



## **CIEE Seville, Spain**

<b>Course name:</b>	Digital Video Reporting in Context
<b>Course number:</b>	COMM 3003 CSCS
<b>Programs offering course:</b>	Communications, New Media, and Journalism – English
<b>Language of Instruction:</b>	English
<b>U.S. semester credits:</b>	3
<b>Contact Hours:</b>	45
<b>Term:</b>	Spring 2020

### **Course Description**

This course presents a journey through the history of documentary film, from its beginnings to current trends. At the same time, we will also be able to present the evolution of cinematographic language, with the idea that from session to session, the student engages in audiovisual exercises of a documentary nature specifically related to the historic period we are studying. These exercises will be oriented toward the student's life- the social community he or she forms a part of during the experience abroad. As a result, students will use audiovisual media as tools that allow them to gain understanding of the cultural context in which they live, and of themselves, as participants in that context.

### **Learning Objectives**

The goal of this course is to guide participants in the process of acquiring theoretical and practical knowledge about audiovisual language in the context of documentary film, as well as its application for recording, viewing, and editing audiovisual projects, always keeping in mind the specific cultural framework in which the students participate during their time abroad.

### **Course Prerequisites**

There are no prerequisites, apart from a basic knowledge of how to use recording devices and how to edit audiovisuals. Beginning the course with a lower quality camera or editing program does not necessarily lead to a lower grade than if a student had had better tools. The same can be said regarding familiarity with audiovisual language. Students need to have a GPA of at least 2.5.

### **Methods of Instruction**

The course consists of 45 hours, containing both theoretical activities – viewings and discussion of documentary films, and practical work - recording audiovisual material in selected areas outside the classroom. In both cases, the goal is to stimulate the students to reflect on their narrative production and their peers' through a constant intra and interpersonal dialogue. The professor's job will be to accompany and guide the students in reflective dialogue about their audiovisual material, all in the context of a cultural immersion program specially created to stimulate these reflections.

### **Assessment and Final Grade**

**CIEE classes are not graded on a curve nor is there extra credit work. The final grade will be based upon the following criteria:**



1. Participation:	20%
2. Weekly Projects (x8):	30%
3. Midterm Project	20%
4. Final Project:	30%

### **Course Requirements**

**Participation:** All students are expected to participate actively in class by show willingness to participate in the discussion of the issues raised at the beginning of the session and an interest in conducting classroom exercises and subsequent reflection and comments.

**Weekly Projects (x8)** In the first nine weeks, we will complete out-of-class exercises related to the theoretical content covered. In each session, the application of theory and technique previously studied will be evaluated. Additionally, the student's personal progress overall to create and to reflect on the audiovisual projects will be evaluated.

**Midterm Project:** At the midpoint of the course, students will create a midterm projects that consists of a participative interview. The instructions for this project will be given during class, in the corresponding session. The evaluation will focus on the students' capacity to put their theoretical and practical knowledge from class into practice.

**Final Project:** As a final project, students will complete an audiovisual documentary piece, which will be evaluated according to the degree they are able to integrate the knowledge they have gained throughout the course in the project. In order to foster coherence in all of the presented projects, a general theme will be chosen midway through the semester. In this way, students can carry out their projects according to a specific topic within the theme.

### **Attendance policy**

Students are not allowed to miss class for unjustified reasons. For each unexcused absence, the participation portion of the grade will be lowered. Hence, it will be very difficult to receive a 100 in the class. Please keep this in mind. If a student misses class twice without a valid excuse (a note from a physician in the event of an illness), then the professor will automatically lower the final grade by 5 points (on a 100-point scale) for each class missed thereafter. Students with 6 or more absences will fail the course.

Students should arrive to class on time. Arriving more than 15 minutes late for a class will count as an unexcused absence. Please note that an excused absence is one that is accompanied by a doctor's note: signed stamped and dated. Travelling and/or travel delays are not considered valid reasons for missing class.

\* Notes from a physician will only be valid and admitted by the Program Manager if the doctor confirms that the visit could not have been arranged at another time, or that the student was too ill to attend class that day.

### **Academic Honesty**

Students are expected to act in accordance with their university and CIEE's standards of conduct concerning plagiarism and academic dishonesty.



## Weekly Schedule

### **Week 1**

#### First Session

The first session will be devoted to presenting the course. What does it consist of? What will be the methodology used? How will we organize the theoretical and practical sessions? Also, participants will have the opportunity to talk about the expectations they have of the course and to express any questions or concerns.

