

Prepared by the Department of Arts and Communication
Date of Departmental Approval: October 2005
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Effective: Fall 2006

1. **Course Number:** COM 224
Course Title: Documentary Film
2. **Description:** Filmmaker John Grierson defined documentaries as "the creative treatment of reality." This course looks at the history and development of the documentary film, with a particular focus on the varying notions of truth, art, reality. Students learn how to look at documentaries with a critical eye by not only studying the subject, but also by participating directly in the making of an actual documentary video.
3. **Student Learning Outcomes (instructional objectives: intellectual skills):**
Upon successful completion of this course, students are able to do the following:
 - demonstrate an understanding of the history of documentary film and the changing notions of truth, reality, and fiction that relate to the form.
 - apply the production techniques of documentary filmmaking.
 - write critical responses to documentary films that show a clear understanding of the history, techniques, and processes of documentary film.
4. **Credits:** 3 credits
5. **Satisfies General Education Requirement:** No.
6. **Prerequisite(s):** ENL101
7. **Semester(s) Offered:** Spring
8. **Suggested General Guidelines for Evaluation:** Students are graded on their ability to grasp the concepts discussed in class, their participation in discussions, and their abilities to express what they've learned clearly and originally in their assignments. Specific assignments include a group production of a documentary film, periodic quizzes, short response papers about films we watch in class, and a final paper covering a particular documentary filmmaker's work or a particular documentary approach.
9. **General Topical Outline (Optional):** Historical, aesthetic, and conceptual study of the documentary film is covered in the first half of the semester, followed by intensive instruction in the basics of producing a documentary video. Students learn how to look critically at non-fiction films and work as a group to implement what they've learned in a class documentary video project.