

# **3508ART**

## **Documentary Studies**

### **Semester 1 2009**

Academic Organisation:	School of Humanities
Faculty:	Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences
Credit point value:	10
Student Contribution Band:	Band 1
Course level:	Undergraduate
Campus/Location/Learning Mode:	Gold Coast / On Campus / In Person
Convenor/s:	Dr Grahame Griffin (Gold Coast)
Enrolment Restrictions:	Nil
This document was last updated:	20 February 2009

#### **BRIEF COURSE DESCRIPTION**

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This course introduces students to the techniques, concepts and theories of documentary, with particular emphasis on the theoretical and practical aspects of film production. The course provides students with an understanding and appreciation of the relationship between theory and the technical and aesthetic codes of documentary. In addition, it places documentary within a social, cultural and historical context.

Students should have completed at least one year before attempting this course.

## SECTION A – TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

### COURSE AIMS

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The aim of this course is to help you develop a critical understanding and appreciation of the documentary form. The basic content will be to understand the techniques, concepts and theories of documentary production that have evolved since the first use of moving images. While the course does not involve 'hands on' production, it will help you examine and understand the relationship between cinema studies, film theory as well as some of the technical/aesthetic codes of filmmaking and film content. Documentaries screened will be placed chronologically within the history of the documentary form. Tutorial discussions which follow the screenings will focus on the social, cultural and historical contexts of the films screened.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

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On completion of this course, you should have:

1. An understanding of the most influential periods of documentary production and development
2. An understanding of the major theories of documentary style and form
3. An awareness of the technical/aesthetic components of documentary and their impact on interpretation and meaning
4. The ability to relate documentary theory to the critical analysis of 'truth-making'

### CONTENT, ORGANISATION AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

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A series of three-hour lectures and film screenings will be conducted from weeks 1 through 8. Although powerpoint note headings will be accessible through [learning@Griffith](mailto:learning@Griffith), it is essential that you attend these screenings for the cinematic experience that they offer. There will also be discussion of the films screened in the tutorials following. Attendance at these screenings is also essential because they provide the resource for the first assessable assignment (the portfolio of reviews) which is based on five of the films shown. One-hour tutorials will be conducted throughout the semester. The format from weeks 1 to 8 will be in the form of discussion and debate, and weeks 9-13 will schedule student presentations at tutorial times and during lecture times. Tutorial attendance at tutorials in weeks 9-13 is essential in order to complete the peer assessment item (Item 3).

### CONTENT SUMMARY

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1. Technical, formal and aesthetic aspects of the documentary, eg, shot, scene, camera movement, lighting, sound, editing, mise-en-scene and narrative development.
2. The historical context: key periods and producers will be introduced to gain an understanding of sub-genres like ethnography, cinema verite, docu-drama, mockumentary.
3. The major theories: Film as art: Russian montage, German expressionism, surrealism, auteurism, genre theory as they apply to documentary/Film as reality: documentary, deep focus, Italian neo-realism

The filmmakers under discussion will include Dziga Vertov, Jean Rouch, Brian Hill, David Bradbury, Michelle Citron, John Marshall, Robert Gardner, Timothy Asch.

Please note that there will be a course reader available in the campus bookshop.

A structured summary specifying the topics to be covered in the course and a sequential list of readings will be contained within the reader. Below are the lecture topics and the screenings for that lecture. All films will be placed ON RESERVE in the library for those who miss the big screen experience.

