all required academic activities. Authorized absences may only be approved by the Resident Director, and students are expected to make up any missed work. Unauthorized absences will adversely affect a student's grades.