Documentary films have become more popular than ever in the past decade, in part due to the technology that has allowed more people access to equipment and the ability to film easily and (somewhat) unobtrusively in different environments. Although nonfiction films were among the first made at the turn of the last century, by the 1920s the documentary film was identified as something that differed from both nonfiction and fiction films. Documentaries take many shapes and have a variety of different aims; they have a unique and contested relationship to notions of what is real, factual, true and/or historical. Of all the media that participate in the genre, film and video raise the most questions where these concepts are concerned because they appear to provide the most authentic and full representation of the "real world." The best documentaries, however, tell compelling stories and telling a good story requires more than just letting a camera record an event or an interview. Through readings, films and filmmaking, we will consider the theoretical, aesthetic, ethical and technical, dimensions of the documentary.

Texts


Films and Readings as assigned

Other Materials

Headphones
Field Notebook

Major Assignments and Other Responsibilities

Attendance

Come to class and the screenings. To meet the requirements of the class, you must be present. You have three absences to use for illness or unexpected emergencies. If you miss more than three classes, your final grade will be decreased by 1/2 grade per absence. You are responsible for any material covered or due on the date you missed.
Assignments and Grade Distribution

Important Note: Each project will have subsidiary due dates for conferences, drafts and revision. Late work will not be accepted unless arrangements have been made prior to due date. The calendar on the course website will contain specific information about assignments, activities and other deadlines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Grade Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation and Informal Assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
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To get a good class participation grade:

**DO**
- Come to class
- Readings as assigned
- Take good notes
- Ask questions when you don't understand something
- Stay on task when you've got in-class work to do
- Talk when you have things to say, but make sure others get to talk, too
- Listen when others are talking

**DON'T**
- Miss class
- Talk during the films
- Multitask the class (i.e., text message, answer your cellphone or work on your laptop, etc.)

**Documentary Analyses** You will do critical analyses of a documentary, one written (individual), one video (group). The paper will examine narrative structure. The video will engage the ideas of the film in a critical and/or creative way.

**Bolivia Project (Class)** You and your group will edit footage from the 2007 International Student Design Projects conducted in Bolivia.

**Documentary Film Project (Group)** You and your group will plan, shoot and edit a documentary film.

About Plagiarism and Intellectual Property

Turn in your own work. If you are caught cheating (e.g., plagiarizing from the internet or other sources, turning in a purchased essay or someone else's work) you will fail the course. If you're not sure how to use other sources, always ask for help before submitting your work. This is a very serious offense that will have consequences beyond my classroom.