Topic	Lecture Content	Tutorial/Laboratory Content
1.	<p>"The Other": Documentary Roots in Ethnographic Film</p> <p>Screening: <b>Nanook of the North</b></p>	<p>Tutorial Film Extracts: Les Maitres Fous (AS) Dead Birds (AS) The Nuer (AS) The Hunters, sequence films &amp; N!ai (AS) Tempus de Baristos &amp; Leyssart (AS)</p>
2.	<p>Flies on the wall and Flies in the soup: Direct Cinema &amp; Cinema Verite</p> <p>Screening: <b>Gimme Shelter</b></p>	<p>Film Extracts: <b>Direct Cinema: Pure observation</b> Titicut Folies (AS) 901/904:Pittsburgh Police Series (AS) The War Room (AS) Don't Look Back (lib) <b>Cinema Verite: the filmmaker exposed</b> Chronique d'un Ete (AS) Unfinished Diary (lib) Cinema Verite (lib) <b>Reflexive roots:</b> Waiting for Fidel (lib) Much Ado About Something (lib)</p>
3.	<p>A Vocation of Evocation: Poetic &amp; Experimental documentaries</p> <p>Screening: <b>Man with A Movie Camera</b></p>	<p><b>Painterly</b> Berlin (lib) A propos de Nice (AS) Rain (AS) Glass (AS) Necrology (Youtube) Forest of Bliss (lib) <b>Poetic Voice</b> Song of Ceylon (lib) Unfinished Diary (lib) Tongues Untied (AS) <b>Conceit devices</b> Sans Soleil (lib) From the One Who Loves you (AS)</p>
4.	<p>The Avante Garde in Early to Late Twentieth Century Cinema Documentary "We don't like to use the D word..." – Errol Morris</p> <p>Screening: <b>The Thin Blue Line</b></p>	<p>Film Extracts: Agnes Vards The gleaners and I Chris Marker The battle of Chile Maya Deren 'Meshes in the Afternoon'</p>
5.	Guest Lecture	TBA
6.	Social change documentaries in Australia and overseas	<p>Film Excerpts: David Bradbury "A Hard Rain" Essie Coffey "Two Laws" DU 124.L4 T8 Tom Zubrickyi - "friends and</p>

Topic	Lecture Content	Tutorial/Laboratory Content
	Screening: <b>Blue Vinyl</b>	enemies' 'Moonlight State' 'Barbakewaria' DU124.R3 B3 1986
7.	Hybrid Documentary and New Forms TEXT: Screening: <b>Drinking for England</b>	Excerpts 'The Shoebox' 'The Wrong Crowd' 'Mixed Greens'
8.	Summary of Content/Approval of Research Topics	Timetabling of presentations and peer evaluations
9.	Student Presentations	Student Presentations
10.	Student Presentations	Student Presentations
11.	Student Presentations	Student Presentations
12.	Student Presentations	Student Presentations
13.	Student Presentations	Student Presentations

## ASSESSMENT

Item	Assessment Task	Length	Weighting	Total Marks	Relevant Learning Outcomes	Due Day and Time
1.	Student presentation of proposed research paper	15 minutes	20%	20	1	Weeks 9-13
2.	Portfolio of film reviews of films screened in lectures Weeks 1-7	3000 words (5 reviews of 600 words approx.)	30%	30	2	Week 8, Fri. First May, 5pm
3.	Peer Evaluation of Presentations	5 peer review sheets	10%	10	3	Weeks 9-13
4.	Research paper	2000 words	40%	40	4	Week 14, Friday 12 June, 5pm

### Assessment Details

1. Student presentation: Students analyse a film, or a filmmaker, concentrating on a scene or scenes from the film, and lead a class discussion linking the film to its historical context. Students may

present a film already screened in the lecture period or a film yet to be screened. Please discuss your choice of film with your tutor prior to planning your presentation in detail.

This exercise assesses your ability to illustrate and communicate key course topics by way of close analysis of film content.

2. Portfolio of film reviews: This consists of 600 word reviews of five of the films screened during the lecture period in weeks 1-8. You may adopt a review writing style with a brief 'personal response' component, but you should also attempt to relate some of your review to a topic or issue covered in classes.

This exercise assesses your ability to analyse and discuss a film based on your understanding of the development of cinema over the past century.

3. Peer Evaluation: This mark is based on your oral and written contribution to class discussion following tutorial presentations, and your handing in of FIVE peer evaluation sheets
4. Research paper: Elaborate on any major topic raised in the course. Illustrate widely with examples from films which can include films viewed during the course. Choice of topic may include an extended analysis of a particular film, genre of film or film director.

