



CU/FS 321 BARCELONA: FILM AND THE CITY

IES Abroad Barcelona

DESCRIPTION: In recent years technological development has democratized access to audiovisual creation, generating new models of narrative, which have changed our dialogue with reality and its perception, creating new visions of places and people, both in our environment and in our trips abroad.

This hands-on course aims to provide students with the basic theoretical and practical tools to perform and produce documentaries, linear or expanded, in discourse with other film forms, offering a refreshing look at the different aspects of reality.

By mapping the different faces of the city of Barcelona students will develop their intercultural skills and their own critical view. They will be encouraged to transform their intuitions, ideas and emotions into visual narratives in order to offer visions of different aspects of the city. The practices focus on the process of observing the students' environment and on how their abroad experience translates onto the screen.

The students will produce a short documentary film that will explore a subject that defines the image of Barcelona, taking as inspiration not just the documentary as genre but other strategies used by video essayists.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

INSTRUCTOR:

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: Students registered in this class should bring a camera with which they can film video footage. An SLR reflex camera with video function is ideal, although another type of video camera would also be suitable.

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

- Film viewings
- Readings
- Class discussions
- Fieldwork
- Practical exercises
- Moodle

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Class participation (10%)
- Film reviews and presentations (10%)
- Midterm exam (20%)
- Project Outline (20%)
- Final Project (30%), final critique (10%)

Class Participation

Course participation will be evaluated through the following items that involves :

- Class participation in all the activities.
- Evaluation and discussion of the following practical exercises:
Practical exercise 1: Metro observation exercise.

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Walking Tour: Photo journey of Plaça 8 de Març.
Walking Tour: Audio exploration of Plaça 8 de Març.
Practical exercise 2: Portraying the past in a Barcelona square.
Practical exercise 3: Portrait exercise

Participation in these activities ensures the acquisition of practical and theoretical knowledge to successfully carry out the final project.

Project Outline

The project final evolution will be presented in 3 outlines. Each of the 3 outlines holds equal importance and allows for the evaluation of the final project's progress.

Outline 1: Presentation and filmed material for an initial approach to the topic.

Outline 2: Presentation of filmed and edited material, along with a report detailing the production process of the project.

Outline 3: Final draft of the project, where modifications can be made.

Midterm Exam

Take-home exam. The midterm exam will propose 2 scenes from different documentaries or a short documentary film, but not necessarily discussed in class. The students will have to prepare a written commentary about the approach taken by the director and the use of relevant elements involved in the scene.

Final Project

The short documentary film will be the result of a team-work and will be focused on one of the following areas:

1. Districts of Barcelona: Architecture and urban planning.
2. Tourism and Business.
3. Urban Art.
4. Design and Fashion.

This short documentary piece will be a collective project involving the entire class. The class will be divided into sections to collaboratively organize the writing, filming and editing process.

The time of the film will be between 15 and 20 min. And we will value:

1. Approach to the subject and implication.
2. Editing (image, sound and text).
3. Originality.
4. Ability to portrait places and people with an active and reflective observation and listening.
5. Ability to solve problems related to producing a project abroad.
6. Aim to incorporate their own experience in the film.

The final project will be screened in class or at the civic center Pati Llimona with a presentation and Q&A session of all the team members.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Identify and use the formal elements and grammar of the documentary
- Improve their capacity for active and reflective observation
- Incorporate their own experience of the city into film research
- Navigate the challenges of producing a project abroad
- Contribute a tangible product to the local community

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ATTENDANCE POLICY: As a member of our class community, you are expected to be present and on time every day. Attending class has an impact on your learning and academic success. For this reason, attendance is required for all IES Barcelona classes, including course-related excursions. If a student misses more than three classes in any course without justification, 3 percentage points will be deducted from the final grade for every additional absence. Seven unjustified absences in any course will result in a failing grade.

Absences will only be justified, and assessed work, including exams, tests and presentations rescheduled, in cases of documented medical or family emergencies.

