

UC Santa Cruz, Social Documentation Program, Community Studies Dept.

Social Documentation 200 Approaches to Social Documentary

Professor: B. Ruby Rich

Class: Mondays 2-5 pm, Oakes 109

plus screenings or colloquia, as assigned

This course concerns itself with ideas about documentary, their application and articulation. It's also concerned with how documentation (film, video, photography, audio, creative nonfiction) interfaces with the world outside the camera/screen/page/microphone, its terms of production and reception, and what sorts of effects it can muster. Documentary offers sets of strategies by which to observe, interpret, and effect the world via audiences and structures of meaning. Ten weeks is not much time for delving into such things, but we'll do our best. Hopefully, we'll at least be able to articulate some of the right questions. I'll put a number of works on reserve in the library for you; watch as much as you can, beyond assignments, because that screening area is your laboratory as certainly as if it were packed with tubes of gurgling liquid. In addition, I'll be alerting you to important documentary events throughout the term, and welcome your additions.

Guidelines for this class:

Each week, you will view, hear, or navigate one or two documentaries or documentary essays or web pages, in addition to the assigned readings; I encourage you, if at all possible, to experience these as a group. This class has worked best when the cohort is able to do that. You have an additional lab credit specifically to address that extra evening or afternoon.

Each week, you are expected to email me and your classmates a short (1-2 pages) response paper. For the documentaries, you should pinpoint a scene you'd like to view in the seminar and explain why, or which photograph or audio excerpt or web page/feature is of particular interest, and why. For the readings, you should identify one or two ideas, in each piece, that you find captivating or troubling; do not try to summarize all the reading, please! [If you watch the assigned works together as a group, feel free to reference any group responses, but be sure to develop and present your own as well.] All articles can be found in the Reader.

This seminar is essentially on fast-forward: I'll attempt to frontload into your brains and hearts and muscles and nerves as much theoretical and historical knowledge of documentary approaches, traditions, and politics, systems of power, and processes of representation as humanly possible. At any point, you as my collaborators may feel the need to say: Less! or More! or Different! and I pledge to stay open to your input. My only goal is to keep the level of energy, knowledge acquisition, and response high. I'll continue to fine-tune the syllabus as we go along.

>> Grading will be based on class participation (30%) and presentations (20%), with half the grade to be determined by your final project.

>> Your final project will be a 20-ps. researched paper on one aspect of social documentation, to be identified together with the professor, that you wish to explore, analyze, argue, and investigate using sources both within and beyond the syllabus. In other words, it's a research project geared to your own passions and interests. If you've already identified your M.A. thesis project, then we can discuss ways to make the paper relevant for your ongoing work.

If students have articles or images to share, we have a scanner in Faculty Services that's available to use, and then I post them to the class website as pdfs. Soon enough, we'll be able to do that with the films/videos, but for now, we can utilize YouTube and just post the links on the website. I will continue to recommend DVDs and VHS tapes in McHenry for you to view during the quarter.

To get started, please order these books:

Bruzzi, Stella, *New Documentary: A Critical Introduction* (London/NY: Routledge, 2000)

Light, Ken, *Witness In Our Time: Working Lives of Documentary Photographers* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000)

Nichols, Bill, *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary* (Bloomington: U. of Indiana Press, 1991)

Zimmerman, Patricia, *States of Emergency: Documentaries, Wars, Democracies* (Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota Press, 2000)

Readers are available at the Literary Guillotine bookstore, downtown at 204 Locust Street, Santa Cruz (831 457 1195).

#1 Monday 29 September: Evidence, Narration, Address, Perception

In class: Explanation of the course and foundational figures/concepts, discussion of your knowledge base and inclinations; mutual update on new documentaries as well as trends and directions.

