

Course Title	: Topics in Cinema and Media Studies
Course Code	: CUS331
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Sectional Approach
Class Contact Hours	: 3 hours per week
Category in Major Prog.	: Elective
Prerequisite(s)	: CUS/GEC309 Film and Cinema Studies
Co-requisite(s)	: None
Exclusion(s);	: None
Brief Course Description	: This course offers students an opportunity to pursue specific topics in film and media with greater depth than an introductory course would normally allow. The basic aim is not to provide an overview of film and mass communication theory but to encourage students to think through controversial issues about which there is often little agreement among scholars. Those issues have been chosen to span different areas, ranging from purely aesthetic to social and ideological questions. Students will learn to cultivate their analytical and critical skills about topics with which they should be somewhat familiar from previous introductory courses. Students should have taken CUS/GEC309 Film and Cinema Studies as pre-requisite to this course.

The following is a list of possible topics from which lecturers will compile their particular course outline for each academic year: defining the cinema: the specificity thesis; pre-cinema and early cinema: historical alternatives to mainstream cinema; national alternatives to mainstream Hollywood cinema; different models of film and media authorship; the interpretation of meaning; film and television genres; conceptualising media audiences: the reception contexts of mass communication; television, domesticity, and gender; media, behaviour and consumption; media globalization; media and the public.

Aims	: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. to enable students to gain a deeper understanding of some theories and concepts around media and cinema through the selected topic of a given semester;</li> <li>2. to encourage students to apply relevant theories to the critical reflection of current controversial issues concerning selected aspects;</li> <li>3. to cultivate students' analytical and critical skills by being able to map seemingly unrelated phenomena to the reflection of the current state media and cinema, locally and overseas.</li> </ol>
Learning Outcomes	: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. that students will be able identify, show knowledge of and explain concepts and theories around media and cinema relevant to the selected topic;</li> <li>2. that students can demonstrate the ability to analyze current issues around media and cinema through the application of relevant</li> </ol>

- theories;
3. that students can show the ability to reflect on current phenomena by relating them to current political and socio-economic contexts; comparing and contrasting local and overseas examples,
  4. that students will be able to grasp and apply relevant research skills to the critical reflection and analysis of current issues.
- Indicative Content : The indicative content varies with the topic selected for the semester, but they generally include:
1. media and film theories on representation, genre, gender, identities;
  2. concepts around media and cultural globalization;
  3. concepts such as narrativity, subjectivity, textuality
- Teaching Method : 1. Lectures and tutorials are designed to provide students the necessary concepts and thinking tools on the analysis of media and cinema issues, while tutorials are geared towards encouraging students to discuss and theorize media and film concepts;
2. Audio-visual materials are adopted and screened extensively to expose students' vocabularies on texts, to critically reflect on the meanings of those texts and the ideologies inscribed;
  3. Guest speakers are invited to provide students exposure to front line situations as well as sample and valuable research conducted in the area;
  4. Occasional visits enable students to gain direct exposure by talking to media personnel and on-site observations.
- Measurement of Learning Outcomes : 1. students display their comprehension of complicated media and cinema concepts through occasional assignments which include readings reports (20%);
2. students display their skills in analyzing media texts through occasional assignments which include film and television programme reviews (20%)
  3. students show their knowledge of relevant media and film concepts, and to apply the learnt concepts to analysis of controversial relevant issues through active classroom discussions and presentations (20%), and writing of the final exam (30%)
  4. students demonstrate their research skills, as well as the ability to integrate and combine complicated concepts in their critical reflection on a selected topic in the final paper/ project at the end of term (30%);

## **CUS 331E Topics in Cinema & Media Studies:**

### **Documentary Theory and Practice**

Yau Ching, Department of Cultural Studies, Lingnan University

**Prerequisite: GEC/CUS309 Film and Cinema Studies**

The first films ever made were "actualities" and, for over one hundred years, the documentary form has proven a hardy, dynamic, and evolving genre. Contemporary documentary producers borrow from that rich past while forging new styles informed by today's social, political, ideological and aesthetic concerns. This course surveys the historical development of documentary produced around the world during the past century. Screenings and discussions explore the evolution of documentary as historical record, archive and newsreel, as personal essay, autobiography, and diary, as catalyst for foregrounding "truth" and exposing different levels of reality, as "a window to the world", "a fly on the wall", as investigative journalism, as political propaganda, and as social advocacy. The course also examines the dialogue over the uses of participatory, observational and theatrical modes, of archival footage, of direct cinema and cinema vérité, of re-enactments, of montage vs. interval, of narration vs. non-narration, self-reflexivity, and the recent crossover between documentary, fictional and experimental languages.

