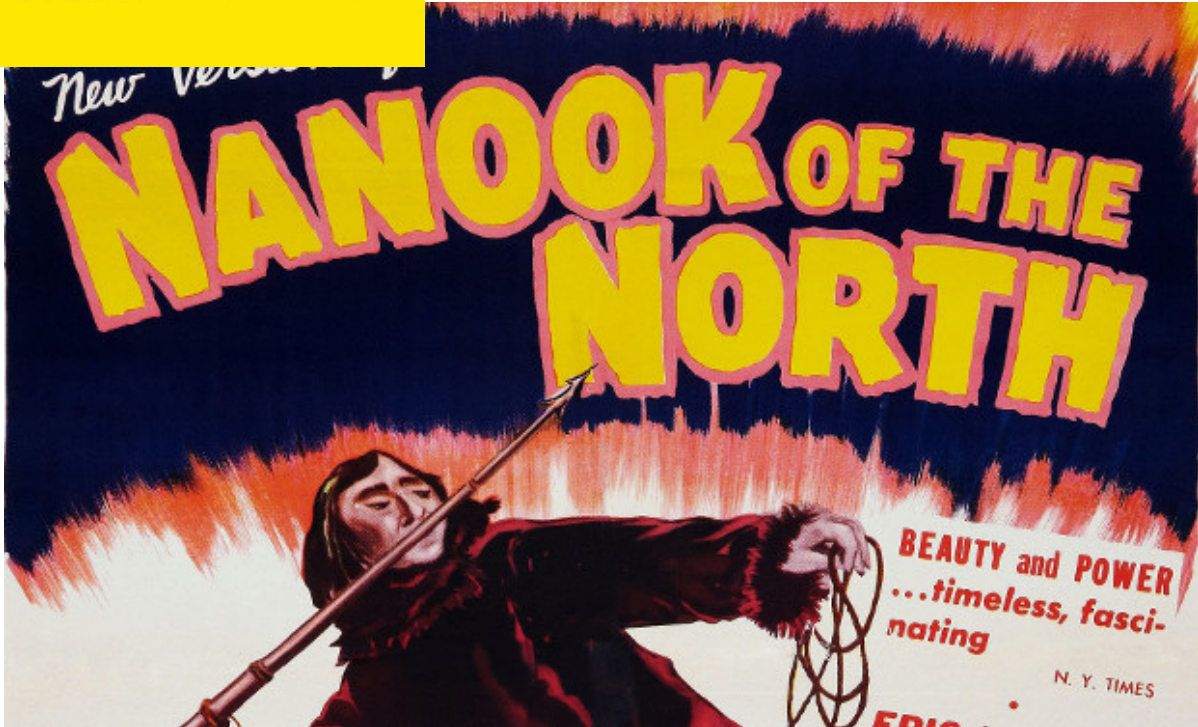




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ARTS3289

Documentary Film and History

Term Three // 2020

Course Overview

Staff Contact Details

Convenors

Name	Email	Availability	Location	Phone
Ruth Balint	r.balint@unsw.edu.au	Monday 3-4	Morven Brown 345	9385 8278

School Contact Information

School of Humanities and Languages

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Course Details

Credit Points 6

Summary of the Course

Do documentaries tell the truth? Can we rely on them as sources of history? In this course you will watch, analyse and debate how documentary films have both represented and revised the past. From the earliest radical Bolshevik pioneers to the home movies of the forties, to the current use of the phone camera to record emergency and war, and even to the wildlife documentary, this course explores how documentary films interpret history, make history and in some cases, have even changed history. This course is structured around a love of documentary and each week we examine a different theme related to the history documentary, and its development as a form of historical interrogation over the past century.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Analyse important turning points, idea and developments in the history of documentary film
2. Analyse how key documentary films have represented, interpreted and made history
3. Evaluate and engage with scholarly arguments
4. Communicate ideas and engage in discussions

Teaching Strategies

In my own work I am interested in the possibilities of the non-print form for historical research and am particularly fascinated by the audiovisual archives and the documentary film format. This course is structured around a love of documentary and each week we examine a different theme related to the history documentary, and its development as a form of public history over the past century. We view many different documentary films from around the globe, and learn to think about their historical contexts in time and place, their argument and reach. I see this course as a way of engaging you in discussion, debate and argument about the extraordinarily rich field of documentary film and its relationship to history.