In-class viewing:

Excerpts from Carlos Marcovich, *Quién diablos es Juliette?/Who the hell is Julietta?* (Mex/Cuba, 1997); Isaac Julien, *Looking for Langston* (UK, 1989); Tina DiFelicianantonio and Jane Wagner, *One or Two Things I Know For Sure* (US, 1997); Jon Else, *The Day After Trinity: J. Robert Oppenheimer & The Atomic Bomb* (US, 1981); Louis Massiah, *The Bombing of Osage Avenue* w/writer: Toni Cade Bambara (US, 1986);

also: Susan Meiselas, *Kurdistan: In the Shadow of History* (NY: Random House, 1997)

www.akakurdistan.com; and Wendy Ewald, *In Peace and Harmony: Carter Portraits* (Visual Arts Center of Richmond, 2006)

To prepare for next class:

Karen E. Becker, "Photojournalism and the Tabloid Press"

Ardis Cameron, "When Strangers Bring Cameras: The Poetics and Politics of Othered Places," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 3 (September 2002)

Claudia Dreifus, "The New Battle of Chile: Keeping Memory Alive" *New York Times*

Patricio Guzman, "Politics and the Documentary in People's Chile"

Stuart Hall, "Reconstruction Work: Images of Post-War Black Settlement" and "Media Power: The Double Bind"

To view before next class:

Elizabeth Barret, *Stranger with A Camera* (US, 2000)

Patricio Guzman, *Chile, Obstinate Memory* (Chile/Spain, 1997)

And listen:

<http://murmurtoronto.ca/about.php>

#2 Monday 6 October: Filmmaker-Subject Power Dynamics

In-class:

Discussion of Becker, Cameron, Dreifus, Guzman, Hall

Framing of questions surrounding production vis-a-vis the documentarian's relationship to the subject, and how the politics of production/intention are revealed or not on screen

In-Class viewing:

Harvest of Shame, excerpt (Edward R. Murrow, 1960)

Ilha das Flores/Island of Flowers (Jorge Furtado, Brazil, 1989)

Jon Else, *The Day After Trinity: J. Robert Oppenheimer and the Atomic Bomb* (US, 1981)

To read for the next class:

James Lastra, "Sound Theory" chapter, *Sound Technology and the American Cinema: Perception, Representation, Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000)

Chuck Kleinhans, "Audio documentary: a polemical introduction for the visual studies crowd," *JumpCut* 48, 2006 (www.ejumpcut.org/currentissue/index.html)

To view for next class:

Robert Drew Associates, *Primary* (US, 1960)

Andrew Snell (for BBC, with Sebastiao Salgado), *Looking back at you* (UK, 1993)

To listen:

Audio references in Kleinhans, including LeAlan Jones and Lloyd Newman's *Ghetto Life 101* with David Isay for Sound Portraits

#3 Monday 13 October: Intention, Reception, Engagement, Disengagement

In-class: Discussion of observational strategies in *Primary*; point of view, intentionality, identification, in *Looking back at you*; theories of sound

In-class viewing:

Trevor Wilkerson, excerpt, *An Injury to One* (US, 2002)

In-class reading (!):

Ingrid Sischy, "Photography: Good Intentions," *The New Yorker*, 9 September, 1991 and in *Illuminations: Women Writing on Photography From the 1850s to the Present* Ed. Liz Heron, Val Williams (NY/London: I.B.Tauris, 1997)

To read for the next class:

Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*;

William Rothman, "Chronicle of A Summer"

Edgar Morin, "Chronicle of A Film"

Michael Renov, "Early Newsreel: The Construction of a Political Imaginary for the New Left"

Jean Rouch "The Camera and Man" and "The Cinema of the Future?" in his *Ciné-Ethnography* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 2003)

To view for next class:

Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin, *Chronicle of a Summer* (France, 1961)

Mike Gray & Associates/Howard Ald, *The Murder of Fred Hampton* (US, 1971), also on YouTube

#4 Monday 20 October: Identity Politics, Social Movements, and the Force of Representation

In-class: Discussion of the origins of cinema verité and direct cinema in terms of new synchronous-sound equipment; difference between the imported ethnographic and the solidarity documentary; examination of Nichols' theories of documentary.

