

THFM-2312-001  
(6 credit hours – condensed full course)

## DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING

Fall 2014  
Time: Wednesday: 14:30 to 21:00  
Location: OT10 and OT14  
Number of Classes: 12

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Office Hours: TBA

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Emerging filmmakers will be introduced to documentary filmmaking tools and techniques. With screenings, lectures and hands-on experience students will explore and experience non-fiction storytelling through an examination of contemporary filmmaking practices and the opportunity to conceive, develop, produce and direct their own short, non-fiction films.

Each student will be required to write and present documentary pitches and creative treatments. Students will be required to make two short documentary films and will be graded on their practical work and participation in class. Prior training or experience with operating cameras and editing software and equipment is recommended.

### EVALUATION

1. Film 1 Pitch (Due Week 2) .....	10%
2. Delivery Of Film 1 (Due Week 6).....	25%
3. Film 2 Pitch – Group Work (Due Week 7).....	10%
4. Film 2 Treatment/Storyboard – Group Work (Due Week 8).....	10%
5. Film 2 Rough Cut – Group Work (Due Week 10).....	10%
6. Delivery Of Film 2 – Group Work (Due Week 12) .....	25%
7. Class Participation .....	10%
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>100%</b>

### COURSE SCHEDULE:

#### **Week 1: September 3, 2014**

Introduction: Course overview. Defining documentary storytelling; a brief history of factual filmmaking and an examination of contemporary markets, methods and styles.

The Power of a Good Idea: Conceiving and developing provocative, engaging, and "do-able" non-fiction ideas for film and television.

Roles and Relationships: Understanding the role of the producer. Understanding the role of the director as "team coach"; shooting etiquette and communicating with the crew; methods for keeping documentary subjects on board.

**ASSIGNMENT: Conceive an original short documentary idea (no more than two minutes in length) to be told only with narration, music and still pictures. Write a one-page story pitch and present it to the class in Week 2.**

**NOTE: This pitch is real. It will be a practical working document for the first short documentary (Film 1) students will produce during the fall term.**

**Week 2: September 10, 2014**

May the Focus Be With You: The art of turning a good concept into a working idea. Using a "focus line" to fine-tune a film concept.

Inside the Researcher's Toolkit: Where to look and how to find the right elements that will turn a good idea into a great documentary; the importance of accuracy and asking the right questions; creating a research report for the director and the production team.

Finding the Dramatic Arc: Turning a tight focus and solid research into a dramatic story. Defining the hook, finding and organizing key plot points, defining the development, the climax and the resolution and examining the power of humour, surprise and irony in storytelling.

Working In the Field 2: Working in the field as part of a documentary crew.

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: Presentation of Film 1 pitches to class. One-page Film 1 story pitch documents for this assignment are due.**

**Week 3: September 17, 2014**

Camera Seminar 1: Introduction to Documentary Cinematography.

**ASSIGNMENT: Upon approval of the Film 1, one-page story pitch, students will write, narrate and edit a short documentary using only narration, music and still pictures. Film 1 must be no more than two minutes in length. It must be an original work. Both archival stills and personal photographs are acceptable visuals. Rough cuts of Film 1 are due in Week 5. Fine Cuts are Due in Week 6.**

The Power of Music: Choosing music for television. An overview of rights issues associated with music use.

Writing for Television Seminar 1: Introduction to Writing for Factual Television.

**Week 4: September 24, 2014**

Editing Seminar 1: The basics of editing for factual television.

Legal Concerns for Documentary Storytellers: An overview of legal issues affecting documentary makers including: privacy, trespass and permissions to shoot, the importance of signed releases; slander, libel and contempt of court, special concerns when working with minors, and rights and legal issues associated with music, stock and archival footage.

Sound is not a Second Class Citizen: Techniques for getting good sound with simple cameras. The importance of sound in television storytelling.

Sound Seminar: The Basics of Using Sound Equipment.

LAB: Rough Cut editing for Assignment 1. Scheduled consultation time with instructor.

**Week 5: October 1, 2014**

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: Rough Cut of Film 1 due. Films will be screened and critiqued in class. A DVD output of your film is required for screening and marking purposes.**

LAB: Fine Cut editing: Consultation time with instructor.