CONTENT:

Session nº	Content	Required Reading/Task
Session 1	Course presentation. New approaches to reality through film. Contents of the course, evaluation and course-related trips.	
Session 2	Introduction to documentary (I). Definition of documentary. How Do documentaries differ from other types of film? Discussion with film scenes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required Reading: Nichols (1991), Introduction to documentary, pp.1-41
Session 3	Introduction to documentary (II). Documentary as reproduction of reality: A tool for exploration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Film discussion: Werner Herzog, Cave of Forgotten Dreams (2010) Benjamin, Walter (2009) One-Way Street and Other Writings. A Short History of Photography. London: Penguin. pp 240-258 Benjamin, Walter (2009) One-Way Street and Other Writings. The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction London:Penguin. pp 107-124
Session 4	Documentary film and urban memory. Our subject: the city In this class we will define the subjects that we can film in a city through a film discussion. Places History People Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Film discussion: Walter Ruttmann, Berlin: Symphony of a Metropolis (1927) Required Reading: Smithson, R (1967) A Tour of Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey. pp. 68-75. Class exercise / prepare a report of your observations from one metro line in Barcelona.
Session 5	Pre- production (I). Mapping the City: Observation exercise. Class presentation and discussion on the class exercise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required reading: Chapman, Jane (2006), Documentary in Practice: Filmmakers and Production Choices, p. 1-23
Session 6	Pre- production (II). Mapping the city: locations. Course related trip Walking Tour: We will take shots from different areas and subjects from a square of Barcelona.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The material must be sent and we will edit a short video that will be commented in class.
Session 7	Final Project Outline 1. Presentations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class presentation and discussion; Final project outline 1

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Session 8

Pre-production (III). Following the leads 1. Storytelling and profile.

We will explore the intersection between reality and fiction involved in documentary films through a film discussion of films made in Barcelona.

- Film discussion: José Luis Guerin, *Work in Progress* (2001) / *Mercado de Futuros* (Mercedes Álvarez, 2011)
- Required reading: Barbash, Ilisa & Taylor, Lucien (1997) *Cross-Cultural Filmmaking: A Handbook for Making Documentary and Ethnographic Films and Videos*. pp.34-55

Session 9

Pre-production (IV). Following the leads 2. Document and History.

We will explore how to portrait the history of a place through a film discussion.

- Film discussion: Alain Resnais, *Night and Fog* (1955)
- Hebard, A. (1997). *Disruptive Histories: Toward a Radical Politics of Remembrance in Alain Resnais's Night and Fog*. *New German Critique*, (71), 87-113.
- Nichols, Bill. (2001). *Documentary Film and the Modernist Avant-Garde*. *Critical Inquiry*, 27(4), 580-610.

Session 10

Pre-production (V). Portraying the past. Course related trip Walking Tour: we will take shots from this square and we will try to portray its past. We will focus on the audio recording and in the differences between diegetic and non-diegetic sound.

- Filming Now and then: team work / Audio recording
- We will visit and record sounds in different squares from Barcelona to portrait its history.

Session 11

MIDTERM EXAM . Take-home exam

- Nichols, Bill. (1991). *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*. Indiana University Press. pp. 165-199
- Nichols, Bill. (2010). *Introduction to documentary*. Indiana University Press. pp 1-41

Session 12

Production (I): Portrait of our subjects. Portrait: From the example to practice 1. We will explore the following questions:
How to portray a classmate?
How to portray an unknown person?
How to portray someone that is not there?

- Film Viewing: *Ten Minutes Older* (Herz Frank, 1978)
- Required Reading: Jamison, Leslie (2019) *Make it Scream, Make it Burn*. pp. 124-152

Session 13

Production (II). Conducting an interview. Portrait: Strangers and neighbors. We will explore through a film discussion how to direct an interview, the use of the voiceover and our interaction with local people.

