

LAC Study Course “Documentary Film: Approaches and Methods”

General Information

Code	ER18_2019R
Course title	“Documentary Film: Approaches and Methods”
Course level	Undergraduate / Graduate
Course type	Academic
Field of study	Arts
Author of the course	Zane Balčus
Course Instructor	Zane Balčus
Credit Points	6 ECTS
Language of Instruction	EN
Abstract	From early actualities to contemporary performative films documentary cinema shows a complex set of aesthetic practices and approaches to reality. Throughout its history, documentary cinema has been closely related to political and social issues expressed by means of aesthetical and technological possibilities of the time. Documentary filmmaking due to its direct link to reality rises a set of questions about its definition, artistic expression, and ethical stance towards its subjects. The variety of approaches of different filmmakers and movements present this kind of filmmaking as an engaging art form to be explored from its beginnings to recent years.
Aim and objectives of the course	The aim of the course is to introduce students with the main theoretical and aesthetic approaches to documentary cinema, as well as the key filmmakers and their practices since the beginnings of cinema to contemporary scene.
Structure and tasks of independent studies	Students are expected to read articles and/or book chapters, and to watch films for each theme of the course. List of reading materials and films will be provided in the detailed course description circulated in the beginning of the semester.
Literature	<p><u>Compulsory</u></p> <p>Bruzzi, S. <i>New Documentary: A Critical Introduction</i>, 1st ed., London, New York: Routledge, 2011.</p> <p>Chapman, J. <i>Issues in contemporary documentary</i>, Cambridge: Polity, 2009.</p> <p>Kahana, J. (ed.). <i>The Documentary Film Reader: History, Theory, Criticism</i>, New York: Oxford Univeristy Press, 2016.</p> <p>McLane, B.A. <i>A New History of Documentary Film</i>, 2nd ed., New York, London: Continuum, 2012.</p> <p>Nichols, B. <i>Introduction to Documentary</i>. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001.</p> <p>Renov, M. <i>The Subject of Documentary</i>, Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2004.</p> <p><u>Recommended</u></p>

	<p>Barnouw, E. <i>Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film</i>, 2nd ed., Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.</p> <p>Chanam, M. <i>The Politics of Documentary</i>, London: pelgrave Macmillan, 2007.</p> <p>Nicholls, B. <i>Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary</i>, Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991.</p> <p>Renov, M. <i>Theorizing Documentary</i>. New York, London: Routledge, 1993.</p> <p><u>Additional Sources</u></p> <p>Aitken, I. (ed.). <i>The Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of the Documentary Film</i>, London, New York: Routledge, 2013.</p> <p>Rotha, P., J. Ruby (eds.), <i>Robert J. Flaherty: A Biography</i>, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983.</p> <p>Vertov, Dz. <i>Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov</i>, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1984.</p>
Course prerequisites	Interest in cinema

Course Outline

Theme	Number of hours
What is documentary cinema – key concepts	4
Documentary film modes	6
John Grierson	2
Robert Flaherty	2
Dziga Vertov	2
Free Cinema	2
Cinéma vérité/ Direct cinema	4
Riga School of Documentary Cinema	2
Contemporary trends of documentary cinema	4
Seminars	4

Expected learning outcomes and their assessment

Learning outcome	Assessment methods
Understanding of the main concepts of documentary cinema	Final examination – test
Knowledge of important directors and their practices	Final examination – test; seminar task
Awareness of contemporary trends of documentary cinema	Final examination – test; seminar task

Requirements for credit points

Attendance – at least 70 %.
Participation in all seminars (in case student cannot participate, the assignment has to be handed in in written form).
Exam – successfully completed test (based on the lecture materials and compulsory viewing list) with a mark at least 4 (out of 10).