Assessment

Assessment Tasks

Assessment task	Weight	Due Date	Student Learning Outcomes Assessed
Major Essay	50%	23/11/2020 05:00 PM	1,2,3
Tutorial responses	25%	02/10/2020 05:00 PM	1,2,3
Test	25%	Not Applicable	1,2,3

Assessment Details

Assessment 1: Major Essay

Start date: Not Applicable

Length: 2000 words

Details:

Research essay. 2000 words. Answering a set question source and analyse one or more documentary films and historical sources to make an informed argument.

The feedback is in the form of a written response on moodle, analysing argument and analysis, effective location and use of relevant sources, effective use of documentary case studies, referencing and presentation and written style.

Additional details:

Essay questions

1. Choose one documentary film that addresses an historical event, and discuss how it represents history. Consider the context in which it was made and how the film compares to scholarly analyses of the same event. You may wish to compare two films made at different times since the event itself, and whether interpretations may have changed.
2. 'Documentary claims to address the historical [the real] world and to possess the capacity to intervene by shaping how we regard it.' [Bill Nichols]. Discuss, using examples that do or do not conform to this analysis.
3. How do propaganda films aid historical understanding? Are there ethical and moral dilemmas historians face in using these archival films for historical investigation? What are they?
4. Rather than undercut European myths about race, ethnographic films have tended to reinforce such assumptions. Discuss, using at least two examples.
5. "In myth-making about Australian Aborigines there has been a consistent paradigm of opposing poles-noble and savage, good blacks and bad blacks, primitive and civilised, real and unreal." (Frances Peters-Little, 2002). Discuss.
6. How can archival film materials such as home movies or amateur footage be used as evidence in historical analysis? In your discussion, you may wish to refer to one or more films where filmmakers have re-purposed original/found footage to make new historical meanings.

7. How have documentaries about warfare navigated or treated the complexities of history, memory and national identity?
8. Are "natural history" or nature documentaries, natural or historical? Why or why not?

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 2: Tutorial responses

Start date: Not Applicable

Length: 200 words each

Details:

Five tutorial responses of 200 words each. This will be a written response to a specific question relating to the essential readings for that week's tutorial. Students will be able to choose two weekly topics from the first three weeks, and three from the topics for the rest of the term.

The first two tutorial responses will be due in week 3, so that students have early feedback, and the final three will be assessed at the end of term. Written feedback will be provided in moodle, assessing ability to accurately analyse tutorial readings and respond to the question, as well as written style, referencing and presentation.

Additional details:

The first due date for the first **two** tutorial responses is 2 October, 2020.

The second set of **three** responses are due 13 November, 2020.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 3: Test

Start date: 20/11/2020 10:00 AM

Length: Two hours

Details:

The test is a written test, and will assess students' understanding of lecture and tutorial material for the entire course. It will take place in the final week of term.

There will be no feedback for this assessment.

Additional details:

The test is an in-class, closed book test. As we are going to be online, it will be done through Moodle.

Students will access the test at 10am, and submit at midday.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Attendance Requirements

Students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes and review lecture recordings.

Course Schedule

[View class timetable](#)