#### Second Session

In this session, the pioneers of documentary film will be studied, from the end of the 19th century to the fundamental turn of Robert J. Flaherty at the beginning of the 1920s. This study will involve reflecting on these pioneers' attitudes towards the cinema, as well as on the cinema's fundamental tool for making movies: the composition of the image. In class, both aspects will be worked with an exercise related to receptivity and another related to the concepts of flat space and deep space.

Homework.

Video project 1. Students will be expected to do approximately one minute of video work inspired by the style of documentary records from the late 19th century and whose characteristics have been studied in class.

In preparation for the next class, students should also watch the documentary *Nanook of the North* (Robert Flaherty, 1922) on their own and reflect on questions that will be asked in class by the teacher.

### **Week 2**

#### Session 1

Viewing and analysis of student projects.

#### Session 2

Robert J. Flaherty is considered the father of documentary film and his masterpiece, *Nanook of the North*, the first documentary in the history of cinema. In this session, students will learn why Flaherty and his documentary are so important, they will come to know their influence on other authors to this day, and will take away new dramatic and narrative tools to apply in their projects

Homework.

Video project 2. Students will be expected to do approximately two minutes of video work inspired by the style of Robert Flaherty (*Institutional Mode of Representation*) and whose characteristics have been studied in class.

In preparation for the next class, students should also watch the documentary *Man with a Movie Camera* (Dziga Vertov, 1929) on their own and reflect on questions that will be



asked in class by the teacher.

### **Week 3**

#### Session 1

Viewing and analysis of the student projects.

#### Session 2

Parallel to Flaherty in the United States during the 1920s, Dziga Vertov was conducting a revolution in film at the USSR. He and other European artists explored non-narrative film forms to talk about reality, forms that we can describe as expressive. In this session, students will learn about these radical and avant-garde ways of approaching reality and will obtain practical ideas for their next projects.

Homework.

Video project 3. Students will be expected to do approximately three minutes of video work inspired by the expressive style of Dziga Vertov and whose characteristics have been studied in class.

In preparation for the next class, students should also watch the documentary *Don't Look Back* (D.A Pennebaker, 1967) on their own and reflect on questions that will be asked in class by the teacher.

### **Week 4**

#### Session 1

Viewing and analysis of student projects

#### Session 2

New revolutions of video and audio recording equipment in the 1950s also produced an essential turn in the history of documentary film. The directors become silent observers of reality, discreet witnesses of what happens around them that they try to register with the greatest possible objectivity. It is the moment of the so-called observational documentary. In this session we will study some of its most important representatives in the United States and Europe, such as D.A Pennebaker, Albert and David Maysles, John Schlesinger or Lindsay Anderson. Also, participants will work in class with the concepts of sequence shot, points of interest, ellipsis and wildtrack, necessary for their next projects.

Homework.

Video project 4. Students will be expected to do approximately three minutes of video work inspired by the observatory style of D.A Pennebaker, Frederick Wiseman or Albert and David Maysles and whose characteristics have been studied in class.

In preparation for the next class, students should also watch the documentary *Chronicle*



*of a Summer* (Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin, 1961) on their own and reflect on questions that will be asked in class by the teacher.

## **Week 5**

### Session 1

Viewing and analysis of student projects

### Session 2

A different documentary film model appears in Europe as a response to observational cinema. In this model, the director considers himself not so much an observer of reality as another element of reality and acts accordingly. The interaction with the subjects of observation thus becomes essential and takes shape in a style in which the interview is essential. This type of interactive or participatory documentary has been called cinema verite or direct cinema. In this session, we will see classic examples of this trend, such as *Chronicle of a Summer* by Jean Rouch, and we will work on the interview activity and the combined edition of the so-called A-ROLL and B-ROLL.

Video project 5. Students will be expected to do approximately three minutes of video work inspired by the participatory style of Jean Rouch and whose characteristics have been studied in class. This is the Midterm Project.

In preparation for the next class, students should also watch the documentary *Sans Soleil* (Chris Marker, 1983) on their own and reflect on questions that will be asked in class by the teacher.

## **Week 6**

### Session 1

Viewing and analysis of student films

### Session 2

Throughout the following sessions, we will explore the trends in documentary film that appear from the fifties until today: the reflective documentary, the autobiographical, the false documentary (mockumentary), etc., until arriving at the new documentary model that is born with Internet: the interaction documentary, where the user can decide which itineraries to travel within the documentary film itself.