OR

Select a scene from a film and subject it to intense analysis in terms of its formalistic elements (composition, sound, lighting, editing, acting) and in relation to developments in film technology over the last century.

**Please discuss with the course convenor your choice of topic well in advance of detailed planning and preparation.**

This assignment assesses your ability to deliver a relevant and significant analysis of a topic through traditional scholarly means.

### **Important Assessment Guidelines**

#### Assessment Marks

Each assessment item will be given a mark. This mark will either be on the returned assessment item or displayed on the School noticeboards.

Students should not add up the marks awarded for each assessment to estimate their final grade. University policy is to use a criterion-based assessment system when staff grade work submitted for assessment. Staff will discuss with students the criteria that will be used to determine grades. They will be listed on each assignment sheet.

#### Assessment Deadlines

Unless prior arrangements are made for an extension or documentary evidence accompanies work late without extension, all work is to be presented by the due deadline dates in accordance with guidelines provided for the assessment item. (You should feel comfortable about discussing any difficulties with your lecturers/tutors).

If an assessment item is submitted after the due date, without an approved extension, it will be subject to a penalty which will normally be a reduction of the maximum mark by 10% for each day or part day that the assessment item is overdue. In this regard, weekends count as one day. Assessment items submitted more than 5 days late are awarded zero marks.

The course convenor may vary these provisions provided that any penalties to be imposed for late submission are approved by the relevant School Committee in the context of approval of the course outline and conveyed to the student on the course outline.

Applications for deferred assessment may be made by students if they were prevented from performing a particular assessment item (examination, test, seminar presentation or other assessment) on the grounds of illness, accident,

temporary disability, bereavement or other compassionate circumstances. Please see Student Administration or your course convener for advice.

Submission of assessment items

All students will normally lodge their written assignments in the assignment submission boxes located in the School foyer on the top floor of the Multimedia Building (G23). All assignments will be due by 5.00 p.m. on the designated date, unless an alternative time has been stipulated by the course convener. Assignments should not be deposited or returned via School administrative staff. Assignments not collected in class will normally be placed in the assignment return boxes in the School of Arts corridor on the top floor of the Multimedia Building (G23).

**GRADUATE SKILLS**

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Graduate Skills	Taught	Practised	Assessed
Effective communication (written)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Effective communication (oral)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Effective communication (interpersonal)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Problem solving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Critical evaluation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Work autonomously	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Work in teams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creativity and innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ethical behaviour in social / professional / work environments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Responsible, effective citizenship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Professional Skills

This course is a valuable resource for people who wish to gain a sound theoretical understanding of historical, cultural and aesthetic aspects of film which they can apply to their professional practices as filmmakers.

**TEACHING TEAM**

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Convenors are required to provide information about the teaching team. For courses offered at more than one campus, the following table may be copied for each campus, or columns may be added/deleted as required.

Course Convenor

Convenor Details	Gold Coast
Campus Convenor	Dr Grahame Griffin
Email	<a href="mailto:g.griffin@griffith.edu.au">g.griffin@griffith.edu.au</a>
Office Location	3.24 Multimedia
Phone	5552.8631

Fax	5552.8141
Consultation times	Email or phone to make appointment

Additional teaching team members

Adrian Strong, Ph D candidate, School of Arts, Gold Coast

Janet Marles, Ph D candidate, School of Arts, Gold Coast

**COURSE COMMUNICATIONS**

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Contact the course convenor by phone or email regarding course enquiries or meeting times.

**TEXTS AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

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**READER – Module One**

**Week 0. Required reading**

Corrigan, Timothy, A Short Guide to Writing About Film, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Chapter 2 (Preparing to Watch and Preparing to Write) pp16-32

**Week 1. Required reading:**

Barnouw, Erik (1993), Documentary: A History of the Non-fiction Film (New York: OUP) pp33-51

Rouch, Jean (1995) Our Totemic Ancestors and Crazy Masters. Principles of Visual Anthropology.

