

Tarnation (2003) Jonathan Caouette

Eng. 585d: Documentary

Fall 2006

Mondays, 6:00-10:00 – Caldwell G 107

Dr. Devin Orgeron

Office Hours: M: 2:30-3:30 / W: 11:15-12:15, or by appt.

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Required Texts:

- 1) Erik Barnouw, *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film* (Oxford University Press, 1993)
- 2) Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991)
- 3) Michael Renov, *The Subject of Documentary* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004)
- 4) Grant & Sloniowski eds., *Documenting the Documentary* (Detroit: Wayne State, 1998)
- 5) Electronic Reserve Materials: “(ER)” <http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/reserves/>

Course Objectives and Outcomes: This course probes the history of the documentary form with an eye toward investigating its present shapes. Evolving theories regarding the cinema’s contested and ever-changing relationship to that category we call “the real” will guide us as we explore non-fiction films from around the world. Particular attention will be devoted to the changes wrought by digital technologies and the illusion of “access” these technologies create. We will also consider more controversial—perhaps even questionable—forms of documentary image-making. Students will produce a short research paper, an annotated bibliography, and a research-based seminar paper.

Class Discussion/Oral Participation: This is a discussion-based seminar. Discussions will revolve around the materials we’ve read and seen so always bring the readings being covered to class along with any notes that you have taken. Be ready to participate on a daily basis. You will also have to orally present your ideas as your research project takes shape.

Reading: You are required to complete all reading for each class session. Read carefully and closely, making comments in the margins of the text and taking notes in order to help your oral responses in class and your individual research projects.

Grade Breakdown:

- 1) A short (5-7 pg.) research project due either 9/25, 10/2, or 10/9 (20%)
- 2) An **annotated** bibliography/5 minute Topic Presentation (10%)
- 3) A 15-20 page research paper due 12/11 (50 %)
- 4) Participation (20%)



Titicut Follies (1967) Frederick Wiseman

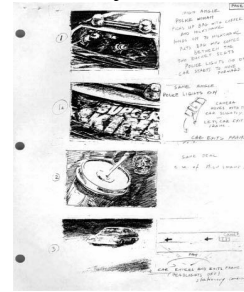
This syllabus is subject to change. You are responsible for all changes announced in class. If you miss some or all of a class session, contact a classmate about changes to the syllabus. Always read the assigned text for the class session on which the assignment appears.

What's Really Real? History of and in The Documentary Form

Monday, Aug. 28

Screening: *Medium Cool* (1969) Haskell Wexler (110 min.)

Reading: Renov: "The 'Real' in Fiction" (21-42)



Storyboard fragment from
The Thin Blue Line (1988) Errol Morris

Monday, Sept. 11

Screening: Excerpts from Muybridge, Edison, Lumières, etc.

Las Hurdes/Land Without Bread (1933) Luis Buñuel (30 min.)

Reading: Siegfried Kracauer: "Basic Concepts," (27-40) "The Film of Fact" (193-214) (ER)

Barnouw: "Prophet" (1-30)

Nichols: "The Domain of Documentary" (3-31)

Vivian Sobchack (in *DD*): "The Dialectical Imperative of Luis Buñuel's *Las Hurdes*" (70-82)

Monday, Sept. 18

Screening: Excerpts from *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* (1927) Walter Ruttmann, *The Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) Dziga Vertov

Louisiana Story (1948) Robert Flaherty (78 min.)

Reading: Barnouw: "Explorer" (33-51), "Reporter" (51-71), "Painter" (71-81), "Promoter" (213-228)

Nichols: "Documentary Modes of Representation" (32-75)

Documentary Form in the 1960s (short papers due each week per sign-up sheet)

Monday, Sept. 25

Screening: *Don't Look Back* (1967) D.A. Pennebaker (96 min.)

Reading: Barnouw: "Observer" (231-253)

Nichols: "Sticking to Reality" (134-164)

Jeanne Hall (in *DD*): "'Don't you Ever Just Watch?': American Cinema Verité and *Don't Look Back*" (223-237)

Monday, Oct. 2

Screening: *Salesman* (1969) The Maysles Bros. (85 min.)

Reading: Nichols: "The Fact of Realism and the Fiction of Objectivity" (165-198)

Monday, Oct. 9

Screening: *Titicut Follies* (1967) Frederick Wiseman (85 min.)

Reading: Nichols: "Axiographics" (76-103)

Barry Keith Grant (in *DD*): "'Ethnography in the First Person': Frederick Wiseman's *Titicut Follies*" (238-253)

Documentary Politics

Monday, Oct. 16

Screening: *The Plow That Broke The Plains* (1936) Pare Lorentz (25 min.)
The River (1938) Pare Lorentz (31 min.)
Excerpts from *Triumph of the Will* (1935) Leni Riefenstahl
Night and Fog (1955) Alain Resnais (32 min.)

Reading: Barnouw: “Advocate” (85-139), “Bugler” (139-172), “Prosecutor” (172-182)
Sandy Flitterman-Lewis (in *DD*): “Documenting the Ineffable: Terror and Memory in Alain Resnais’s *Night and Fog*” (204-222)

Monday, Oct. 23

Screening: *Harlan County, U.S.A.* (1976) Barbara Kopple (103 min.)

Reading: Barnouw: “Catalyst” (253-262), “Guerilla” (262-293)

Monday, Oct. 30

Screening: *The Thin Blue Line* (1980) Errol Morris (85 min.)

Reading: Linda Williams (in *DD*): “Truth, History, and *The Thin Blue Line*” (379-396)

Interrogating the Subject of Documentary in the Twenty-First Century

Monday, Nov. 6

Screening: *Capturing the Friedmans* (2003) Andrew Jarecki (103 min.)

Reading: Paul Arthur: “Extreme Makeover: The Changing Face of Documentary” (18-23) **(ER)**
Paul Arthur: “True Confessions, Sort Of” (4-7) **(ER)**
Renov: “Charged Vision: The Place of Desire in Documentary Film Theory” (93-103)

Monday, Nov. 13

Screening: *Tarnation* (2003) Jonathan Caouette (88 min.)

Reading: Paul Arthur: “Feel The Pain” (47-50) **(ER)**
Renov: “Domestic Ethnography and the Construction of the ‘Other’ Self” (216-229)
***5 MINUTE RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS/BIBLIOGRAPHIES DUE**

Monday, Nov. 20

Screening: *Bright Leaves* (2003) Ross McElwee (107 min.)

Lawrence F. Rhu: “Home Movies and Personal Documentaries: An Interview with Ross McElwee” (6-12) **(ER)**

Renov: “The Subject in History: The New Autobiography in Film and Video” (104-119)

Monday, Nov. 27

Screening: *Grizzly Man* (2005) Werner Herzog (103 min.)

Reading: Renov: “Filling Up the Hole in the Real” (120-129), “New Subjectivities: Documentary and Self-Representation in the Post Verité Age” (171-181)

The Form and its Margins

Monday, Dec. 4

Screening: Home Movies & Educational Film with A/V Geek Skip Elsheimer

Monday, Dec. 11, 6:00-9:00 -- Final exam period: **PAPERS DUE**

Screening: “*F*” for *Fake* (1974) Orson Welles (85 min.)