Video project 6. Students will be expected to do approximately three minutes of video work inspired by the reflective style of Chris Marker and whose characteristics have been studied in class.

In preparation for the next class, students should also watch the documentary *The Gleaners and I* (Agnes Varda, 2000) and *Stories we Tell* (Sarah Polley, 2013) on their own and reflect on questions that will be asked in class by the teacher.



## **Week 7**

### Session 1

Viewing the students' projects

### Session 2

Throughout the following sessions, we will explore the trends in documentary film that appear from the fifties until today: the reflective documentary, the autobiographical, the false documentary (mockumentary), etc., until arriving at the new documentary model that is born with Internet: the interaction documentary, where the user can decide which itineraries to travel within the documentary film itself.

Video project 7. Students will be expected to do approximately three minutes of video work inspired by the autobiographical style of Agnes Varda and Sarah Polley and whose characteristics have been studied in class.

In preparation for the next class, students should also watch the documentary *The Dark Side of the Moon* (William Karel, 2002) on their own and reflect on questions that will be asked in class by the teacher.

## **Week 8**

### First Session

Viewing of the student projects

### Second Session

Throughout the following sessions, we will explore the trends in documentary film that appear from the fifties until today: the reflective documentary, the autobiographical, the false documentary (mockumentary), etc., until arriving at the new documentary model that is born with Internet: the interaction documentary, where the user can decide which itineraries to travel within the documentary film itself.

Video project 8. Students will be expected to do approximately three minutes of video work inspired by the mockumentary style and whose characteristics have been studied in class.

In preparation for the next class, students should also watch the documentaries *The Thin Blue Line* (Errol Morris, 1988) and *The Act of Killing* (Joshua Oppenheimer, 2013) on their own and reflect on questions that will be asked in class by the teacher.

## **Week 9**

### First Session

Viewing of the student projects

Additionally, students will be asked to prepare a brief presentation about their idea for the final project for the next session.

### Second Session



Tutoring sessions for the final project

**Week 10**

First Session

Tutoring sessions for the final project

Second Session

Tutoring sessions for the final project

**Week 11**

First Session

Tutoring sessions for the final project

Second Session

Tutoring sessions for the final project

**Week 12**

First Session

Viewing of the student final projects

Second Session

The students and professor of the course will conduct an out of classroom activity in which they will make an open evaluation of the course and themselves, as well as discuss last-minute issues with the presentation of their projects.

**Course Materials**

***Readings***

Block, B. (2007) *The Visual Story. Creating the Visual Structure of Film, TV and Digital Media*.  
Aufderheide, P. (2007). *Documentary Film. A Very Short Introduction*

***Recommended Films***

*The Lost World of Mitchell & Kenyon* (3 episodios. British Film Institute, 2005 - )  
*The Great White Silence* (Herbert Ponting, 1910-1911, edited in 1924)  
*Nanook of the North* (Robert J. Flaherty, 1922)  
*Grass* (Merian C. Cooper,  
*Moana* (Robert J. Flaherty, 1926)  
*Berlin, Simphonie eine Grosstadt* (Walter Ruttmann, 1927)  
*Chelovek s kino-apparatom* [El hombre de la Cámara] (Dziga Vertov, 1929)  
*Man of Aran* (Robert J. Flaherty, 1934)  
*Night mail* (John Grierson, 1936)  
*The Plow that Broke the Plains* (Pare Lorentz, 1936)  
*Nuit et brouillard* [Noche y Niebla, 1955] (Alain Resnais, 1955)



*O Dreamland* (Lindsay Anderson, 1953)  
*Thursday's Children* (Lindsay Anderson, 1954)  
*Primary* (Robert Drew, 1960)  
*Chronique d'un été* [Crónica de un verano] (Jean Rouch, 1961)  
*Titicut follies* (Frederick Wiseman, 1967)  
*Don't Look Back* (D.A Pennebaker, 1967)  
*Salesman* (Albert y David Maysles, Charlotte Zwerin, 1969)  
*Gimme Shelter* (Albert y David Maysles, 1970)  
*Grey Gardens* (Albert y David Maysles, 1975)  
*Canciones para después de una guerra* (Basilio Martín Patino, 1976)  
*Agarrando pueblo* (Carlos Mayolo, Luis Ospina, 1977)  
*Sans Soleil* (Chris Marker, 1983)  
*Nobody's business* (Alan Berliner, 1996)  
*The Gleaners and I* (Agnes Varda)