

Com 352 Fall 2019 (will become 306/406)

Documentary Storytelling & Production

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Reggienet: Course schedule, messages, lecture notes, grades, etc.
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Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday, 12:30 pm – 1:45 p.m.
or by appointment

Course Objectives

This course is an in-depth investigation of the art and craft of on screen nonfiction storytelling. Successful completion of this course will result in students having an enhanced historical, theoretical, ethical, and aesthetic understanding of documentaries.

Specifically, students will be able to:

- Identify the various genres and the accompanying techniques used in various documentary productions.
- Discuss ethical concerns and dilemmas surrounding the documentary form.
- Analyze documentaries to identify and understand the story structure used by the creators.
- Work as part of a team to complete an 8 – 12 minute documentary.
- Create ancillary materials to promote their work for film festivals.

Textbook

Bernard, S.C. (2016). *Documentary Storytelling: Creative Nonfiction on Screen* (4th ed.). New York: Focal Press.

Course Policies

1. Regular attendance is expected. Students should have read the assigned material prior to class and be prepared to participate. Being absent/tardy or failure to actively engage in class activities will negatively affect your grade (i.e., being absent for a discussion will result in an automatic 50% grade reduction in the reading questions you answer in advance of class).
2. Deadlines must be met unless you have met with me and I have approved a delay. Late assignments will have points deducted equivalent to one letter grade for each day late.
3. For your own protection, please keep digital copies of all assignments you submit to me.
4. Plagiarism (i.e., presenting someone else's work as your own or without proper acknowledgment) or any other type of academic dishonesty will be considered justification for failure in the course.
5. Students who do not pull their weight during the group documentary project will be removed from their team and given an alternative assignment.

Course Requirements

- Class participation, discussion, & reflection
- Documentary Treatment (Background & Creative Approach)
- Research/Contact List for Documentary
- Shot Sheet/Wish List for Documentary
- Production Schedule
- Final Script
- Final Documentary
- Peer Evaluations
- Film Festival package (press releases, social media, FilmFreeway page, submissions)
- Graduate Students are required to complete a 10-12 page “close reading” of a feature documentary (see chapter 7 in the textbook).

Grading

Assignment	Points
Daily Reading/Participation (14 x 5)	70
Filmmaker Reaction/Reflection	50
Research/Contact List	5
Shot Sheet/Wish List	5
Production Schedule	5
Documentary Treatment	50
Progress Reports (7x5)	35
Final Script	30
Final Documentary	100
Peer Evaluations	50
Film Festival Package	100
Total	500
Graduate Paper*	100
Graduate Total	600

*Graduate Students are required to write an additional paper to receive graduate credit. This paper is a “close viewing” of a feature documentary of your choosing using the techniques described in chapter seven of your textbook. The additional points are reflected in the table below.

Grading Scale

Grade	Percentage	Points	Grad Points
A	90-100%	450+	540+
B	80-89%	400+	480+
C	70-79%	350+	420+
D	60-69%	300+	360+
F	59% & below	299 -	359-

Course Schedule

- <http://my.ilstu.edu/~bksimon/com352/>
- You can also access the schedule by following the “Course Schedule” link on the class Reggienet site.

Absences due to Student Bereavement: Students who experience the death of an immediate family member or relative as defined in the University Student Bereavement Policy will be excused from class for funeral leave, subsequent bereavement, and/or travel considerations. Students are responsible for providing appropriate documentation to the Dean of Students office and for contacting the instructor as soon as possible to make arrangements for completing missed work. More information is available in the Student Bereavement Policy at <http://www.policy.illinoisstate.edu/2-1-27.shtml>

Research Participation - Extra Credit: There will be a few extra credit opportunities for research participation. The extra credit points will be added to your final grade, and may not necessarily appear in the gradebook immediately upon your completion of the opportunity. There are no guarantees for extra credit, and it is each student’s responsibility to be aware of and take advantage of such opportunities. You may receive extra credit for participating in any of the studies posted to the School of Communication’s Research Announcement Board. The Research Announcement Board is updated as research studies are opened/closed, and it is your responsibility to access the Board and be aware of available opportunities. The Research Announcement Board can be accessed via: <https://sites.google.com/site/ilstusocstudies>

In general, each 30 minutes of participation in an extra credit study will earn you .5 Research Credits, but please see the call for participants for the Research Credits associated with each study. For example, if you participate in a research study worth .5 Research Credit, your participation would provide 5 points to your final grade. Each project listed on the Research Announcement Board will indicate the specific number of Research Credits associated with the project. You can only receive five extra points once for Com 352.