MacDougall, David (1998) Transcultural Cinema (Princeton: PUP) pp 178-196 (Ch 8. Ethnographic Film: Failure and Promise).

**Week 2. Required reading:**

Winston, Brian (1995) Claiming the Reel: the Documentary Film Revisted (London BFI) pp 148-158 and pp197-218

**Week 3. Required reading:**

Barnouw, Erik (1993), Documentary: A History of the Non-fiction Film (New York: OUP) pp 51-81

Gardner: Robert (2006), The Impulse to Preserve (New York: Other Press) pp277-305

**Weeks 4-8 will be itemised in the Course reader**

**SECTION B – ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION**

Plagiarism

Students must conduct their studies at the University honestly, ethically and in accordance with accepted standards of academic conduct. Any form of academic conduct which is contrary to these standards is academic misconduct, for which the University may penalise a student. In particular you must avoid plagiarism.

Plagiarism is knowingly presenting work or property of another person as if it were one's own. The best way to avoid allegations of plagiarism is to ensure that all the ideas you take from other people are properly referenced.

For further information, and an indication of the range of severe penalties that plagiarism can attract, all students are advised to refer to the Griffith University Policy on Academic Misconduct at [www62.gu.edu.au/policylibrary.nsf/azcategory/352f26aa1a1011e64a256bbb0062fd5f?opendocument](http://www62.gu.edu.au/policylibrary.nsf/azcategory/352f26aa1a1011e64a256bbb0062fd5f?opendocument)

Use of plagiarised material in any assignment or presentation will a) earn a fail grade in that assignment, and b) require the submission of a non-plagiarised assignment which fulfils the assignment topic requirements and/or c) be referred to the Dean.

### **Special Note**

Plagiarism is treated with the utmost seriousness in this course. For example, the School of Arts uses search engines capable of tracing plagiarised material to all parts of the web.

### **Non-discriminatory language**

Please consult the University guidelines on the use of non-discriminatory language in the pamphlet provided with your orientation materials and available from Student Administration. It is School policy that students avoid the use of sexist, racist and other discriminatory language in class work and assessment items. However, in certain circumstances where the appropriate use of such language is shown to be necessary it may be permitted.

### **References and Bibliography**

All assessable work, including oral seminar presentations, must be fully and correctly referenced throughout and accompanied by a bibliography.

Guides are available at the Learning Assistance Unit's Self-Help Resources at [www.gu.edu.au/ins/training/study/content\\_studyresources.html](http://www.gu.edu.au/ins/training/study/content_studyresources.html). Go to 'eStudy Centre – Allen & Unwin' under General Study Skills, and 'MLA style citation of electronic sources' under Referencing. Consult your lecturers if unsure about appropriate citation and bibliographic conventions for oral and written work in the arts and humanities.

Students should refer to the Learning@Griffith website where there may be further information about this course.

## **SECTION C – KEY UNIVERSITY INFORMATION**

### **ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

Students must conduct their studies at the University honestly, ethically and in accordance with accepted standards of academic conduct. Any form of academic conduct that is contrary to these standards is academic misconduct and is unacceptable.

Some students engage deliberately in academic misconduct, with intent to deceive. This conscious, pre-mediated form of cheating is one of the worst forms of fraudulent academic behaviour, for which the University has zero tolerance and for which penalties, including exclusion from the University, will be applied.

However the University recognises many students commit academic misconduct without intent to deceive. These students may be required to undertake additional educational activities to remediate their behaviour.

Specifically it is academic misconduct for a student to:

- ***Cheat in examinations and tests*** by communicating, or attempting to communicate, with a fellow individual who is neither an invigilator or member of staff; by copying, or attempting to copy from a fellow candidate; attempting to introduce or consult during the examination, any unauthorised printed or written material, or electronic calculating or information storage device; or mobile phones or other communication device, or impersonates another.
- ***Fabricate results*** by claiming to have carried out tests, experiments or observations that have not taken place or by presenting results not supported by the evidence with the object of obtaining an unfair advantage.
- ***Misrepresent themselves*** by presenting an untrue statement or not disclosing where there is a duty to disclose in order to create a false appearance or identity.



