

UTEP Dept. of Communication
COMM 4346: Documentary Video Practicum (F2F)
CRN: 23288
SPRING 2023

Instructor: Dr. Sabiha Khan
Times: Tuesdays 12:30-3:20 PM EDU 303
Email: skhan2@utep.edu
Office hours: Tuesdays after class or by appt on Zoom

Course Information: What this class is about and what we will do

COURSE DESCRIPTION: An advanced documentary video production course for students who have taken COMM 2342: *Introduction to Video Systems* (or who have had sufficient previous video production experience). Classes will consist of: group discussion of techniques of documentary video production and theory of documentary film based on assigned readings and class screenings and individual documentary video production exercises as well as a final short documentary film.

COURSE TOPICS & OBJECTIVES: Students will experience the process of independent video production – from initial research, treatments and scripts (including principles of documentary structure and storytelling), production planning, archival research, production, editing, and grantwriting. In-class screenings will provide students with examples of the various approaches to documentary film.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Students will:

Demonstrate the ability to produce a film combining conceptual, creative, and technical skills sets:

- Apply all three phases of production
- Aggregate various forms of communication to create a topical basis for a documentary film project
- Work collaboratively with a film crew

LEARNING MODULES:

This course uses a modular format using a **Tuesday to Monday posting** schedule on Blackboard. New material will be posted on **Tuesdays** (usually two weeks in advance) and you have until the following **Monday** to submit all work for that week. In each module, material for two to three weeks is packaged together by broad topic, including: lectures, lecture notes, assignment submissions, discussion posts.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Sheila Curran Bernard, *Documentary Storytelling: Creative Nonfiction on Screen*
(ISBN: 0240812417) (ANY EDITION IS OK)



These books may also be supplemented by assigned and suggested readings, which will be distributed on Blackboard

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:

STUDENT EVALUATION: students will be required to:

I. attend class lectures and screenings, do assigned readings, participate in class discussions and student video screening/critique sessions, complete all interim production assignments. This is an advanced level course in which students are expected to demonstrate their understanding of issues through participation in the group exercises and discussions.

*** NOTE: Since this class is a workshop and requires your active participation, class attendance is mandatory - attendance will be noted and points will be deducted for all unexplained or unapproved absences. Attendance includes arriving for class on time, and staying until the end of class (unless you have an unavoidable time conflict and have notified me of the situation beforehand or as soon as possible afterward).

II. Gain an understanding of documentary form by making a mockumentary short or scene from an imagined longer mockumentary (under 2 minutes).

III. Participate in the making of an original, short documentary video production, 7-12 minutes in length.

The final short documentary must include the following:

- A treatment for the final documentary
- screening/discussion of rushes and cuts as assigned
- An assembly and rough cut (of representative footage/images) that will be screened in class and critiqued.
- Copies of talent release forms, licensing agreements for any copyrighted materials used
- Final cuts will be screened and critiqued by the class.

- The final videos must include end titles listing your production crew, as well as subtitles for all essential non-English dialogue. A high quality digital video file (exact specs will be provided) should be uploaded for streaming for grading the day of final screening / critique sessions.

GRADING: 90-100 = A 80-89 = B 70-79 = C 60-69 = D 0-59 = F

Final grades will be based on the following:

All work other than what is listed below	60%
Mockumentary	10%
Final Documentary Project (rough cut; final cut; final supporting docs)	<u>30%</u>
Total:	100%

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS:

Course content is delivered via the Internet through the Blackboard learning management system. Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the best browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser.

You will need to have access to a computer/laptop, scanner, a webcam, and a microphone. You will need to download or update the following software: Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat Reader, Windows Media Player, QuickTime, and Java. Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course.

If you do not have a word-processing software, you can download Word and other Microsoft Office programs (including Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and more) for free via UTEP’s Microsoft Office Portal. Click the following link for more information about [Microsoft Office 365](#) and follow the instructions.

IMPORTANT: If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the UTEP [Help Desk](#) as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students. Please do not contact me for this type of assistance. The Help Desk is much better equipped than I am to assist you!