I will get evidence of participation and the time of participation from the researcher(s) who administer the research studies at the conclusion of the semester; however, it is your responsibility to make sure that the researchers have the necessary evidence of your participation at the time of the study. Before participating in a study, please be sure to have your name, ULID (i.e., the part of your email before @ilstu.edu), instructor name, and course and section number ready, as you will need to provide these to receive credit. Research Credit can only be applied to one course for each study, unless specified otherwise on the Research Announcement Board. After the final exam, there will be no further opportunities for extra credit or to otherwise improve your grade.

Non-Research Extra Credit Opportunities (Instructor Determined): There may be some studies for which you are not eligible (e.g., recruiting based on gender or family structure) or in which you do not wish to take part. Reasonable alternatives are available for those not able or wanting to take part in specific studies, to ensure equitable non-research based opportunities. Throughout the semester, the instructor will announce non-research opportunities for extra credit, which may include attending a colloquium, reading a recent article or research paper, or attending an on-campus event and writing a summary of the connection of the event to course content. The instructor will make these opportunities and specific details available as they arise.

Special Needs: Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 350 Fell Hall, (309) 438-5853, or visit the StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu.

Mental Health Resources: Life at college can get very complicated. Students sometimes feel overwhelmed, lost, experience anxiety or depression, struggle with relationship difficulties or diminished self-esteem. However, many of these issues can be effectively addressed with a little help. Student Counseling Services (SCS) helps students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. Student Counseling Services is staffed by experienced, professional psychologists and counselors, who are attuned to the needs of college students. The services are FREE and completely confidential. Find out more at Counseling.IllinoisState.edu or by calling (309) 438-3655.

Tentative Schedule of Class Topics & Reading Assignments Fall 2019

Week	Tues	Topic/Readings/Films	Thurs	Topic/Readings/Films
1	08/20	Introduction "My Mom's Motorcycle" NY Times Article	08/22	Chapter 01 Defining Documentary "Kalua Pig" & "SLOMO"
2	08/27	Chapter 02 Story Basics "Ken Burns on Story"	08/29	Chapter 03 Finding the Story Scenes from "Thomas Jefferson"
3	09/03	Chapter 04 Story Structure "Betty Tells Her Story" "Hand Cut" "My Evening with Haskell"	09/05	Chapter 05 Time on Screen "The Camera that Changed the World"
4	09/10	Chapter 06 Creative Approach Recreation, Errol Morris	09/12	Chapter 07 Close Viewing Werner Herzog
5	09/17	Chapter 08 Research "Sriracha"	09/19	Chapter 09 Planning & Pitching "Sriracha" with comments
6	09/24	Chapter 10 Treatments & Proposals "This may be the Last Time"	09/26	Chapter 11 Shooting Hands On Demonstration
7	10/01	Chapter 12 Editing Demonstration	10/03	Chapter 13 Narration & Voice Over Filmmaker Reaction/ Reflection Due
8	10/08	Chapter 14 Storytelling Checklist	10/10	Due: Research/Contact List Shot Sheet/Wish List Production Schedule Treatment
9	10/15	Group Work	10/17	Group Work
10	10/22	Group Work	10/24	Group Work
11	10/29	Group Work	10/31	Group Work
12	11/05	Group Work	11/07	Group Work
13	11/12	Group Work	11/14	Group Work
14	11/19	Group Work	11/21	Group Work
15	11/26	Thanksgiving Break	11/28	Thanksgiving Break
16	12/03	Group Work	12/05	Group Work

**Final Exam Period. Screen Documentaries
Turn in Final Scripts/Festival Package**