#### **Course Requirements :**

Students are expected to complete the readings for each week. Each student is required to present the summary of at least one reading, and study the relationships between that week's readings and the films/videos to be screened during that week. The areas to be focused include the artistic, social and political contexts, the aesthetics, politics, ideologies, representational strategies and technical aspects of the works.

Students are expected to actively participate in all classroom discussions and critiques and finish all production work according to class schedule. While production work could be done in groups, each student is required to keep a log journal documenting her/his learning process and experience during production.

#### **Assessment Criteria :**

Presentations: 30% ;

Projects: 30% ;

Class Participation (including log journals): 40%

#### **Tentative Weekly Schedule**

(readings and screenings might change according to student needs and progress) :

##### **Week I**

Sept 6: Introduction

Required readings:

Erik Barnouw, "Prophet" and "Reporter", *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film*. Oxford University Press, 1993 (second revised ed.), pp. 3-30, 51-65.

Dziga Vertov, *Kino-Eye: The Writings from Dziga Vertov*. Annette Michelson ed. Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1984, pp. 34-42, 49-50, 57, 60-79, 82-91.

## **Week 2**

Sept 13: **Early cinema excerpts** (France, Lumière Brothers, 1895)

**The Man with a Movie Camera** (USSR, Dziga Vertov, 1929)

Required reading:

Barbara Creed and Jeanette Hoorn, "Memory and History: Early Film, Colonialism and the French Civilising Mission in Indochina"

Erik Barnouw, "Catalyst," *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film*, pp. 253-262.

## **Week 3**

Sept 20: **NO CLASS. Enjoy the moon and...**

View at library: **Singapore Gaga** (Singapore, Tan Pin Pin, 2006, 55 min.) PN1995.9.D6 S56 2006

## **Week 4**

Sept 27: **Chronicle of a Summer** (France, Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin, 1960)

Project proposals due. Introduction to pre-production.

Required readings:

Brian Winston, *Claiming the Real: the documentary film revisited*. London: BFI, pp. 11-14.

Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching: mass media in the making and unmaking of the new left*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, pp. 283-305.

Supplementary reading:

Edgar Morin, "Chronicle of a Film."

## **Week 5**

Oct 4: **Le Joli Mai** (France, Chris Marker, 1963)

Introduction to cameras and mics. Production begins.

Supplementary reading:

小川紳介 (1995) 《小川紳介の世界》台北: 遠流, 頁 69-94, 105-115.

## **Week 6**

Oct 11: **Paper Tiger TV** (USA, Deep Dish TV Network, 1980s-2000s)

**Narita: Heta Village** (*Sanrizuka: Heta buraku*) (Japan, Ogawa Shinsuke, 1973)

Rushes due. Critique.

Required reading:

Richard Kilborn and John Izod, "How real can you get? Realism and Documentary," *An Introduction To Television Documentary: confronting reality*. Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, pp. 27-54.

## **Week 7**

Oct 18: **Perfumed Nightmare** (Philippines, Kidlat Tahimik, 1977)

Rushes critique cont.

Required reading:

Stella Bruzzi (2000) "Narration: The Film and Its Voice", *New Documentary: A Critical Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 40-43, 57-65.

**Mid-term warning: please finish all unfinished readings and complete all production work. Post-production starts here.**

### **Week 8**

Oct 25: **Sunless/Sans soleil** (France, Chris Marker, 1983)

Presentation of rough cuts and discussion.

Required reading:

Ron Burnett, "To Document – to Imagine – to Simulate", *Gendering the Nation: Canadian Women's Cinema*, Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, pp.120-133.

### **Week 9**

Nov 1: **History and Memory; for Akiko and Takashige** (USA, Rea Tajiri, 1991)

All rough cuts due.

### **Week 10**

Nov 8: **Keep Not Silent** (Israel, Ilil Alexander, 2003)

Selected shorts of Sadie Benning (USA, Sadie Benning, 1990s)

**OUT!** (S. Korea, WOM, 2007)

### **Week 11**

Nov 15: 《樂生活》(台灣，許雅婷，林婉玉，2006)

Fine cuts due.

Reading:

影行者，〈紀錄。普及。現場—重構紀錄片藝術的人民網絡〉，《製造香港：本土獨立紀錄片初探》，香港電影評論學會，2011，頁128-145。

View at library: **Capitalism: A Love Story** (USA, Michael Moore, 2009, 127 min)

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### **Week 12**

Nov 22: Visit from 影行者

Reading:

呂新雨，《紀錄中國：當代中國新紀錄運動》，北京：三聯書店，2003，頁69-140。

### **Week 13**

Nov 29: Excerpts from 《彼岸》(中國，蔣樾，1995) and 《八廓南街16號》(中國，段錦川，1997) (without subtitles)

### **Week 14**

Dec 6: Final Projects on DVD due. No extensions.