

ENG 367 | THE U.S. EXPERIENCE || DOCUMENTARIES & SOCIAL ACTION

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Winter 2010
Class meets: T 3:30-5:18 (CC 312), Th 3:30-5:18 (DE 307)
Office hours: T 12:30-2:30, W 1:00-2:00 (DE 547)

Course description and objectives.

Course theme.

It's no secret that we live in a highly mediated culture, always bombarded by *something*— the newest reality TV show, cell phone jingles in the deli, a concert advert tucked beneath a windshield wiper. Whether you pull up a web browser or fold back a newspaper, it's hard to miss references to our so-called Information Age, the age that wants to document or change or enliven or seek fame from *everything*. In short, media is ubiquitous, and it matters.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Writing and Related Skills

Goals/Rationale:

Writing courses across the disciplines develop students' skills in writing, reading, critical thinking, and oral expression.

Learning Objectives:

1. Students apply basic skills in expository writing
2. Students demonstrate critical thinking through written and oral expression
3. Students retrieve and use written information analytically and effectively

As we consider issues relevant to media and the U.S. experience in our class this term, we'll pay close attention to documentaries—across media, across genre; their how, their what, their why. In our particular 21st-century moment, laypeople have access to production tools once reserved for a small few. And as Daniel Anderson has described, we're transforming from consumers into *prosumers*, consumers and producers both. With the access landscape shifting, issues of who produces and for whom are important on a number of levels, practically and rhetorically. This term, we'll examine the ways in which contemporary documentaries can further our understanding of society and social change. Who produces these documentaries, and for what purpose? In what ways are their audiences implored to react—to *act*? In what ways can our own documentary creations instill—instigate—that omnipresent buzzword, *change*?

ENG 367.

ENG 367 is a writing-intensive course designed to foster your development as active writers, speakers, and thinkers within your communities. Class readings, discussions, and writing assignments have been designed to build upon the

foundation you established in English 110 in order to support more sophisticated rhetorical analysis and practice. You will have the opportunity to practice your skills of critical thinking, careful analysis and interpretation, and developing clear, compelling

arguments supported by thoughtful evidence. In addition to several essays and informal writing, you will each produce *your own* short work of documentary film that you will share with the class. Please note all necessary technological skills will be taught in class; you do not need to be tech-savvy already in order to succeed in this course.

Course requirements.

Required texts and materials

- Class readings. Unless I specify otherwise, you will need to print hard copies of all readings on Carmen for each class meeting. Your Buck-ID allows you to print 50 free pages each quarter at university computer sites, with additional pages costing ten cents each.
- Copies of drafts for workshop days. On the attached schedule, you'll notice that several class periods are indicated as workshop days. Because we will workshop in our non-computer classroom at times, you're required to bring 2 hardcopies of your current draft for peer review purposes. If you bring in your own laptop, you can use a digital copy in lieu of printing hardcopies.
- External hard drive **or** large jump/USB drive for transporting drafts, files, and so forth to and from class. Because you will be transporting your iMovie files in this way, you will need a drive with *at least* 16 GB of memory.
- 1-2 blank mini DV tapes for recording.
- 5 blank DVDs for drafts and delivery of final project.
- Headphones that cover your ears (*not* earbuds).

Assignments.

Rhetorical analysis (3-4pages)..... 20%

A paper that analyzes the rhetorical choices of *Murderball*. In this assignment, you'll consider the ways in which this documentary imparts a message to its audience(s). You'll receive further guidelines on 1/12.

Media analysis (4-6 pages) 25%

This assignment will be a focused essay exploring the interrelationships between social action, media, and documentary. You will analyze a short documentary piece of your choice—either audio **or** video—selected from the *Third Coast Audio Festival* **or** *Media That Matters Film Festival* web sites. You'll receive further guidelines on 1/26.

Blog posts (4 posts) 15%

Throughout the quarter, I will pose a question or two on our class blog and ask you to post a response on your own individual blog prior to class. Additionally, I'll also expect you to look over and comment on one another's posts as part of your preparation for class. These posts will enliven and supplement our time together and thus be an important part of making this class matter. You'll find the due dates and topics on the attached schedule. And we'll set up our blogs, as a class, on 1/7.

A note about technology

You do not need previous knowledge or experience with video editing technologies in order to complete class projects; you will receive necessary instruction and practice during the course of the quarter. Please do note, however, that we will only use iMovie in this course. Though you're certainly free to explore and use alternative video editing programs, I will not be able to assist you in using other programs—the responsibility for learning and troubleshooting will fall on you.

Documentary project (3 components).....30%

1. Proposal (2 pages) (10%)
2. Video documentary (3-5 minutes) (10%)
3. Analytic reflection (2-4 pages) (10%)

This project offers an opportunity to translate your growing rhetorical understanding from criticism into practice. You will propose, compose, and analyze a documentary of your own creation and then share your project with the class. You'll receive further guidelines on 2/4.

Participation.....10%

Good participation includes coming to class on time, active listening, completing in-class activities, workshopping, being prepared to contribute your views on the assigned reading, showing a positive attitude, collaborating appropriately, and showing respect to your classmates and to me.

Course policies.

Final versions of assignments must be turned in on time. Late projects are subject to a penalty of one letter grade for each day late. Missing class or encountering technological misfortunes *are not* acceptable excuses for failing to meet a deadline.

Academic misconduct. Plagiarism is the unauthorized use of the words or ideas of another person. It is a serious academic offense that can result in referral to the Committee on Academic Misconduct and failure for the course. Please remember that at no point during the writing process should the work of others be presented as your own.