In-class viewing:

Louis Massiah (dir) for Henry Hampton (prod), *Eyes on the Prize, II, v.6, "A Nation of Law?"*

To read for the next class:

Ono, Kent A., "Re/membering Spectators: Meditations on Japanese-American Cinema" in *Countervisions: Asian-American Film Criticism*, Eds. Darrell Y. Hamamoto and Sandra Liu (Philadelphia: Temple U. Press, 2000)

Lopate, Phillip, "In Search of the Centaur: The Essay-Film" in *Beyond Document: Essays on Nonfiction Film*, Ed. Charles Warren (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan U. Press, 1996)

Mimura, Glen Masato, "Antidote for Collective Amnesia? Rea Tajari's Germinal Image" and excerpt of "The Gendering of Historical Trauma in Internment-Camp Documentary" by Elena Tajima Creef in *Countervisions: Asian American Film Criticism* (ed. Darell Y. Hamamoto and Sandra Liu, Philadelphia: Temple U. Press, 2000)

Renov, Michael, "Warring Images: Stereotype and American Representations of the Japanese, 1941-1991" from Part I of *The Subject of Documentary* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 2004)

Linda Williams, "Mirrors Without Memories: Truth, History, and the New Documentary," in *Film Quarterly* Volume 46 No. 3, Spring 1993

To view for next class:

Emiko Omori, *Rabbit in the Moon* (US, 1999)

Renee Tajima-Peña and Christine Choy, *Who Killed Vincent Chin?* (US, 1987)

#5 Monday 27 October: Individual Memory and Collective Trauma

In-class:

Discussion of the workings of memory in constructing and redeploying history/ies; individual versus collective memory; memory as evidence, memory as trauma; the essay film.

In-class viewing:

Rea Tajiri, *History and Memory: For Akiko and Takashige* (US, 1991)

To read for the next class:

Rosa Linda Fregoso, "Cross-Border Feminist Solidarities"

Henderson, Lisa, "Access and Consent in Public Photography"

Jonathan Stuart Katz and Judith Milstein, "Ethics and the Perception of Ethics in Autobiographical Film"

Julia Lesage, "The Political Aesthetics of the Feminist Documentary Film"

B Ruby Rich, "Tell It To the Camera"

Renato Rosaldo, "Subjectivity in Social Analysis"

Janice R. Welsch, "Bakhtin, Language, and Women's Documentary Filmmaking"

Brian Winston, "The Tradition of the Victim in Griersonian Documentary"

To view for next class:

Vicky Funari and Jennifer Maytorena-Taylor, *Paulina* (US/Mex, 1997)

Judith Helfand, *A Healthy Baby Girl* (US, 1996)

#6 Monday 3 November: Autobiography, Activism, and Confrontation

In-class: Discussion of documentary strategies embedded in autobiographically-based investigations from the perspectives of transnationalism, family dramas, ethics, POV.

In-class viewing:

Jonathan Caouette, excerpt, *Tarnation* (US,2003)

To read for next class:

Stella Bruzzi, *New Documentary: A Critical Introduction* [Part I and section intros required; remaining texts, only as of interest]

Ernest Callenbach, "The Gleaners and I" in *Film Quarterly* Vol.56, 2003 s

Sekula, Allan, "Reading An Archive: Photography between labour and capital"

Michael Walsh, "Around the World, Across All Frontiers: Sans Soleil as Dépays" [skim]

To view for next class:

Chris Marker, *Sans Soleil (Sunless)* (France, 1983)

Agnes Varda, *The Gleaners and I* (France, 2000)

#7 Monday 10 November: Time Travel, Social Relations, Authorial Voice

In class:

Discussion of Bruzzi's documentary concepts in terms of social documentation, in view of Nichols and other approaches; analysis of Marker and Varda, thinking back to the "essay" film and forward to applied notions of appropriate authorial voice in social documentation.