**ASSIGNMENT 2:** Students will be assigned to a production team. Each team will be required to pitch, produce, shoot, direct, write, and edit Film 2 – a five to seven minute short documentary. Teams will be required to deliver a written pitch and treatment during the term and a finished piece in Week 12. Each team will be deliver a written pitch in Week 7, a Treatment and Storyboard in Week 8, a Rough Cut in Week 10 and a Fine Cut in Week 12.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO CONTRIBUTE AND PARTICPATE IN GROUP WORK. FAILURE TO PARTICIPATE FULLY IN FILM TWO GROUP WORK WILL RESULT IN A FAILING GRADE.**

#### **Week 6: October 8, 2014**

Financing Documentary Films: An overview of the challenges of financing and budgeting non-fiction films. An examination of grant and support programs for emerging and experienced filmmakers.

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: Fine Cut of Film 1 due. Films will be screened and critiqued in class. A DVD output of your film is required for screening and marking purposes.**

LAB: Final Tweaking and outputs of Film 1.

#### **Week 7: October 15, 2014**

Casting for Documentaries: An examination of "casting" choices for documentary films; the importance of choosing the right characters for maximum conflict and drama, the pitfalls of too many players; managing hostile subjects; issues of fairness and balance associated with casting choices.

Choosing "The Look" and Writing a Treatment: Finding scenes, locations and a shooting style that are motivated by the characters and the dramatic arc of the story. Selecting the right "voice" and point of view for maximum drama and impact. Introduction to the power of sound, script and cinema verité shooting in bringing the points home in different kinds of stories. Techniques for writing a treatment.

Preparing for The Shoot/Writing a Storyboard: Planning a shoot on the basis of "The Look" and the storyboard; acknowledging realistic shooting timelines; organizing access to locations for shooting and interviewing; what to do when things go wrong and the story veers away from the storyboard.

**ASSIGNMENT 2 PITCH DUE: Production teams will pitch their Film 2 concepts to the class. Written one-page pitch for Film 2 due.**

#### **Week 8: October 22, 2014**

Cinematography and Videography: An examination of shooting styles and techniques. Using the camera as an editorial tool. Getting enough coverage and avoiding the perils of over shooting.

Interviewing Seminar: An examination of the art and the etiquette of interviewing including ways to put subjects into their comfort zones and a short course in how to frame questions that will produce dramatic, "round" answers and quality clips.

Introduction to Graphics: Using computer graphics and animation in documentaries.

Screening, Shot Lists and Transcripts: Techniques for screening and selecting the shots, scenes and interview clips that fit the focus and the dramatic arc of the story, exploring established formats for writing non-fiction editing scripts.

Organizing Your Material and Writing for Television Part 2: We will examine and compare some of the raw footage shot for Film 2. A discussion about the "less is more" rule for narration; finding writing that fits the director's intended tone and style; finding language that drives the drama.

**ASSIGNMENT 2: FILM 2 WRITTEN TREATMENT AND STORYBOARD DUE:****Week 9: October 29, 2014**

EDITING: Desktop non-linear editing methods for factual television; selecting and sequencing shots for motivated scenes; effective and motivated use of sound and interview clips; review of selecting music that fits tone and style; finding and following the dramatic arc. A sneak peak and comparisons of some works in progress.

**NOTE: STUDENTS WILL BE REQUIRED TO MAKE TIME OUTSIDE LECTURE AND LAB TIME TO EDIT THEIR WORK.**

The Rough Cut: What goes into a rough cut? What stays out? How much does the broadcaster/funder need to see?

LAB: Consultation with Instructor over footage, shooting and editing progress and rough cut.

**Week 10: November 5, 2014**

**ASSIGNMENT DUE::** Rough Cut due. Rough cuts will be screened and critiqued in class. Attendance is mandatory.

**Note:** No % will be given for delivery of the rough cut. However, a % will be awarded on the finished documentary. Students must deliver a rough cut on this date as part of this assignment. Students will learn the art of managing criticism and making changes that will improve the final cut, without losing their "vision".

LAB: Consultation with Instructor.

**Week 11: November 12, 2014**

Editing Seminar 2: Moving your Film from a fine rough cut to a fine cut.

LAB: Work on finessing Rough Cut to Fine Cut: Consultation with Instructor.

**Week 12: November 19, 2014**

The Fine Cut: Students will present their work to their peers. The all-important wrap party.

**ASSIGNMENT: Final Cut of Film 1 due. Films will be screened and critiqued in class. Attendance is mandatory.**

NOTE: Students will be provided with the opportunity to do some final tweaking on their films following the screening. Films must be submitted for final grading no later than **DECEMBER 5, 2014.** No extensions or exceptions.

Course schedule and assignments are subject to change depending on available production resources.

