In this class we are going to produce a 30-minute documentary of such quality that it can be aired on the local PBS station. This class will act as a production team with different students performing different functions on the film. The first task in the semester will be to pick a topic. Each student is responsible for pitching a fully developed idea the first day of class.

Early in the semester you will learn to use the Sony PMW-EX1, a broadcast-quality, HD camera. Also early in the semester we will have a lighting lab in which you will learn the basics of three-point lighting for interviews.

**Texts:**

None

**Videos:**

We will watch the documentaries listed below. Each documentary includes an essay topic and a due date for those papers. Papers should be about 750 words. We will discuss those films in class the day the papers are due. These films are on reserve at the MRC. All are available from Netflix. Some may be available online.

2. Jesus Camp. Did the filmmakers have a point of view? If you were the people running the camp, would you feel you had been treated fairly? Due Thursday, Feb. 6.
3. Undefeated. The one about the Mempher high school football team, not the one about Sarah Palin. Is this different than the crowd of reality TV shows? Due Thursday, Feb. 20.
4. Inside Job. How would this film have been different if it had been done my Michael Moore? Are there similarities in approach and style? Due Thursday, March 6.
5. The Thin Blue Line. Are re-enactments ever justified in documentaries? Are they justified in this film. Due Thursday, March 27.
6. The Gatekeepers. Is this a piece of anti-Israel propaganda? Due Thursday, March 10.

**Plagiarism and other lies:** Journalists are in the truth business. Part of telling the truth is being truthful about how we do our jobs. Webster defines plagiarism as the taking (ideas, writings, etc.) from (another) and passing them off as one’s own. Lots of big names have been caught in recent years plagiarizing – Stephen Ambrose, Doris Kearns Goodwin, etc.
because something appears on the Internet, for example, does not mean you can use it as if you wrote it. If you want to use someone’s description, do so, but put quotes around it and attribute it. To do otherwise is to lie to your readers. If I catch you plagiarizing you will fail this course. There has also been a rash of liars masquerading as journalists, people who’ve made up sources, made up quotes, made up facts. If I catch you doing that, you will fail the course.

**Attendance:** Missing a class is not an excuse for failing to do the work assigned in that class. Ask your classmates or ask me what the assignment was. If there’s a good reason you missed the class, talk to me. But it had better be good. We have only 40 class sessions and a lot of ground to cover. I will forgive one unexcused absence. More than one will start counting against your final grade.

**Punctuality:** Be in class on time. Each class will start promptly. The door will be closed at the start of class and you will not be allowed to enter.

**Deadlines:** No late assignments will be accepted. Part of learning to be a journalist is meeting deadlines. Use your time efficiently. Editors do not tolerate those who miss deadlines.

**Cell Phones:** No cell phone use, either voice or text, is allowed during class. If your cell phone goes off, you will be asked to leave the class.

**Reaching me:** I will be in my office or the production lab from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday. Feel free to call me at 484-4759 from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. any day of the week. If you need me in person at other times, that can be arranged by appointment. You may e-mail me at rhodiern@richmond.edu. But a special note about e-mails to me: Treat them like the business communication they are. Begin with a conventional salutation (Dear. Prof. Hodierne) and end with a polite closing (Sincerely, Jane Doe). Write in complete sentences with proper capitalization and punctuation. I don’t think emoticons are cute. Finally, I don’t respond to text messages.

**Grading:** The grading of papers will be done in the usual style – emphasis on clarity of expression, originality of thought, correct spelling, etc. There will be some other specific assignments that will be graded individually. For example you will all help log the video and you will be graded on how well you accomplish that.