

# *Ethnographic and Documentary Film*

ANT3930

TH 5:10 pm-7:40 pm

CSE E222

Instructor: Dr. J.R. Stepp  
Office Hours: Grinter 337 by appointment  
Office phone: 392-0299

This course provides an introduction to ethnographic and documentary film and explores major anthropological concepts through film. The first part of the course explores early and seminal work in the genre by anthropologists and other filmmakers. The second part of the course focuses more on contemporary film and explores how these films approach a wide range of concepts related to the human condition. We will be critically viewing and discussing these films, both in class and through written assignments. Please note that this course is not about making ethnographic and documentary films, but instead about understanding them. There are no prerequisites for this class, but students who have not taken anthropology classes before will need to gain familiarity with basic terms and issues in anthropology to be successful.

## Texts

There are 2 required texts for the course:

Ellis and McLane. 2005. *A New History of Documentary Film*. Continuum Press.

Karl Heider 2006. *Ethnographic Film*. Univ Texas Press.

## Course Objectives

- Students will gain a good understanding of concepts and principles in ethnographic and documentary film and the importance of the genre to anthropology.
- Students will learn the history of ethnographic and documentary film and become familiar with major works.
- Students will learn principles from this course that they can apply creatively to their own studies and research.

Students will gain a rich and diverse theoretical perspective that they could then apply to their own filmmaking.

## Course requirements and grading policy

This course requires significant writing and reflection on the films and readings. It is imperative that you do the readings because you will need to use them to build your arguments for your assignments. Please note that participation is a significant percentage of the final grade. Students will be called on randomly throughout the semester to provide input for discussion. Late assignments will NOT be accepted.

**Course grades are based on the following:**

15% Assignment #1  
 25% Assignment #2  
 25% Assignment #3  
 25% Assignment #4  
 10% Participation

Grading Scale	
A = 90 or above	C = 70 - 73
A- = 87 - 89	C- = 67 - 69
B+ = 84 - 86	D+ = 64 - 66
B = 80 - 83	D = 60 - 63
B- = 77 - 79	D- = 57 - 59
C+ = 74 - 76	E = 56 or below

Assignments will be handed out at least one week before they are due and all will involve critical analysis and creative thought about films and readings. On average, students will be expected to write between 7-10 **typed** double spaced pages for each assignment (with the exception of the first assignment). Assignments should be **carefully proofed and spell checked** before they are handed in. Assignments that do not meet basic standards for correct spelling and grammar will be returned ungraded. Clear and concise writing is essential. Extra credit: One point of extra credit towards your final grade (maximum of 5 points) will be given to students who attend screenings of documentaries outside of class during the semester and 1) turn in proof of attendance (e.g. ticket stub), along with a two page critical essay on the film.

E-mail policy

If you contact me by e-mail, I will attempt to reply within a reasonable period of time. However, I receive an enormous number of emails each day and there are only so many hours in the day. If your query can wait until the next class time then please do so. Besides, I would much rather communicate in person than by computer.

Classroom behavior policy

No cell phone use is permitted in the classroom at any time, including texting. Laptop computers are not allowed during film screenings, they are disruptive to others. If you would like to take notes, please bring a pen or pencil and paper. No video/audio recording or photography. Disruptive behavior in general is not allowed. Failure to follow these policies will negatively impact your participation grade and may result in your dismissal from the course.

### **University of Florida Policies**

#### *Honesty:*

As a result of completing the registration form at the University of Florida, every student has signed the following statement: "I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University."

#### *UF Counseling Services:*

Resources are available on-campus for students having personal problems or lacking a clear career and academic goals which interfere with their academic performance. These resources include:

1. University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, personal and career counseling;
2. Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, personal counseling;
3. Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, sexual counseling; and
4. Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.

#### *Software Use:*

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

#### *Disabilities Accommodations:*

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

#### *UF Grading Policy:*

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html> .