

**MEDIA IV: DOCUMENTARY  
STORYTELLING SYLLABUS  
2019-2020**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course introduces students to documentary storytelling. Students will learn basic principles of non-fiction storytelling with emphasis on the aesthetic, intellectual, and ethical considerations involved in this cinematic form. Traditional documentary writing, form, style and structure will be stressed, however students may explore new creative forms of non-fiction storytelling for their final project. Instruction will focus on the documentary process from preproduction and production through post-production. *Students will be given three 2-3 minute documentary projects that explore the different types of documentary film. Students may document any aspect of the theme that they are most interested in. The final project will require students to research, produce, direct, and edit a compelling 3-7 minute documentary on a subject of their choice.*

**OBJECTIVES:**

Upon completion of this course students should be able to:

1. Understand the history and modes of documentary film.
2. Know the principles of non-fiction storytelling.
3. Critique documentary films
4. Write a documentary proposal and professional treatment.
5. Understand the ethical considerations as a documentarian.
6. Know how to plan and research a story.
7. Identify and secure interviewees.
8. To shoot and edit a documentary film.

**METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:**

1. Lecture
2. Hands-on
3. Group Project
4. Reading and writing assignments
5. Experimental learning
6. Screenings
7. Guest Lecturers

**TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER RESOURCES:**

*Documentary Storytelling*, Sheila Curan Bernard, [2010, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition]

*Making Documentary Films and Videos: A Practical Guide to Planning, Filming, and Editing Documentaries*, [2007]Barry Hampe

\*I will provide additional supplemental reading materials.

### **COURSE OUTLINE:**

The following topics will be covered throughout the duration of this course:

- I. Defining Documentary
- II. History of Documentary
- III. Modes of Documentary: Expository
- IV. Modes of Documentary: Observation
- V. Modes of Documentary: Participatory
- VI. Modes of Documentary: Reflexive
- VII. Modes of Documentary: Performative
- VIII. Modes of Documentary: Poetic
- IX. Writing a Documentary Proposal
- X. Production

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

In order to succeed in this course, students must meet the following criteria:

1. Write documentary film critiques for documentaries screened in class.
2. Complete two short documentary projects
3. Write a documentary proposal
4. Complete and present final documentary project
5. Attend class regularly and participate during in-class discussions and activities.
6. Keep and maintain a director's notebook.

### **COURSE POLICIES**

The following is how the final grade will be averaged. Students are responsible for keeping returned assignments, tests, and exams.

Computation of Final Course Grade:

**The grades for each advisory will be based on the following areas:**

<b>Participation</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Practice and Application</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>Assessments</b>	<b>40%</b>

**DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS:**

Students will keep an E-portfolio.

**GRADING:**

Generally:

A: indicates superior work

B: indicates good work

C: indicates that the student barely passed the course. Such work is normally not acceptable in a student's primary area of concentration. A student who receives such a grade may be put on formal or informal academic probation.

D: indicates work that does not meet departmental requirements. Students who receive a D must repeat the course or an approved substitute.

F: indicates the student has failed the course.

How Grades are Earned:

**A grade of "A" will be earned by the student who:**

- Completes his/her class work and assignments thoroughly and in a timely fashion.
- Displays outstanding behavior during classes, workshops, performances, lectures, etc.
- Is always prepared for class and performances with appropriate materials and attitude.
- Assists others, participates in discussions, and works well with peers and teachers.
- Often goes beyond what is expected or required of him/her.

**A grade of "B" will be earned by the student who:**

- Completes his/her class work and assignments in a timely fashion.
- Displays good behavior during classes, workshops, performances, lectures, etc.
- Is usually prepared for class and performances with appropriate materials and attitude.
- Usually assists others, participates in discussions, and works well with peers and teachers.

**A grade of "C" will be earned by a student who:**

- Often completes work with nonchalant attitude, and/or in an untimely fashion and/or with bare minimum requirements met.
- Often displays nonchalant attitude and/or discourteous behavior by sleeping, talking, etc. during classes, workshops, performances, lectures, etc.
- Is frequently tardy or absent and/or is generally unprepared for class and performances and/or usually does not have appropriate materials and attitude.
- Often does not participate in discussions and/or is often combative and unable to work well with others.

