Documentary Journalism I, Spring 2016

Corrina Waxman Tuesday and Thursday 1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.
Classroom: Journalism Editing lab, Weinstein Hall, Room 418
Office Hour: Tuesdays 3 p.m. – 4 p.m. Weinstein, Room 424
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Course Objective: You will learn the fundamental, theoretical, creative and technical concerns of documentary and video production. You will be introduced to research for documentary, treatment writing, location scouting and how to conduct interviews. The demands of documentary expression require preparation with a different emphasis from that which applies to the personal and experimental approaches to filmmaking and video making.

“From the outside, making a documentary seems like the easiest thing in the world. You just go where something interesting is happening, turn on the camera, and record it.”

-- Barry Hampe.

Throughout this course you will learn that it takes a great deal of work to make a documentary well, even a short one.

Portrait Film: Create a 3-minute portrait of someone. Use a variety of shots. Use absolutely no music.

Short Documentary: Create a 6- to 7-minute short documentary that you will work on for the duration of the semester.

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to use cameras, lighting and sound to create projects Students will learn editing software and interview techniques
Required Reading:


Assignments – Written Responses

• You will watch a film and write a response on it and put it up on our blackboard discussion board.

• We will also discuss threads on the readings.

• When emailing me, please put “DocJournalism” in the subject line of the email and week number of the assignment. For all email questions, put “DocJournalism” in the subject line.

• Films on Reserve in the MRC:

“Don’t Look Back” by D.A. Pennebaker
“Fog of War” by Erroll Morris
“Bright Leaves” by Ross McElwee
“Waiting for Superman” by David Guggenheim
“Enron The Smartest Guys in the Room” by Alex Gibney
“Buena Vista Social Club” by Wim Wenders

Required: External Hard Drive (See Recommendation List on Blackboard.)

Recommended Texts:

“The History of Documentary” by Eric Barnouw
“Documentary 12 Essays” by Dai Vaughan

Attendance: If you attend every class on time, your final grade will get one half point.
Grading:

Film and reading responses, 25 percent.

Production Journal, 25 percent.

Final Project, 50 percent.

Class Rules: No cell phones.

Workload: To be successful in this course, you should expect to devote 10 to 14 hours on assignments outside class each week.

Plagiarism: It is unethical to take someone else’s work without permission. It is also an honor code violation. You may use material from other sources as long as you attribute them. If you are involved in any form of plagiarism, you automatically will fail this course. This has taken on new significance in recent years with the ease of obtaining information from the Internet. If you have any questions, please check with me before handing in assignments.