

COURSE SPECIFICATION
DOCUMENT

Academic School/Department:	Communications and The Arts
Programme:	Film Studies Film & Photography
FHEQ Level:	6
Course Title:	Documentary Theory and Production
Course Code:	FLM 6102
Total Hours:	160
Timetabled Hours:	45
Guided Learning Hours:	15
Independent Learning Hours:	100
Credits:	16 UK CATS credits 8 ECTS credits 4 US credits

Course Description:

This course introduces students to theories of documentary that are applicable to both filmmaking and photography and gives students hand-on experience in producing their own short documentary films. Students will examine some of the major works of the genre and explore how documentaries, like other types of “factual” texts, can present evidence, argue persuasively, shape public opinions, as well as entertain. We will also analyze many theoretical debates posed by the documentary practices, including the blurring of fiction and nonfiction, the shifting definition of “documentary” through the last century and the problematic assumption of objectivity. Students have the opportunity to try the different ‘parts’ of documentary film-making, including researching and developing topics for a documentary production, writing a treatment or proposal for the film, shooting and interviewing in the field, as well as crafting a story during the post-production and editing process.

Prerequisites:

ADM 5200 Video Production
FLM 6103 International Cinema

Aims and Objectives:

This course aims to expose students to the theories and practices of documentary film. It poses questions about how to analyse documentary films and what are the genre's forms, grammar and purpose. It also exposes students to contemporary debates and theories about documentary films. Students will put theory into practice by creating short documentary films. Successful students at the end of the course will have:

- Detailed knowledge and understanding of documentary theories and practices.
- Further developed the critical thinking and imaginative abilities needed to undertake the entire process required in documentary filmmaking.
- Developed an understanding on how to analyse successful examples of documentary films, taking into account the genre's form, grammar and purpose.
- Further developed the transferable skills, knowledge and ability to create a successful proposal and to complete a documentary project.

Programme Outcomes:

Film Studies: A6i, B6i, C6i, D6ii

Film and Photography: A6i, B6i, C6i, D6ii

A detailed list of the programme outcomes is found in the Programme Specification. This is maintained by Registry and located at:

<https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, successful students should be able to:

- Develop a systematic understanding of the genre's evolution, as well as its aesthetical traditions, forms, current characteristics and possible future developments.
- Develop a systematic understanding and application of the key production processes and professional practices in documentary production and apply this knowledge in the creation a short documentary film.
- Demonstrate the ability to gather, organise and deploy complex and abstract ideas and information to produce cogent arguments in a written proposal and a narrative within an original documentary film.
- Demonstrate personal responsibility and professional codes of conduct in working, learning and development, and in professional and interpersonal communication.

Indicative Content:

- Key definitions of documentary
- Key debates and theories about the documentary genre
- Evolution of the documentary genre
- Selecting a documentary subject
- Writing a short proposal about the documentary project
- Producing a documentary film
- Manage cinematography, sound design & operation Directing a documentary
- Editing a documentary

Assessment:

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/university-policies/>

Teaching Methodology:

Course meetings will consist of interactive lectures, class discussions, presentation of audiovisual materials, and one-on-one tutorials. Student work is assessed through a variety of ways using both formative and summative approaches. Feedback is intended to help improve student approach to learning and achieve better results.

Indicative Texts:

Bogre, Michelle. *Documentary Photography Reconsidered: History, Theory and Practice*, (Routledge 2019)

Chanan, M. *Politics of Documentary*. London: BFI Publishing, 2008. Print.

De Jong, Knutsen and Rothwell. *Creative Documentary Production and Practice*. Harlow: Longman, 2011. Print.

Fox, B. *Documentary Media: History, Theory, Practice*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2009. Print.

Journals:

Documentary

Dox Magazine

Filmmaker Magazine

Point of View Magazine

Quarterly Review of Film and Video

Sight & Sound

Studies in Documentary Film

Web Sites:

BBC Filmmaking Guide

European Documentary Network

EU Media

Hot Docs

Independent Filmmaker Project

International Documentary Association

International Documentary Film Festival

Sheffield Documentary Film Festival

Student Filmmakers

Video conversion to Quicktime format

Please Note: The core and the reference texts will be reviewed at the time of designing the semester syllabus

Change Log for this CSD:

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or LTPC)	Change Actioned by Academic Registry
Various updates as part of the UG programme review	AB Jan 2022	
Revision – annual update	May 2023	
Total Hours Updated	April 2024	