

DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY

Course description: Introduces critical issues and practices in documentary photography and video. Explores the influence of social documentarians. Examines the relationship of subject to documentarian and the development of the photo-essay/story through examples, discussion and studio experience.

Course objectives:

- Identify critical ethical issues specific to documentary photography
- Learn hands-on techniques with still and motion cameras in both natural and artificial light
- Gain knowledge of visual editing software used in still and motion projects
- Engage in real world photojournalism assignments for web and print – EX: THE REVIEW
- Discuss impact of current tools including cell phones and Internet on contemporary media
- Learn the independent production and editing skills needed for Location Photography and how to work with photo editors

Grading: Grading is based on effort and progress. Attendance and hard work are paramount for success. Merely doing the bare minimum will result in a C at best. Feedback comes in the form of critiques. They are not personal attacks. I do not sugar coat my critiques, but speak in hopes of sharing the knowledge I have received from others along the way.

A = Outstanding. Extraordinary work, extra effort. Work goes beyond assigned expectations, pursues concepts and techniques above and beyond what was discussed in class. Risks are taken in the pursuit of creative ideas. Expansive investigation of ideas and excellent composition. All assignments completed on time. Insightful contributions to critiques. Goes substantially beyond minimum requirements.

B = Above Average. Substantial investigation of concepts and compositions. Student pursues ideas and suggestions presented in class and goes to extra effort to resolve analytical and creative problems. All assignments completed on time, insightful contributions to critique.

C = Average. Basic required work and effort. All assignments done competently and completed on time. Strong participation in critique.

D = Marginal Work. Late projects, limited investigation of ideas, incoherent compositions. Limited contributions to critiques.

F = Unsatisfactory Work. Course failure due to minimal idea development, disjointed compositions, lack of participation, late assignments, or excessive absences.

Policies: All UDel policies and procedures regarding academic misconduct, dishonesty and harassment are to be followed in this course.

Attendance: More than three absences will result in an incomplete for the course or a serious additional workload. Excessive tardiness is simply rude and will count against you. You signed up for the class, so I expect you in class.

Assignment: Assignments are due at the beginning of class and will not be accepted after that time. Each student has one make-up that can be used at their convenience, due the week prior. Plagiarism will result in a zero.

fall 2014

Instructor: brian wagner
bewagner@udel.edu

this syllabus can and will be amended when I deem it necessary to improve the course and ensure educational success.

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To further develop one's ability behind the camera, mature one's understanding of content and expand one's artistic expression. We will accomplish this by working on the following ideas.

-Technical maturity-We will continue to develop skills behind the camera, expanding your ability to express/capture what you choose with the camera.

-Photographer research-You will be expected to pick five documentary photographer and analyze their style. A one page paper will be due on each as well as a presentation on your favorite.

-Style development-This research should expand your own practice, your personal perspective and eventually your style.

-Tool expansion-By working with new cameras and processes, we will work to add new skills to your visual expression.

-Editing-Learning editing can help develop your shooting ability. A good photographer is also a good editor. Your only as strong as your weakest image, so learning to refine and simplify your visual voice will strengthen your overall ability.

-Longer term effort-You will be expected to work on a longer-term project throughout the semester. Remember that choosing something you are interested in is essential to your success. Also remember that you only have a semester to work on it, so make sure you can accomplish what you attempt.

-Genre focus-By the end of the semester, a present pursuit should be apparent---be it environmental, portrait, story/essay, abstract, etc.... Focusing on one area will provide you strength and help you expand once/if that focus becomes less appealing. This is not the end but still the beginning of your exploration with the camera.

Assignments will follow these general topics.

1. narrative-think about images as a storyteller.
2. people-bringing them to the table visually speaking.
3. place-record your vision on how you see a given location.
4. thing-illustrate something or a concept and make it creatively interesting.
5. feeling-work to evoke one.
6. explanation-a statement of reality or expression.

You will be required to shoot weekly. ex. When shooting a portrait, coordinate to shoot the same subject early on during your two weeks and then again after you've seen what you've done. This will help your editing ability and also further develop your ability to get the most of your efforts. Mistakes will be apparent, but two shoots allows time for a redo or further expansion from your original idea. All assignments will be uploaded to your personal flickr account [more detail later] and your selects into our Flickr group page. Each assignment will also be accompanied by a written explanation. Think of this as an artist statement or brief story descript--a paragraph will suffice, so long as it's relative to your efforts.

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