- **Plagiarise** by representing the work of another as their own original work, without appropriate acknowledgement of the author or the source. This category of cheating includes the following:
  1. collusion, where a piece of work prepared by a group is represented as if it were the student's own;
  2. acquiring or commissioning a piece of work, which is not his/her own and representing it as if it were, by
    - purchasing a paper from a commercial service, including internet sites, whether pre-written or specially prepared for the student concerned
    - submitting a paper written by another person, either by a fellow student or a person who is not a member of the University;
  3. duplication of the same or almost identical work for more than one assessment item;
  4. copying ideas, concepts, research data, images, sounds or text;
  5. paraphrasing a paper from a source text, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, without appropriate acknowledgement;
  6. cutting or pasting statements from multiple sources or piecing together work of others and representing them as original work;
  7. submitting, as one own work, all or part of another student's work, even with the student's knowledge or consent.

A student who willingly assists another student to plagiarise (for example by willingly giving them their own work to copy from) is also breaching academic integrity, and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Visit the University's Institutional Framework for Promoting Academic Integrity Among Students for further details.

## **PLAGIARISM DETECTION SOFTWARE**

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The University uses plagiarism detection software. Students should be aware that your Course Convenor may use this software to check submitted assignments. If this is the case your Course Convenor will provide more detailed information about how the detection software will be used for individual assessment items.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

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Griffith University is committed to providing a safe work and study environment, however all students, staff and visitors have an obligation to ensure the safety of themselves and those whose safety may be affected by their actions. Staff in control of learning activities will ensure as far as reasonably practical, that those activities are safe and that all safety obligations are being met. Students are required to comply with all safety instructions and are requested to report safety concerns to the University.

General health and safety information can be obtained from [http://www.griffith.edu.au/hrm/health\\_and\\_safety/](http://www.griffith.edu.au/hrm/health_and_safety/)

Information about Laboratory safety can be obtained from [http://www.griffith.edu.au/ots/secure/health/content\\_labsafety.html](http://www.griffith.edu.au/ots/secure/health/content_labsafety.html)

## **KEY STUDENT-RELATED POLICIES**

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All University policy documents are accessible to students via the University's Policy Library website at: [www.griffith.edu.au/policylibrary](http://www.griffith.edu.au/policylibrary). Links to key policy documents are included below for easy reference:

[Academic Calendar](#)

[Academic Standing, Progression and Exclusion Policy](#)

[Assessment Policy](#)

[Examinations Timetabling Policy and Procedures](#)

[Guideline on Student E-Mail](#)

[Health and Safety Policy](#)

[Institutional Framework for Promoting Academic Integrity Among Students](#)

[Policy on Student Grievances and Appeals](#)

[Student Administration Policy](#)

## **UNIVERSITY SUPPORT RESOURCES**

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The University provides many facilities and support services to assist students in their studies. Links to information about University support resources available to students are included below for easy reference:

[Learning Centres](#) - the University provides access to common use computing facilities for educational purposes. For details visit [www.griffith.edu.au/cuse](http://www.griffith.edu.au/cuse)

[Learning@Griffith](#) - there is a dedicated website for this course via the Learning@Griffith student portal.

[Student Services](#) facilitate student access to and success at their academic studies. Student Services includes: Careers and Employment Service; Chaplaincy; Counselling Service; Health Service; Student Equity Services (incorporating the Disabilities Service); and the Welfare Office.

[Learning Services](#) within the Division of Information Services provides learning support in three skill areas: computing skills; library skills; and academic skills. The study skills resources on the website include self-help tasks focusing on critical thinking, exam skills, note taking, preparing presentations, referencing, writing, proof reading, and time management.