Timetable

Date	Type	Content
Week 1: 14 September - 18 September	Lecture	Defining the Field: Documentary Film as History?
	Tutorial	Documentary as History
	Homework	Errol Morris and <i>Thin Blue Line</i>
Week 2: 21 September - 25 September	Lecture	The Soviets and the Brits. Propaganda or Education?
	Tutorial	Putting the Nation on Film
	Homework	<i>The Eternal Jew</i> and <i>Theresienstadt/Terezin</i>
Week 3: 28 September - 2 October	Lecture	The Era of the Witness and the Politics of Testimony
	Tutorial	Witness and Testimony in Documentary
	Homework	Films for this week are not available online, so watching this week TBA.
Week 4: 5 October - 9 October	Lecture	Visual Anthropology
	Tutorial	Indigenous Storytelling
	Homework	<i>Etched In Bone</i> .
Week 5: 12 October - 16 October	Lecture	The Audiovisual Archive and the Home Movie
	Tutorial	Home movies and Historical Meaning.
	Homework	Viewing TBA.
Week 6: 19 October - 23 October	Lecture	There are no lectures this week.
	Tutorial	There are no tutorials this week.
Week 7: 26 October - 30 October	Lecture	Anniversary Histories
	Tutorial	The Great War in Historical Documentaries
	Homework	Peter Jackson's <i>They Shall Not Grow Old</i>
Week 8: 2 November - 6 November	Lecture	Emergency Cinema
	Tutorial	Activist Documentary, or a Cinema of Accountability
	Homework	<i>Scream Quietly or the Neighbours Will Hear</i> .
Week 9: 9 November - 13 November	Lecture	The Natural History Documentary
	Tutorial	Cinema in the Wild.
	Homework	TBA.
Week 10: 16 November - 20 November	Lecture	TEST
	Tutorial	In this tutorial we will discuss final essay tips.

Resources

Prescribed Resources

Weekly readings will be available via the Moodle site for this course.

Please note that we will be using Blackboard Ultra for our lectures, as this course is to run online. I expect you to attend lectures, which will usually run for around 2 hours. The third hour was used for film viewing in face to face lectures. As screening hour-long films online in the lecture time-slot is not a viable option, I will expect you to watch the films listed for each week, and will provide the necessary links for these.

Recommended Resources

There are no textbooks for this course. Essential weekly readings will be uploaded to Leganto on Moodle, and I have also made available some ebooks which you might find useful as general reading.

Below is a short list of recommended books for this course and for your essays, to help guide you to relevant literature.

- Keith Beattie, *Documentary Screens: Non-Fiction Film and Television*, Palgrave, New York, 2004.
- David Cannadine, *History and the Media*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2004.
- John Corner, *The Art of Record: A Critical Introduction to Documentary*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1996.
- Jerome De Groot, *Consuming History: History and Historians in Popular Culture*, Routledge, London, 2009.
- Marnie Hughes-Warrington, *History Goes to the Movies*, Routledge, 2007.
- Rahat Imran, *Activist Documentary Film in Pakistan: The emergence of a cinema of accountability*, Routledge, Oxon and New York, 2016.
- Karen Ishizuka and Patricia Zimmerman, *Mining the Home Movie: Excavations in Histories and Memories*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2008.
- Marcia Landy, (ed), *The Historical Film: History and Memory in Media*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick and New Jersey, 2001.
- Kevin Macdonald and Mark Cousins, *Imagining Reality: The Faber Book of Documentary*, Faber and Faber, London and Boston, 1996.
- Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2001.
- Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1994.
- Paula Rabinowitz, *They Must Be Represented: The Politics of Documentary*, Verso, London and New York, 1994.
- Laura Rascolli, Gwenda Young and Barry Monahan, (eds), *Amateur Filmmaking: The Home Movie, the Archive, the Web*, Bloomsbury, 2014.
- Michael Renov and Jane M. Gaines (eds), *Collecting Visible Evidence*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1999.
- Graham Roberts and Philip M Taylor (eds), *The Historian, Television and Television History*, University of Luton Press, Luton UK, 2001.
- Robert Rosenstone, *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Understanding of History*, Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Alan Rosenthal and John Corner (eds), *New Challenges for Documentary*, Manchester University

Press, Manchester and New York, 2005.