- Film Discussion: Agnès Varda, *The Gleaners and I* (2000)
- Required reading: Required reading: Barbash, Ilisa & Taylor, Lucien (1997) *Cross-Cultural Filmmaking: A Handbook for Making Documentary and Ethnographic Films and Videos*. pp.60-75

Session 14

Production (III). To plan a film. We will explore the idea of objective approach in a documentary film and its fragility. The relevance of editing will be pointed out and we will check the shooting plan of your final project.

- Film discussion: Frederick Wiseman, *High School* (1968)
- Required Reading: Grant, Barry (1992) *Voyages of discovery: The cinema of Frederick Wiseman*. pp.42-79

Production (IV). Class discussion: Portrait exercise / Sant Felip Neri
Solving problems and technical elements.

- Class presentation with all the concepts and ideas that will be developed in practical exercises 2 and 3.
- We will discuss the filmed material from practical exercises.

Session 16

Post -production (I). Editing 1. Essay as document: from image to script.

We will analyze an example of a script made from filmed images during a trip and the importance of montage and voiceover.

- Film discussion: Chris Marker, Sans Soleil (1983)
- Required Reading: Cooper, S. Chris Marker. pp. 109-125

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Post- production (II). Editing 2. Film as a form of essay: from the script to the image and back.

We will explore how to make an essay with images starting from the script and changing it in the film editing process.

- Film discussion: The Man with a Movie Camera (1929) Dziga Vertov
- Required Reading: Vertov, Dziga (1984) Kino-Eye : the writings of Dziga Vertov. The Birth of Kino-Eye. Pp 40-42 and The Same Thing From Different Angles. pp 57

Session 18

Final Project Outline 2. Presentations of 3 min of the final project and comments about difficulties and doubts.

- Class presentation and discussion: Final project outline 2.
- Required reading: Curran Bernard, Sheila (2015) Documentary Storytelling: Creative Non-Fiction on Screen. pp 93-132

Session 19

Post-production (III). Editing: Basic tools and notions. Workshop exercise. Archive collage.

Film extracts will be commented and we will explore subjects as final cut, rhythm and transitions. We will discuss doubts of editing of the final project.

- Film editing practise.
- Class discussion.
- Required reading: Johnson, William (1976). F for Fake. *Film Quarterly*, 29(4), 42-47. doi:1.

Session 20

Post- production (IV). Workshop editing projects
We will take a look to special effects: double screen, zoom, subtitles and text.
We will explore these effects using film extracts. Class discussion of the drafts for Outline 3.

- Film editing exercise.
- Class discussion.
- Required reading: Williams, James. (2008). Histoire(s) Du Cinéma. *Film Quarterly*, 61(3), 10-16.

Session 21

Post- production (V). Workshop exercise: Sound mixt and music.
Film extracts from practical exercises 3 and 2 will be commented.

- Film editing exercise.
- Class discussion.

Session 22

Final Project Outline 3. Presentations of 5 min of the final project and comments about difficulties and doubts.

- Class presentation and discussion: Final project outline 3.

Session 23

Class presentation and discussion. Final project and final critique (1)

- Final cut of the films will be discussed and redirected if it's required.