Access to Adobe Creative Cloud (you are pre-approved through this course)
Camera kit

Course Communication: How we will stay in contact with each other

- **Office Hours:** My office hours will be held after class and by appointment on Zoom Meetings using [this link](#).
- **Email:** UTEP e-mail is the best way to contact me. My email address is: skhan2@utep.edu. I will make every attempt to respond to your e-mail within 24-48 hours of receipt. When e-mailing me, be sure to email from your UTEP student account and please put the course number in the subject line. In the body of your e-mail, clearly state your question. At the end of your e-mail, be sure to put your first and last name, and your university identification number.
- **Discussion Board:** If you have a question that you believe other students may also have, please post it in the Help Board of the discussion boards inside of Blackboard. Please respond to other students' questions if you have a helpful response.
- **Announcements:** Check the Blackboard announcements frequently for any updates, deadlines, or other important messages.

NETIQUETTE

Some assignments will require that you communicate online via message thread. Sometimes communication online can be challenging. It's possible to miscommunicate what we mean or to misunderstand what our classmates mean given the lack of body language and immediate feedback. Therefore, please keep these netiquette (network etiquette) guidelines in mind. Failure to observe them may result in disciplinary action.

- Always consider audience. This is a college-level course; therefore, all communication should reflect polite consideration of others' ideas.
- Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and to the instructor at all times. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
- When reacting to someone else's message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face-to-face situation.
- Blackboard is not a public internet venue; all postings to it should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted on in these online spaces is intended for classmates and professor only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space.

Course Policies: What you need to do to be successful in the course

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

Attendance in the course is determined by participation in the learning activities of the course. Your participation in the course is important not only for your learning and success but also to create a community of learners. Participation is determined by completion of the following activities:

- Reading/Viewing all course materials to ensure understanding of assignment requirements
- Participating in engaging discussion with your peers on the discussion boards
- Other activities as indicated in the weekly modules

Because these activities are designed to contribute to your learning each week, they cannot be made up after their due date has passed.

EXCUSED ABSENCES AND/OR COURSE DROP POLICY

According to UTEP Curriculum and Classroom Policies, “When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor may drop the student from the class with a grade of “W” before the course drop deadline and with a grade of “F” after the course drop deadline,” which this year is **MAR 30**. See academic regulations in the UTEP Undergraduate Catalog for a list of excused absences. Therefore, if I find that, due to non-performance in the course, you are at risk of failing, I will drop you from the course. I will provide one week’s advance notice via email.

If you prefer to initiate the drop process, then let me know and contact the [Registrar’s Office](#) to initiate the drop process. If you do not, you are at risk of receiving an “F” for the course.

ZOOM CLASS MEETINGS

We may need to meet on Zoom Meetings in the event of pandemic-related shutdowns. I will provide information as needed.

DEADLINES, LATE WORK, AND ABSENCE POLICY

All assignments will be due on Mondays at 11:59 PM. No late work will be accepted if the reason is not considered excusable.

ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF SUBMITTING WORK IN CASE OF TECHNICAL ISSUES

I strongly suggest that you submit your work with plenty of time to spare in the event that you have a technical issue with the course website, network, and/or your computer. I also suggest you save all your work (answers to discussion points, quizzes, exams, and essays) in a separate Word document as a back-up. This way, you will have evidence that you completed the work and will not lose credit. If you are experiencing difficulties submitting your work through the

course website, please contact the UTEP Help Desk. You can email me your back-up document as a last resort.

INCOMPLETE GRADE POLICY

Incomplete grades may be requested only in exceptional circumstances after you have completed at least half of the course requirements. Talk to me immediately if you believe an incomplete is warranted. If granted, we will establish a contract of work to be completed with deadlines.

CENTER FOR ACCOMMODATIONS AND SUPPORT SERVICES POLICY:

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu. Or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass. CASS staff are the only individuals who can validate and, if need be, authorize accommodation for students with disabilities.

SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY: “The University of Texas at El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence and students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, submitting work for credit that is attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act that gives or attempts to give unfair advantage.”