In-class viewing:

TBA

To read for the next class:

Patricia Zimmerman, *States of Emergency: Documentaries, Wars, Democracies* [as with Bruzzi, read where your interests take you]

Andrea Hammer, "Audible Evidence: On Listening to Places,"

Amitava Kumar, "Photograph"

Pedro Meyer, "If you liked documentary work, you are going to love digital images"

(<http://zonezero.com/magazine/articles/meyer3/index.html>)

To view for the next class:

Rob Epstein and Richard Schmeichen, *The Times of Harvey Milk* (US, 1984)

Hubert Sauper, *Darwin's Nightmare* (Tanzania/France: 2004)

Gilles Perres, "Farewell to Bosnia"

http://www.picture-projects.com/picture_projects/gallery/gallery1.0.html

To listen, for the next class:

David Issay, "Acting Up"

http://www.soundportraits.org/on-air/acting_up/

#8 Monday 17 November: Truth, Observation, Crisis, Tragedy, Memory

In-class discussion:

Discussion of political movements and documentary practice at an individual as well as group level; forms of documentation and implications of Zimmerman's arguments for today.

In-class viewing: TBA

To read for the next class:

Pat Aufderheide, "Making Video with Brazilian Indians" [skim]

Faye Ginsburg, "The Parallax Effect: The Impact of Indigenous Media on Ethnographic Film" and/or "Mediating Culture: Indigenous Media, Ethnographic Film, and the Production of Identity"

Terry Turner, "Representation, Politics, and Cultural Imagination in Indigenous Video: General Points and Kayapo Examples"

David MacDougall, "Whose Story Is It?"

To view for next class:

Michael Beckham with Terence Turner (Granada Television), *The Kayapo: Out of the Forest* (UK, 1991)

Vincent Carelli/Dominique Gallois/Centro De Trabalho Indigenista/Projeto Video nas Alderias, *Meeting Ancestors, The Spirit of TV, Video in the Villages Presents Itself* (Brazil, 1990-2002)

Note: You need not watch all four in their entirety but watch enough to get a sense of their approaches and contents.

Suggested:

#9 Monday 24 November: Cinema of Contact

In-class discussion of concepts of self-determination through digital representation, sifting claims made by authors and class response to viewings.

In-class viewing:

The Borrooloola Aboriginal Community, with Carolyn Strachan and Alessandro Cavadini, excerpt, *Two Laws: An Aboriginal Struggle For Land And Law*

For next class:

Finish your papers.

#10 Monday 1 December – Conclusions, Parting Shots

In-class viewing:

José Padilha and Felipe Lacerda, *Bus 174* (Brazil, 2003)

Note: Papers are due in class ~~today~~ next week, Wed 12/10, at 2 pm.

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Some other web recommendations:
[please add]

<http://www.transom.org>

<http://www.filmsite.org/docfilms.html>

<http://www.d-word.com/>

<http://daily.greencine.com/>

<http://www.docuclub.org/>

<http://www.centerforsocialmedia.org/index.html>

<http://sfcamerawork.org/exhibitions.html>

<http://murmurtoronto.ca/about.php>

<http://www.cultureisaweapon.org/>

<http://www.ejumpcut.org/currentissue/AudioDoc/index.html>

<http://projectdocumentary.blogspot.com/>

<http://actlab.tv/index.html>

<http://www.akakurdistan.com/>

<http://www.vectorsjournal.net>

<http://jot.communication.utexas.edu/flow/>

<http://www.truefalse.org/home.htm>

<http://www.prx.org/>

<http://idg.communication.utexas.edu/flow/>

<http://altnet.org/>

<http://www.npr.org/programs/lnfsound/>

<http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/media/whatwedo.html>

<http://www.nyu.edu/fas/projects/vcb/about.html>

<http://www.picture-projects.com/>

<http://www.airmedia.org/>

<http://www.picture-projects.com>

<http://www.sonicmemorial.org/sonic/public/index.html>

<http://www.careerwaitresses.com/>

<http://www.activevoice.net/>

<http://www.takeactiongames.com/main/DARFUR.html>