



## FLM615 Documentary Film (3 credit hours) Course Syllabus

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### Course Description

Documentary films have emerged as a popular medium for non-fiction storytelling. This course provides a conceptual overview of the form, strategies, and conventions of documentary films and videos. We will screen historical and contemporary documentaries to examine questions of defining the genre, ethical dilemmas, the debate over objectivity, and the ways that documentaries can stimulate critical thinking about the construction of our social world. Students will need to join a movie subscription service to gain timely access to the films for each week. Please note that it will be very difficult to access these films outside of the U.S., so students living internationally are advised to check on the accessibility of the films before registering for this course.

### Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Analyze and interpret documentary films in order to understand their cultural and contextual significance.

### Required Textbook(s) and Resources

Grant, B. K. and Sioniowski, J. (2013). *Documenting the Documentary: Close Readings of Documentary Film and Video*. Wayne State University Press.

Be sure to also review the weekly **Explore** sections for additional library or web resources. For access to databases, research help, and writing tips, visit the [Tiffin University Library](#).

### Time Commitment

Effective time management is possibly the single most critical element to your academic success. To do well in this online class you should plan your time wisely to maximize your learning through the completion of readings, discussions, and assignments. Because of our accelerated, seven-week term, TU online courses are designed with the expectation that you dedicate a little over **six (6)** hours per credit hour to course activities and preparation **each**

**week.** For example, for successful completion of a three-credit, seven-week online course you should reserve roughly **twenty (20) hours per week.**

To help plan your time and keep on track toward successful course completion, note the distinctive rhythm of assignment due dates:

1. All times assume Eastern Time (GMT-4).
2. Weeks begin at 12:00 a.m. ET on Monday and end at 11:55 p.m. ET on Sunday.
3. Unless otherwise noted, initial assignments or discussion posts are due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Wednesdays.**
4. Additional assignments or follow-up discussion posts are due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Saturdays, and**
5. Major assignments and reflections are typically due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Sundays.**

## Learning Activities

This course has been designed as a Position Post course type. This means that by Wednesday each week, you'll be responding to a prompt in 300-500 words (2-3 substantive paragraphs) without the need to reply to your peers, although we encourage replies and starting conversations. APA formatting will not be emphasized; however you should still acknowledge any outside sources you use in some way.

By Saturday of each week, you will submit a reply to your own post that in some way connects what you did earlier in the week to the weekly learning goals. For example, you may be asked to read a certain number of peer posts and synthesize their ideas, then explain how that affects your own thinking about the topic. Or you may be asked to write a post that pokes holes in your original argument. Courses will vary, so be sure to read directions carefully.

By Sunday of each week, you will have another assignment due that in some way applies the information you learned. This could be an exam, a paper, a presentation, an infographic, etc. Be sure to read directions carefully for the assignment.

Lastly, you will be writing a reflection due each Sunday that reflects on your learning. This kind of writing often asks you to think about your own thinking (metacognition) and will include a prompt to which you must respond. It is **not** writing about your feelings. Reflection is often the best way we learn something, so do your best to analyze your own thought processes.

## Grading

The chart below identifies the individual contributions from each type of activity, per week.

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Total
<b>Discussion</b> Activity 1.1 (n/a)	--	--	--	--	--	--	<b>0</b>
<b>Position Statement</b> Activity 1.2 (50)	<b>Position Statement</b> Activity 2.1 (50)	<b>Position Statement</b> Activity 3.1 (50)	<b>Position Statement</b> Activity 4.1 (50)	<b>Position Statement</b> Activity 5.1 (50)	<b>Position Statement</b> Activity 6.1 (50)	<b>Position Statement</b> Activity 7.1 (50)	<b>350</b>
--	<b>Assignment</b> Activity 2.2 (50)	<b>Assignment</b> Activity 3.2 (100)	<b>Assignment</b> Activity 4.2 (50)	<b>Assignment</b> Activity 5.2 (50)	<b>Assignment</b> Activity 6.2 (150)	<b>Assignment</b> Activity 7.2 (100)	<b>500</b>
<b>Reflection</b> Activity 1.3 (25)	<b>Reflection</b> Activity 2.3 (25)	<b>Reflection</b> Activity 3.3 (25)	<b>Reflection</b> Activity 4.3 (25)	<b>Reflection</b> Activity 5.3 (25)		<b>Reflection</b> Activity 7.3 (25)	<b>150</b>
<b>75</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>1000</b>

## Grading Scale

A: 90-100% | B: 80-89% | C: 70-79% | F: <69%

## Course Schedule and Weekly Checklist

### Start Here

- MON: Activity 1.1: Introductory Forum – Initial Post

### Week 1

- WED: Activity 1.1: Introductory Forum – OPTIONAL Secondary Post
- WED: Activity 1.2: Distinct Elements of Documentaries – Initial Post
- SAT: Activity 1.2: Distinct Elements of Documentaries – Secondary Post
- SUN: Activity 1.3: Reflection

### Week 2

- WED: Activity 2.1: Objectivity – Initial Post
- SAT: Activity 2.1: Objectivity – Secondary Post
- SUN: Activity 2.2: Interviewing
- SUN: Activity 2.3: Reflection

**Week 3**

- WED: Activity 3.1: Autobiographical and Experimental Form – Initial Post
- SAT: Activity 3.1: Autobiographical and Experimental Form – Secondary Post
- SUN: Activity 3.2: Artistic Choices
- SUN: Activity 3.3: Reflection

**Week 4**

- WED: Activity 4.1: Community, People, and Nature – Initial Post
- SAT: Activity 4.1: Community, People, and Nature – Secondary Post
- SUN: Activity 4.2: Memorials
- SUN: Activity 4.3: Reflection

**Week 5**

- WED: Activity 5.1: Michael Moore – Initial Post
- SAT: Activity 5.1: Michael Moore – Secondary Post
- SUN: Activity 5.2: Political Process
- SUN: Activity 5.3: Reflection

**Week 6**

- WED: Activity 6.1: Corporations and Ethics – Initial Post
- SAT: Activity 6.1: Corporations and Ethics – Secondary Post
- SUN: Activity 6.2: Final Paper

**Week 7**

- WED: Activity 7.1: Mockumentaries – Initial Post
- SAT: Activity 7.1: Mockumentaries – Secondary Post
- SUN: Activity 7.2: Presentation
- SUN: Activity 7.3: Reflection

## Tips for Success

Online learning requires self-discipline and self-direction. As seekers of the truth, we should be willing to challenge one another's academic work in a spirit of respectful comradery. Your course is a place for you to grow as you benefit from the expertise, experience, and diverse perspectives of your instructor and peers. Constructive feedback will challenge you to stretch your own thinking, thereby expanding your knowledge and understanding.

To get the most out of your learning experience, you should actively engage (participate) in **ALL** course activities. Course elements are arranged chronologically. To complete a week, simply work your way "down the page" through all of the course materials and activities.

## For More Information:

Be sure to review the [Support, Policies, and Procedures](#) addendum.