**NOTE: No docu-dramas, music videos or "mockumentaries." Films are not to exceed the minute maximum. No blooper reels at the end of the film.**

**Students will be required to provide their own tapes, computers and wherever possible, home video cameras. If unavailable, students may be required to rent some equipment to complete this course.**

**TEXTBOOK**

There is no textbook for this course.

**CONVERSION SCALE**

For the calculation of the final grade the following conversion table will be used:

A+	90 – 100%	GPA	4.5	C+	65 – 69.9%	GPA	2.5
A	85 – 89.9%	GPA	4.25	C	60 – 64.9%	GPA	2.0
A-	80 – 84.9%	GPA	4.0	D	50 – 59.9%	GPA	1.0
B+	75 – 79.9%	GPA	3.5	F	below 50%	GPA	0
B	70 – 74.9%	GPA	3.0				

Work not submitted will be graded as 0%.

**COSTS**

Costs: This is a practical hands-on course in filmmaking utilizing video and film equipment and students should take note of certain costs involved.

There is a \$50.00 non-refundable Technology Fee to help defray the costs of regular equipment maintenance. You paid this fee with your tuition.

In addition to the non-refundable Technology Fee, students are required to pay a \$200 Damage Deposit for this class. In return, we will loan you our equipment for use on class projects. If you lose or damage equipment while it is in your care, the damage deposit will be applied to costs of repair or replacement, but note: you are responsible for the total value of the loss even if it is more than this deposit. Any unused portion of your Damage Deposit will be returned to you, usually by the end of June.

The deadline for payment of the Damage Deposit is **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2014**. **THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS.** If you fail to pay in full by the deadline, a "hold" will be placed on your student file and you will not be permitted to sign out or use any equipment. In order to make payment, take the "Damage Deposit Ticket" handed out in class to Student Central by the deadline. Once you have paid, **take your receipt to Patty Hawkins in Room 3T03.** You will be required to complete an *Equipment Loan Damage Deposit Agreement* which you must show to the Equipment Manager the first time you attempt to sign out equipment.

(NB: if you are taking more than one course requiring a damage deposit, you only pay the Damage Deposit once during the Fall/Winter term.)

Attendance and Class Participation: Attendance will be taken at each class and absenteeism will affect your grade. Also, students are expected to participate in class discussion.

Class etiquette: Be on time. It is very disruptive to the rest of the class if people are wandering

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Class etiquette: Be on time. It is very disruptive to the rest of the class if people are wandering in late, especially if films are being screened or workshops are being conducted.

**"THE REAL THING" LECTURE SERIES**

The Department of Theatre and Film is presenting a series of six lectures which will be held on Wednesdays during the free period (12:30-13:20) in Theatre 1T15. Please note the dates in your diary **NOW:** Sept 17, Oct 22, Nov 12, Jan 14, Feb 11, Mar 11. This series will feature speakers from a range

of areas in the performing arts: technical, performance, design, management, film, directing, playwriting, etc. These speakers will specifically address issues related to “the business of the business.”

Attendance for potential Theatre Honours/majors and for Film majors is optional but highly recommended.

### **2014 ORIENTATION ASSEMBLY**

Each year in September we hold an *Orientation Assembly* to introduce our new students to faculty and other students; to provide information about the department, its various activities and those of its professors; and to provide news about what's coming up. This year our *Orientation Assembly* will be held on **Wednesday, September 10, 2014, 12:30-13:20 in Theatre, 1T15. ATTENDANCE IS COMPULSORY** for all Majors and Honours students. Those considering Honours are strongly recommended to attend. All others are welcome and encouraged to attend.

### **BUILDING SECURITY**

The Asper Centre for Theatre and Film (which houses the Department of Theatre and Film) is open from 8:00 am-5:30 pm weekdays. Students are permitted to be in the building between 8:00 am and 10:00 pm seven days per week (except statutory holidays when the University is closed) **BUT PLEASE NOTE:** outside of regular building hours, it is **MANDATORY** that everyone in the building **EITHER** carry an access card **OR** have a booking confirmation form in their possession (hard copy or electronic). **ALL EVENING STUDENTS in the building for classes MUST have an access card.** If a Security Guard checks and you do not have proper accreditation, **you may be evicted.**

These rules are in place to protect our students and our equipment; please respect them.

### **ELECTRONIC COURSE OUTLINE ADDENDA**

Students must check our website at <http://theatre.uwinnipeg.ca/tbooking.htm> and read the menu items called *Fire Safety Instructions in the Asper Centre for Theatre and Film, Access Card/Building Use Policy* **AND** *Room Booking Instructions*. The link to the electronic *Online Room Booking Form* is also found at this location. Please read and note all instructions carefully.