- Catherine Russell, *Experimental Ethnography*, Duke University Press, Durham, 1999.
- Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, Verso, London and NY, 1994.
- Robert Brent Toplin, *History by Hollywood: The Use and Abuse of the American Past*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 1996.
- Charles Warren, (ed), *Beyond Document: Essays on Nonfiction Film*, University Press of New England, Hanover, 1996.
- Patricia Zimmerman, *States of Emergency: Documentaries, Wars, Democracies*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2000.
- The journal *Film and History* is devoted to this subject, although heavily weighted towards Film Studies; see also *Screen* and *Vertigo*.
- There are a wide range of databases for watching films these days. Vimeo is often a good one for documentaries, as is Stan and Netflix, though you may of course know of others. Kanopy, the UNSW Library database for streaming films also has quite a good collection. Students seeking resources can also obtain assistance from the UNSW Library. One starting point for assistance is: <http://info.library.unsw.edu.au/web/services/services.html>

Course Evaluation and Development

Feedback is welcome at anytime. MyExperience will be made available on Moodle.

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Turnitin Submission

If you encounter a problem when attempting to submit your assignment through Turnitin, please telephone External Support on 9385 3331 or email them on externalteltsupport@unsw.edu.au . Support hours are 8:00am – 10:00pm on weekdays and 9:00am – 5:00pm on weekends (365 days a year). If you are unable to submit your assignment due to a fault with Turnitin you may apply for an extension, but you must retain your ticket number from External Support (along with any other relevant documents) to include as evidence to support your extension application. If you email External Support you will automatically receive a ticket number, but if you telephone you will need to specifically ask for one. Turnitin also provides updates on their system status on Twitter.

Generally, assessment tasks must be submitted electronically via either Turnitin or a Moodle assignment. In instances where this is not possible, it will be stated on your course's Moodle site with alternative submission details.

For information on how to submit assignments online via Moodle: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-submit-assignment-moodle>

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement.

UNSW groups plagiarism into the following categories:

Copying: using the same or very similar words to the original text or idea without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This also applies to images, art and design projects, as well as presentations where someone presents another's ideas or words without credit.

Inappropriate paraphrasing: Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original structure and/or progression of ideas of the original, and information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit and to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without appropriate referencing.

Collusion: working with others but passing off the work as a person's individual work. Collusion also includes providing your work to another student before the due date, or for the purpose of them plagiarising at any time, paying another person to perform an academic task, stealing or acquiring another person's academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person's work or seeking payment for completing academic work.

Inappropriate citation: Citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the "secondary" source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.

Duplication ("self-plagiarism"): submitting your own work, in whole or in part, where it has previously been prepared or submitted for another assessment or course at UNSW or another university.

Correct referencing practices:

- Paraphrasing, summarising, essay writing and time management
- Appropriate use of and attribution for a range of materials including text, images, formulae and concepts.

Individual assistance is available on request from The Learning Centre (<http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/>). Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study and one of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting and proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items.

UNSW Library also has the ELISE tool available to assist you with your study at UNSW. ELISE is designed to introduce new students to studying at UNSW but it can also be a great refresher during your study.

Completing the ELISE tutorial and quiz will enable you to:

- analyse topics, plan responses and organise research for academic writing and other assessment tasks
- effectively and efficiently find appropriate information sources and evaluate relevance to your needs
- use and manage information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- better manage your time

- understand your rights and responsibilities as a student at UNSW
- be aware of plagiarism, copyright, UNSW Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use of UNSW ICT Resources Policy
- be aware of the standards of behaviour expected of everyone in the UNSW community
- locate services and information about UNSW and UNSW Library

Some of these areas will be familiar to you, others will be new. Gaining a solid understanding of all the related aspects of ELISE will help you make the most of your studies at UNSW.

<http://subjectguides.library.unsw.edu.au/elise/aboutelise>

Academic Information

For essential student information relating to:

- requests for extension;
- late submissions guidelines;
- review of marks;
- UNSW Health and Safety policies;
- examination procedures;
- special consideration in the event of illness or misadventure;
- student equity and disability;
- and other essential academic information, see

<https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/protocols-guidelines/>

Image Credit

<https://www.ifc.com/shows/documentary-now/blog/2015/09/5-documentaries-that-turned-out-to-be-bullshit>

CRICOS

CRICOS Provider Code: 00098G

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Bedegal people who are the traditional custodians of the lands on which UNSW Kensington campus is located.