

UTEP Dept. of Communication
COMM 4346: Documentary Video Practicum
CRN: 12976
FALL 2023








Instructor: Dr. Sabiha Khan
 Times: Tuesdays 12:30-3:20 PM CCSB 1.0204
 Delivery Method: In-person
 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. ([UTEP Edge Experience: Creative Activities](#))

COURSE OBJECTIVES + UNIVERSITY LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course students will:

Student Learning Objective	Outcome (UTEP Edge Advantages)	
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 peer-critique.		Critical Thinking
		Problem Solving
		Communication
		Teamwork
		Leadership
		Confidence
		Entrepreneurship

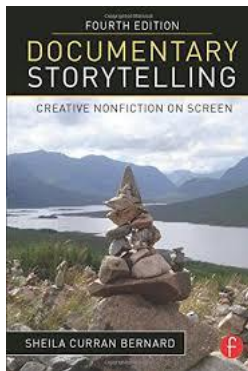
aggregate various forms of communication to create a topical basis for a documentary film project		Critical Thinking
		Problem Solving
		Communication
analyze award-winning global documentary films to assess the potentials and pitfalls of documentary film as an engine to advance the public good		Critical Thinking
		Global Awareness
		Social Responsibility
work collaboratively with a film crew		Teamwork
		Problem Solving
		Leadership
		Confidence
		Communication
engage in peer-critique of student work		Critical Thinking
		Confidence
		Social Responsibility
		Communication

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; related screenings + exercises; 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 **NOV 3**. 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:

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. Students requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY: Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as ones' own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct and](#)

[Conflict Resolution \(OSCCR\)](#) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more, please visit [HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline](#).

GUIDANCE ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The use of generative AI tools such as Chat GPT is permitted in this course **only** when explicitly stated in the assignment prompt.

In all other instances, you may not use AI tools to complete assignments.

When generative AI tools are allowed to be used for an assignment, students must cite any borrowed content sources to comply with all applicable citation guidelines, copyright law, and avoid plagiarism. Instances that violate these guidelines will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.

CLASS RECORDINGS

The occasional 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 INFORMATION

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 any questions or concerns about COVID-19, please email covidaction@utep.edu for assistance.

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?			
AUG 29- SEPT 4	1	<i>Course Orientation</i>	<p>IN-CLASS MTG TUES AUG 29 12:30-3:20 PM</p> <p>DUE MON SEPT 4 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
SEPT 5- SEPT 11	2	<i>Defining Documentary Through Mockumentary</i>	<p>IN-CLASS MTG TUES SEPT 5 12:30-3:20 PM</p> <p>DUE MON SEPT 11 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			
SEPT 12- SEPT 18	3	<i>Story Basics + Brainstorming Doc Ideas</i>	<p>IN-CLASS MTG TUES SEPT 12 12:30-3:20 PM</p> <p>DUE MON SEPT 18 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; Brainstorm 10-15 Doc Ideas

SEPT 19- SEPT 25	4	<i>Story Basics + Brainstorm Doc Ideas cont'</i>	<p>IN-CLASS MTG TUES SEPT 19 12:30-3:20 PM DUE MON SEPT 25 by 11:59 PM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen: TBD • Read: CB Chs. 1-3 cont' • Complete + Submit: Documentary Film Pitch
SEPT 26- OCT 2	5	<i>Story Structure</i>	<p>IN-CLASS MTG TUES SEPT 26 12:30-3:20 PM DOCUMENTARY PITCH SESSION DUE MON OCT 2 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
OCT 3- OCT 9	6	<i>Treatments</i>	<p>IN-CLASS MTG TUES OCT 3 12:30-3:20 PM DUE MON OCT 9 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
MODULE 3: PRODUCTION SKILLS			
OCT 10- OCT 16	7	<i>Treatments</i>	<p>NO SCHEDULED CLASS- VIRTUAL GROUP MEETINGS WORK ON HYPOTHESIS & PROPOSAL HELPER + TREATMENT 1ST DRAFT INDEPENDENTLY DUE MON OCT 16 by 11:59 PM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete + Submit: TREATMENT PACKET + TREATMENT 1ST DRAFT (ONE PER GROUP)
OCT 17- OCT 23	8	<i>Camerawork I: Observational Style</i>	<p>IN-CLASS MTG TUES OCT 17 12:30-3:20 PM DUE MON OCT 23 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 the Week/Documentary</i> • Read: CB Ch. 11 "Shooting" • Complete + Submit: Reading Questions for <i>Call Center Blues</i> + your choice

MODULE 6: ROUGH CUT TO FINAL CUT (DUE DATES TBA)			
DEC 5- DEC 11	15	<i>Rough Cut Screening Rough Cut to Final Cut</i>	DEC 5- LAST DAY OF CLASS ROUGH CUT SCREENING CONT Rough cut to final cut assignment
DEC 12- DEC 18	FINALS WEEK	<i>Final Cut Screening</i>	FINAL CUT SCREENING- DATE TBD