CLASS RECORDINGS

The use of recordings will enable you to have access to class lectures, group discussions, and so on in the event you miss a synchronous or in-person class meeting due to illness or other extenuating circumstance. Our use of such technology is governed by the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and UTEP’s acceptable-use policy. A recording of class sessions will be kept and stored by UTEP, in accordance with FERPA and UTEP policies. Your instructor will not share the recordings of your class activities outside of course participants, which include your fellow students, teaching assistants, or graduate assistants, and any guest faculty or community-based learning partners with whom we may engage during a class session. **You may not share recordings outside of this course.** Doing so may result in disciplinary action.

PLAGIARISM DETECTING SOFTWARE

Some of your course work and assessments may be submitted to SafeAssign, a plagiarism detecting software. SafeAssign is used to review assignment submissions for originality and will help you learn how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase.

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT FOR COURSE MATERIALS

All materials used in this course are protected by copyright law. The course materials are only for the use of students currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. They may not be further disseminated.

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to covidaction@utep.edu, so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID 19 testing.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area, and will be available at no charge on campus during the first week of classes. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit epstrong.org

Course Resources: Where you can go for assistance

UTEP provides a variety of student services and support:

Technology Resources

- [Help Desk](#): Students experiencing technological challenges (email, Blackboard, software, etc.) can submit a ticket to the UTEP Helpdesk for assistance. Contact the Helpdesk via phone, email, chat, website, or in person if on campus.

Academic Resources

- [UTEP Library](#): Access a wide range of resources including online, full-text access to thousands of journals and eBooks plus reference service and librarian assistance for enrolled students.
- [University Writing Center \(UWC\)](#): Submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help and explore other writing resources.
- [Math Tutoring Center \(MaRCS\)](#): Ask a tutor for help and explore other available math resources.
- [History Tutoring Center \(HTC\)](#): Receive assistance with writing history papers, get help from a tutor and explore other history resources.
- [RefWorks](#): A bibliographic citation tool; check out the RefWorks tutorial and Fact Sheet and Quick-Start Guide.

Individual Resources

- [Military Student Success Center](#): Assists personnel in any branch of service to reach their educational goals.

- [Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#): Assists students with ADA-related accommodations for coursework, housing, and internships.
- [Counseling and Psychological Services](#): Provides a variety of counseling services including individual, couples, and group sessions as well as career and disability assessments.

CLASS SCHEDULE

THE INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MAKE NECESSARY CHANGES IN THE SCHEDULE/CALENDAR/ASSIGNMENTS DEPENDING ON THE NEEDS OF THE CLASS.

Readings will come from Curran Bernard’s *Documentary Storytelling* (CB). Reserve readings may be assigned and posted on Blackboard as needed.

DATE	WEEK	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS/ACTIVITIES/DUE DATES
WELCOME MODULE + MODULE 1 : WHAT IS A DOCUMENTARY?			
JAN 17- JAN 23	1	<i>Course Orientation</i>	<p>IN-CLASS MTG TUES JAN 17 12:30-3:20 PM DUE MON JAN 23 by 11:59 PM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen: Capturing Reality: The Art of Documentary (National Film Board of Canada, 2008) • Read: Course Syllabus • Complete + Submit: <i>Capturing Reality</i> assignment • Complete + Submit: “Read the Syllabus” Assignment
JAN 24- JAN 30	2	<i>Defining Documentary Through Mockumentary</i>	<p>IN-CLASS MTG TUES JAN 24 12:30-3:20 PM DUE MON JAN 30 by 11:59 PM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen: Mockumentaries: Everything You Need to Know (Senior Post for NFS, 2018); Spaghetti Harvest in Ticino (BBC, 1957); Crack (Pete King, 2015) • Post + Respond: Mockumentary discussion board • Complete + Submit: Streaming link to your short mockumentary (1-2 min)
MODULE 2: PRE-PRODUCTION SKILLS			
JAN 31- FEB 6	3	<i>Story Basics</i>	<p>IN-CLASS MTG TUES JAN 31 12:30-3:20 PM DUE MON FEB 6 by 11:59 PM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: CB Chs. 1-3 • Screen: Flight (Laura Wadha, 2017); Mockumentaries • Post + Respond: Story Basics discussion board • Complete + Submit: Story Basics Reading Questions