**A grade of "D" or "F" will be earned by the student who:**

- Does not complete assigned work in a timely fashion.
- Makes excuses as to why s/he is unable to study, participate or work.
- Skips class, part of class, or leaves early.
- Displays discourteous behavior by sleeping, talking, or not paying attention in performances, lectures, or workshops.
- Does not work well with other students or teachers and/or does not participate in discussions.
- Has limited pride in his/her work.

Failed Courses in Literary Media Department Policy If a student fails a course in Literary Media, the student is required to take the course again during the following school year or be unable to move on to the next grade level. Failure to pass all courses in the Literary Media & Communications department will prevent the student from receiving the arts certificate upon graduation.

Exams/Final Projects or presentations - Final projects or exams are usually a required form of evaluation in the department. Missed exams/final projects or presentations may only be made up if a written absence excuse is presented to the instructor.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT:**

Students are expected to regularly attend all classes, workshops, meetings, huddles, author talks, presentations, etc. In addition, students are expected to be on time for all of the aforementioned (with appropriate materials).

***Tardiness, Absences, and Sit-Outs*** - It is the responsibility of students to abide by attendance rules and to clear absences with individual instructors. Regular and punctual attendance to all classes is required, along with full participation. It is the student's responsibility to provide necessary written excuses from doctors and/or parents and obtain all written assignments to be made up. Three unexcused absences may result in failure. Three unexcused tardies are equal to one absence. It is possible that extended sit-outs, excessive tardiness and repeated absences may serve as grounds for transfer. If return is allowed (at the discretion of the faculty) the student may be required to repeat courses not completed.

***Class Participation*** - All students are required to fully participate in all class exercises and activities. Students will be regularly called upon to critique the work of other students and to read aloud from their own work. While a student has the right not to participate on occasion (infrequently) they may not opt out on a regular basis. Regular oral participation is required and is a part of a student's graded assessment.

***Conduct*** - In the classroom, hallways, master classes, rehearsals/performances, visits from guest writers, on field trips, etc. students are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism, self-discipline, decorum and restraint at all times. Sleeping is not allowed unless the student has note from the nurse.

***Conflict Resolution*** - Situations that require faculty or administrative intervention should be brought to the attention of the department chairperson who will take the matter through the proper channels until the matter is resolved.

***Dress Code*** - Students are not allowed to wear any of the following: Belly (midriff revealing) tops - cleavage-revealing tops or dresses - Transparent clothing - Short-shorts, Mini-skirts without leggings or tights - Hats - Underwear-revealing clothing (either male or female) - T-shirts with inappropriate statements.

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***Required Materials*** (students must bring the following required materials to classes at all times)

**Assignment Book** - Students must have this at all times in each class and they must use it. Students are responsible for knowing what his/her assignment is in each class and when it is due. If a student is absent they are still required to complete the assignment on the given due date unless an extension has been granted by the teacher.

**Pens, Paper** - students must always have something to write with and on.

**Journals-** will be given to students by some teachers and must remain in that teacher's possession, unless otherwise stated. In addition, students are expected to keep their own separate journals on a regular basis and may be asked to produce such at any time for any teacher. Journals aid writing students in their own/home "practice" of writing. Writers must practice in the same way musicians, dancers, etc. must practice their craft. Please consult course syllabi for

**Notebooks-** (one-inch, three-ring, loose-leaf/college ruled paper) are required in most classes.

**\*CELLPHONES-** must be turned off at all times in the classroom and may not be answered, even if the caller is a parent. (Parents must call the school office if there is an emergency.) If a cell phone rings during class time, the student will first be issued a warning. Thereafter the phone will be confiscated and turned into the front office for parental pickup. The same applies to cell phones being used for text-messaging purposes or to discern what time it is. Cell phones may not be displayed by students unless the teacher has announced a class break.