### **GENERAL NOTES**

This course outline should be considered a guideline only. Time constraints and other unforeseen factors may require that some topics be omitted or covered in less detail than indicated.

Students with documented disabilities, temporary or chronic medical conditions, requiring academic accommodations for tests/exams (e.g., private space) or during lectures/laboratories (e.g., note-takers) are encouraged to contact Accessibility Services (AS) at 786-9771 or [accessibilityservices@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:accessibilityservices@uwinnipeg.ca) to discuss appropriate options. All information about a student's disability or medical condition remains confidential. <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/accessibility>.

Students who plan to conduct research interviews, focus groups, surveys, or any other method of collecting data from any person, even a family member, must obtain the approval of the appropriate ethics committee before commencing data collection. Exceptions are research activities in class as a learning exercise. See <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/research/human-ethics.html> for submission requirements and deadlines.

All students, faculty and staff have the right to participate, learn and work in an environment that is free of harassment and discrimination. The UW Respectful Working and Learning Environment Policy may be found online at [www.uwinnipeg.ca/respect](http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/respect).

UWinnipeg promotes a scent-free environment. Please be respectful of the needs of classmates and the instructor by avoiding the use of scented products while attending lectures. Exposure to perfumes and

other scented products (such as lotion) can trigger serious health reactions in persons with asthma, allergies, migraines or chemical sensitivities.

Archival records such as videotapes, sound recordings, and photographs may be made or taken during class or lab times. The University uses such materials primarily for archival, promotional, and teaching purposes. Promotional use may include display at open houses or conferences, or use in advertising, publicity, or brochures. In reading and accepting the terms in this course outline, students acknowledge consent for such use by the University. Should a student not wish to convey such consent, s/he should withdraw from this course immediately.

Cellular phones **MUST** be turned off during classes and examinations; texting is **NOT** permitted in class.

Any student attending a test or final examination may be required to present proof of identity; photo identification is preferred.

It is the student's responsibility to retain a photocopy or computer disk copy of **ALL** assignments submitted for grading; in the event of loss or theft, a duplicate copy is required.

Students are strongly advised to read the section of the *University of Winnipeg Calendar* (found on-line at <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/cms-filesystem-action/pdfs/calendar/RegulationsandPolicies.pdf>) for information on Registration, Grading, Academic Misconduct including plagiarism, and Appeals.

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2014** is the final date to withdraw without academic penalty from courses which begin in September and end in November, 2014 (Fall 2014 Term).

### **STUDENT PARTICIPATION POLICY**

Theatre is a communal art form in which a number of interdependent artists and crafts people co-operate to create a work of art. This fact is necessarily transferred to the learning situation, and is reflected in many of the Department's courses. Consequently, it is the Department's policy that students are required to: complete homework such as reading, line-learning, script analysis, prop lists, design drawings, etc.; attend classes; attend rehearsals both within and outside of class times; and, in short, to exhibit commitment towards the inevitably shared endeavours of our field of study.

Any student failing to fulfil these requirements is harmful to the progress of dedicated students and may, after due warning, be asked to withdraw from any individual Departmental course.

### **COURSE CONTENT NOTE**

#### All Theatre and Film Classes

Dramatic Literature depicts a wide variety of human action, both elevated and base, public and private, physical and psychological, sexual and non-sexual, etc. The Department of Theatre and Film will not undertake to censor the subject matter of dramatic works.

Students who have concerns about dealing with the full range of content and style in drama/film are urged to discuss these concerns with the course instructor.

#### Performance-Related Classes

Much of an actor's work is based upon actual experiences of life which become translated into fictional circumstances. Because of this, the teaching of acting may involve encouraging the student to examine personal and even intimate areas of life to help him or her access life experiences appropriate to the demands of the work.

Dramatic literature depicts a wide range of human actions, both elevated and base, public and private, physical and psychological, sexual and non-sexual, etc. Acting students must learn to simulate life truthfully in interaction with other students in the safety of the acting class and the rehearsal hall through

exercises, discussions, and directions which address rather than avoid truthful, particularized, personalized action.

Performance classes often require strenuous physical activity. Classes may also involve physical interaction between students as part of class exercises or character development and occasional physical contact by instructors for purposes such as the demonstration of a technique or to make a posture correction. Students are responsible for wearing clothing appropriate to these activities.

Students who have concerns about dealing with the full range of actions and subject matter involved in drama are urged to discuss these concerns with their course instructor.