

Ethnographic and Documentary Film

ANT 3930 (sect 13H3)

W 5:10 pm (3 credit hours)

TUR 2319

Instructor: Dr. Rick 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 beginning of the course explores early and seminal work in the genre by anthropologists and other filmmakers. Then, 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. However, students will have the option of making a short film or trailer for their oral presentation. 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:

Patricia Aufderheide 2007. *Documentary Film: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford 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 and attendance is a significant percentage of the final grade. Students will be called on randomly throughout the semester to provide input for discussion. Students are expected to attend every class and stay until the end of each screening. Many of these films are hard to find and watching the film later via rental or online is not an acceptable substitute for attendance.

Course grades are based on the following:

20% Assignment #1
 20% Assignment #2
 20% Assignment #3
 25% Final Assignment
 5% Student Oral Presentation
 10% Attendance and Participation

Grading Scale	
A = 93 or above	C = 73 - 76
A- = 90 - 92	C- = 70 - 72
B+ = 87 - 89	D+ = 67 - 69
B = 83 - 86	D = 63 - 66
B- = 80 - 82	D- = 60 - 62
C+ = 77 - 79	E = 59 or below

Assignments will be available on Canvas 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 4-6 **typed** double spaced pages for each assignment). Assignments should be **carefully proofed and spell checked** before they are turned in on Canvas.

Assignments that do not meet basic standards for correct spelling and grammar will not be graded. Clear and concise writing is essential. Late assignments will be accepted until midnight of the following day after the due date but will receive an automatic 10% grade penalty. No assignments will be accepted after this late cutoff.

Extra credit: One point of extra credit towards your final grade (maximum of 3 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. Extra credit must be turned in during class in person and can not be accepted via Sakai.

E-mail policy

If your query can wait until the next class time then please do so. I would much rather communicate in person than by computer. If you need to email, you must write "ANT 3930" in the subject line or I may not receive it. Before emailing, please check to make sure your question is not already addressed in this syllabus. My email is stepp@ufl.edu.

Classroom behavior policy

Absolutely **NO cell phone use** and **NO texting** is permitted in the classroom at any time. Students using a cell phone for any reason during class-time will receive a warning. If the problem occurs again during the semester, the student will be asked to leave the class and will receive a 0% participation grade. If you need to check on the time during a film, bring a wristwatch to class. 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 may result in your dismissal from the course.

SCHEDULE AND READINGS

PLEASE NOTE: All films should be considered **tentative and subject to change**

Week 1: 8/26

Introduction to the Course

Capturing Reality: The Art of the Documentary

Week 2: 9/2

Pioneers in Ethnographic Filmmaking

Anthropological Issues: Human Diversity, Understanding Culture

Man With a Movie Camera, Nanook of the North, South: Shackleton & Endurance

Readings: Aufderheide pp 1-24; Heider pp. 1-14

Week 3: 9/9

Cinéma Vérité

Anthropological Issues: Doing Anthropology

Jaguar, Chronique d'un été (Chronicle of a Summer), Dead Birds

Readings: Aufderheide pp. 25-55

Week 4: 9/16

Realism, Direct Cinema

Anthropological Issues: Wealth, Distribution and Production

Salesman, Startup.com

Readings: Heider pp. 15-49

Week 5: 9/23

Anthropological Issues: Community and Norms, Representation of the Other

Titicut Follies, Vernon, FL, Grey Gardens, The True Meaning of Pictures

Assignment #1 due by Tuesday 9/22 midnight EST

Week 6: 9/30

Anthropological Issues: Labor and Class

The Take, Dark Days, The Gleaners and I, Philosopher Kings, Harlan County, USA

Readings: Aufderheide 56-76

Week 7: 10/7

Anthropological Issues: Childhood, Aging, Ontogeny

Seven Up, 56 Up, Born into Brothels, Boys of Baraka

Week 8: 10/14

Anthropological Issues: Representing Culture, Typologies

Ethnographic Video Online Archive

Readings: Heider pp. 50-75

Week 9: 10/21

Anthropological Issues: Art and Symbolic Representations

Cave of Forgotten Dreams, Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry, Exit through the Gift Shop

Readings: Heider pp. 76-109

Assignment #2 due by Tuesday 10/20 midnight EST

Week 10: 10/28

Anthropological Issues: Sex and Gender, Death and Dying

Southern Comfort, Sherman's March

Readings: Heider pp. 110-117

Week 11: 11/4

Anthropological Issues: Violence and Warfare, Remembering and Forgetting

The Act of Killing, Night and Fog, The Fog of War, Nostalgia for the Light

Readings: Aufderheide 77-116

Week 12: 11/11

Veterans's Day

Week 13: 11/18

Producing and Directing an Ethnographic Film

Readings: Aufderheide pp. 125-136

Week 14: 11/25

Assignment #3 due by Tuesday 11/24 midnight EST

Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 15: 12/2

Student Oral Presentations

Week 16: 12/9

The Future of Ethnographic and Documentary Filmmaking

Assignment #4 due Tuesday December 8th by midnight EST

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> .