Session 24

FINAL PROJECT Screening

- IES or Pati Llimona Screening and Q&A

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Barbash, I. & Taylor, L. (1997). *Cross-Cultural Filmmaking: A Handbook for Making Documentary and Ethnographic Films and Videos*. pp. 34-55 and pp. 60-75.
- Benjamin, W (2009). A Short History of Photography at *One-Way Street and Other Writings*. London: Penguin. pp. 240-258
- Benjamin, W (2009). The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction at *One-Way Street and Other Writings*. London: Penguin. pp. 107-124
- Chapman (2006), *Documentary in Practice: Filmmakers and Production Choices*. Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press. pp. 1-23
- Cooper, S (2008) *Chris Marker*. New York: Manchester University Press pp. 109-125
- Curran Bernard, S (2015) *Documentary Storytelling: Creative Non-Fiction on Screen*. New York: Focal Press. pp. 93-132
- Grant, B. (1992) *Voyages of discovery: The cinema of Frederick Wiseman*. Urbana; Chicago: University of Illinois Press. pp. 42-79
- Hebard, A. (1997). Disruptive Histories: Toward a Radical Politics of Remembrance in Alain Resnais's *Night and Fog*. *New German Critique*, (71), pp. 87-113.
- Jamison, Leslie (2019) *Make it Scream, Make it Burn*. pp. 124-152
- Johnson, W. (1976). F for Fake. *Film Quarterly*, 29(4), pp. 42-47
- Nichols, B. (1991). *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*. Indiana University Press. pp. 165-199
- Nichols, B. (2001). Documentary Film and the Modernist Avant-Garde. *Critical Inquiry*, 27(4), pp. 580-610.
- Nichols, B. (2010). *Introduction to documentary*. Indiana University Press. pp. 1-41
- Ruoff, J. (1993). Conventions of Sound in Documentary. *Cinema Journal*, 32(3), pp. 24-40.
- Vertov, D (1984). The Birth of Kino-Eye at *Kino-Eye: the writings of Dziga Vertov*. Berkeley, University of California Press. pp. 40-42
- Vertov, D (1984) The Same Thing from Different Angles at *Kino-Eye: the writings of Dziga Vertov*. Berkeley, University of California Press. pp. 57
- Williams, J. (2008). Histoire(s) Du Cinéma. *Film Quarterly*, 61(3), pp. 10-16.

FILMOGRAPHY :

Álvarez, Mercedes (Spain, 2011) *Mercado de Futuros*
 Flaherty, Robert (United Kingdom, 1934) *Man of Aran*
 Frank, Herz (Soviet Union, 1978) *Ten Minutes Older*
 Franju, George (France, 1949) *The Blood of the Beasts*
 Godard, Jean-Luc (France and Switzerland, 1889-1998) *Histoire(s) Du Cinéma*
 Guerin, José Luis (Spain, 2001) *Work in Progress*
 Herzog, Werner (France, Germany, United States, 2010) *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*
 Marker, Chris (France, 1983) *Sans Soleil*
 Resnais, Alain (France, 1955) *Night and Fog*
 Ruttmann, Walter (Germany, 1927) *Berlin: Symphony of a Metropolis*
 Varda, Agnès (France, 2000) *The Gleaners and I*
 Vertov, Dziga (Soviet Union, 1929) *The Man with a Movie Camera*
 Warhol, Andy (United States, 1963-1966) *Screen Test*
 Welles, Orson (France, 1973) *F for Fake*
 Wiseman, Frederick (United States, 1968) *High School*

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Adorno, T (1991) *Notes to Literature*. Vol I. The Essay as a form. New York: University Press. pp. 3-24
- Arthur, Paul (2006) But Enough About You: First-person documentaries. *Film Comment* v. 42 no. 4 (July/August 2006) p. 24-5

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- Arthur, P (2003) Essay Questions: From Alain Resnais to Michael Moore: Paul Arthur Gives a Crash Course in Nonfiction Cinema's Most Rapidly Evolving Genre. *Film Comment* 39:1 [January-February 2003] pp. 58-62
- Aufderheide, P (2007) *Documentary film: a very short introduction*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Baker, M. (2006). *Documentary in the digital age* Oxford; Burlington, MA: Focal Press.
- Barsam, R. (1988). *The Vision of Robert Flaherty: the artist as myth and filmmaker*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press
- Bazin, André. (2004). *What is cinema?* Vol. 1 & 2 (Hugh Gray, Trans., Ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press
- Hockings, P. (1980). *American Anthropologist*, 82(1), new series, pp.227-228.
- Levin, G. R. (1971). *Documentary explorations; 15 interviews with film-makers* [by] G. Roy Levin. Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday.
- Nichols, B. (2010). *Introduction to documentary*. Indiana University Press.
- Nichols, B. (1991). *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*. Indiana University Press

* The contents of this syllabus may be subject to change.