Attendance & tardiness. Attendance is essential to the success of this class and to your development as a writer. Therefore, each unexcused absence after two will result in the lowering of your final grade by a third of a grade. Excused absences, such as those for documented illness, family tragedy, religious observance, or travel for inter-collegiate athletics, will not affect your grade. It is program policy that 5 unexcused absences will automatically result in failure for the course.

Whether you are excused or not, if you miss a class, you are expected to make up the work. This means, if you miss on a day when a film is shown, you must make arrangements to view it on your own time. Additionally, I will count you as absent if you are more than 15 minutes late to class, sleeping, texting, emailing, and most especially, if you come to class unprepared to discuss the day's assigned readings. I reserve the right to hold pop quizzes to spot check for preparedness.

Class cancellation policy. In the unlikely event of an emergency, I will contact you via email and request that a note on department letterhead be placed on the door. In addition, I will contact you as soon as possible following the cancellation to let you know what will be expected of you for our next class meeting.

Changes to the schedule. At any point throughout the quarter, I reserve the right to make changes to our daily schedule. Any such rearranging most typically happens when we get behind as a class.

Resources.

The Ombudsman of the Writing Programs, Matthew M. Cariello, mediates conflicts between instructors and students in English 110 and 367. His Winter 2010 walk-in office hours in Denney Hall 412 are Tuesday and Thursday 11.30-1.00 and Wednesday 1-3. Other times are available by appointment: please email cariello.1@osu.edu. All conversations with the Ombudsman are confidential.

The **OSU Writing Center** is available to provide free, professional writing tutoring and consultation during any stage of the writing process:

- ◆ Face-to-face tutorials by appointment at their main location in 475 Mendenhall Lab
- ◆ Online tutorials via the chat function on Carmen
- ◆ Walk-in tutorials at our satellite location at the Science and Engineering Library
- ◆ Online appointment scheduling, available 24/7

The Writing Center provides an incredibly valuable service for all writers (from undergrads to faculty)—I strongly recommend you take advantage of it! You may set up an appointment by calling 688-4291 or online at <http://cstw.osu.edu>.

The **Office for Disability Services**, located in 150 Pomerene Hall, offers services for students with documented disabilities. If you need any particular accommodations in order to make the class more accessible, please let me know right away, either after class or during office hours. Contact the ODS at 292-3307 or <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

The **Digital Media Project** (DMP) is the division of the English department that manages, troubleshoots, and supports our classroom and equipment. You will be using the DMP's resources extensively throughout the quarter. The DMP general office is located in Denney 324, and offers equipment borrowing and program support from friendly, expert staff. The DMP Mac lab is located in Denney 343, and is available for use during designated lab hours (see "DMP Studio Hours" at <http://dmp.osu.edu>).

OIT Classroom Services, located in Central Classrooms 25 (the basement), will also check out media equipment to students. You will need the "Student Equipment Loan Permission Form," the last page of this syllabus, to access these resources. Check out <http://oit.osu.edu> for more info.

The **Digital Union**, located in the Science and Engineering Library (SEL 370), is a place for faculty, students, and staff to explore emerging technology. The Digital Union has technology, space to work, and a knowledgeable staff to guide users to thoughtful solutions and provide a supportive environment for low risk trial and error with technology. Visit <http://digitalunion.osu.edu> to check out their hours and resources.

SCHEDULE

C = computer classroom

	Topics/Activities	Reading Due	Assignments Due
Week 1			
T 1/5	Introductions Course overview Developing a rhetorical perspective		
R 1/7 C	Blog setup Defining documentary Begin <i>Murderball</i>	Juel, "Defining Documentary Film"	
Week 2			
T 1/12	Finish & discuss <i>Murderball</i> Actuality & reality Introduce rhetorical analysis assignment	Coles, "Fact and Fiction"	
R 1/14 C	Gathering evidence & making claims	Rosenthal, "Problems and Challenges"	Blog post #1
Week 3			
T 1/19	Ethics & activism Selections from <i>Born into Brothels</i> Workshop	Hampe, "Ethics in Making a Documentary"	Preliminary ideas for rhetorical analysis due in Carmen dropbox (also bring 2 hardcopies)
R 1/21 C	Representation & verisimilitude Selections from <i>Autism: The</i>	View "Autism Reality"	Blog post #2

	<i>Musical</i>		
Week 4			
T 1/26	Workshop Introduce media analysis assignment		Rhetorical analysis draft due in Carmen dropbox (also bring 2 hardcopies)
R 1/28 C	Visual rhetoric Photography Selections from <i>Helvetica</i>		Bring digital camera if you own one
Week 5			
T 2/2	Summary and analysis Genre & modes	Hampe, “Genres” and “Two Major Approaches” View “Asparagus! (A Stalkumentary)”	Rhetorical analysis due in Carmen dropbox
R 2/4 C	Working with iMovie & video equipment Introduce documentary assignment	Digital Storytelling Cookbook	Blog post #3
Week 6			
T 2/9	Workshop Fair use & copyright	View “Fair Use & Copyrights” and “A Fair(y) Use Tale”	Preliminary ideas for media analysis due for workshop (submit to dropbox and bring 2 hardcopies)
R 2/11 C	Writing proposals Studio time	Rosenthal, “Writing the Proposal”	Documentary proposal due to Carmen dropbox by Sunday, 2/14 at 11:59pm
Week 7			

T 2/16	Conferences – no class		24 hours prior to conference: submit media analysis draft to the Carmen dropbox
R 2/18 C	Storyboarding Studio session	TBA	
Week 8			
T 2/23	Interviewing subjects Camera angles & lighting		Blog post #4
R 2/25 C	Studio session		Media analysis due to Carmen dropbox
Week 9			
T 3/2	Workshop Studio session		
R 3/4 C	Workshop Studio session		
Week 10			
T 3/9	Presentations		
R 3/11 C	Presentations		Final doc and reflection due