<p>FEB 7- FEB 13</p>	<p>4</p>	<p><i>Brainstorm Doc Ideas</i></p>	<p>IN-CLASS MTG TUES FEB 7 12:30-3:20 PM DUE MON FEB 13 by 11:59 PM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen: TBD • Read: CB Chs. 1-3 cont' • Complete + Submit: Brainstorm 10-15 Doc Ideas
<p>FEB 14- FEB 20</p>	<p>5</p>	<p><i>Story Structure</i></p>	<p>NO CLASS TUES FEB 14 DUE MON FEB 20 by 11:59 PM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen: TBD • Read: CB Ch. 4 "Story Structure"; "How to Watch a Film" • Complete + Submit: Story Structure Reading Questions; "How to Watch a Film" Assignment
<p>FEB 21- FEB 27</p>	<p>6</p>	<p><i>Treatments</i></p>	<p>IN-CLASS MTG TUES FEB 21 12:30-3:20 PM DUE MON FEB 27 by 11:59 PM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Karen Everett, "Squeezing Reality into Three Acts" [handout]; Treatment Packet • COMPLETE + SUBMIT: Everett and treatment questions
<p>MODULE 3: PRODUCTION SKILLS</p>			
<p>FEB 28- MAR 6</p>	<p>7</p>	<p><i>Camerawork I: Observational Style</i></p>	<p>IN-CLASS MTG TUES FEB 28 12:30-3:20 PM WORK ON Hypothesis & Proposal Helper + Treatment 1st draft in class DUE MON MAR 6 by 11:59 PM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen: <i>Call Center Blues</i> (Geeta Gandhbir, 2020) and your choice from <i>Short of thea Week/Documentary</i> • Read: CB Ch. 11 "Shooting" • Complete + Submit: Reading Questions for <i>Call Center Blues</i> + your choice
<p>MAR 7- MAR 20</p>	<p>8</p>	<p><i>Camerawork II: Interviews + Lighting</i></p>	<p>IN-CLASS MTG TUES MAR 7 12:30-3:20 PM SPRING BREAK MAR 13-17 DUE MON OCT 20 by 11:59 PM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen: Clips from "Analyzing Visual Style in Interviews" • Read: CB on Interviews (pp. on BB) • Complete + Submit: Reading Questions, "Interviews," "Analyzing Interviews" assignment; Edited Interview (2-3 min) assignment

MODULE 5: ASSEMBLING YOUR SHORT DOCUMENTARY			
MAR 21- MAR 27	9	<i>Assembly Cut</i>	IN-CLASS MTG TUES MAR 21 12:30-3:20 PM Work on Assembly Cut
MAR 28- APR 3	10	<i>Assembly Cut</i>	IN-CLASS MTG TUES MAR 28 12:30-3:20 PM Work on Assembly Cut Assembly cut DUE MON APR 3 @ 11:59 PM
APR 4 - APR 10	11	<i>Assembly Cut to Rough Cut</i>	IN-CLASS MTG TUES APR 4 12:30-3:20 PM ASSEMBLY CUT SCREENING DUE MON APR 10 @ 11:59 PM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen: <i>Holocaust Survivor Band</i> • Complete + Submit: ROUGH CUT prep • Assembly cut Peer review
APR 11- APR 17	12	<i>Rough Cut</i>	DR. KHAN-CONFERENCE TRAVEL-NO SCHEDULED CLASS WORK ON ROUGH CUTS
APR 18- APR 24	13	<i>Rough Cut</i>	NO SCHEDULED CLASS WORK ON ROUGH CUTS
APR 25- MAY 1	14	<i>Rough Cut</i>	ROUGH CUT SCREENING

MODULE 6: ROUGH CUT TO FINAL CUT (DUE DATES TBA)			
MAY 2- MAY 8	15	<i>Rough Cut Screening Rough Cut to Final Cut</i>	MAY 2- LAST DAY OF CLASS ROUGH CUT SCREENING CONT' Rough cut to final cut assignment
MAY 8- MAY 12	FINALS WEEK	<i>Final Cut Screening</i>	FINAL CUT SCREENING- DATE TBD SUN MAY 14 @ 11:59 PM- FINAL PROJECTS DUE (FINAL CUT + ALL SUPPORTING MATERIALS)