MECO835

Non-Fiction Screen Media

S2 Day 2017

Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies

Contents

Disclaimer

Macquarie University has taken all reasonable measures to ensure the information in this publication is accurate and up-to-date. However, the information may change or become out-dated as a result of change in University policies, procedures or rules. The University reserves the right to make changes to any information in this publication without notice. Users of this publication are advised to check the website version of this publication [or the relevant faculty or department] before acting on any information in this publication.

General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Convenor
Iqbal Barkat
iqbal.barkat@mq.edu.au
Contact via 9850-2198
Y3A-1154
By Appointment

Credit points
4

Prerequisites
Admission to MCrMedia or MCrInd or MFJ or MCreIndMFJ

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
This unit surveys the history and aesthetics of non-fiction forms of screen media and, in particular, the proliferation of documentary through digital technologies. Through critical readings and viewings, the unit will investigate non-fiction film's aesthetic and rhetorical strategies in fashioning the real and its corresponding status as a way of knowing the world. It combines critical analysis with practice-led research offering an opportunity for students to develop a non-fiction screen media work.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Identify and analyse the contexts and formal strategies of non-fiction screen media.

Analyse and implement creative and technical strategies through a critical appraisal of a range of non-fiction screen works and digital production, post-posproduction and distribution methods.

Synthesise organisational, technical and conceptual skills through the research, development and collaborative realisation of creative non-fiction screen productions.

Implement digital screen media production strategies working in collaboration with peers, social actors, industry professionals and external partners in different learning environments, both on campus and off-site locations.

Critically appraise one's own work and that of others by providing clear, evidence-based and constructive analyses.

General Assessment Information

Assessment tasks will be submitted in class for discussion and online, through iLearn. Assessments to be discussed in class must be brought to class as a printed hard copy and as a soft copy in the following formats only: PDF, PPT or any web-based presentation format e.g. Prezi. The Mac computers in Y3A do not have Keynote installed.

All written work can only be submitted on iLearn as PDFs only. No other format will be accepted.

Late Penalties

Tasks above 10%. Students who submit late work without an extension will receive a penalty of 10% per day. This penalty does not apply for cases in which an application for Disruption to Studies is made and approved.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Project Research Proposal	30%	No	Week 3
On Screen Interview	30%	No	Pt 1: Week 5; Part 2: Week 8
Non Fiction Screen Work	40%	No	incrementally weeks 12 to 13

Project Research Proposal

Due: **Week 3**
Weighting: **30%**

Based on the given general topic (to be provided on ILearn), write a research proposal for a short documentary of around 15 mins. This is both a **creative document and an essay**. Ensure that your idea from the general topic is achievable and that has the potential for strong sounds and images, interesting characters, story or argument.

The research proposal needs to be well structured. Describe the **idea and themes** that you are hoping to explore, any **argument** you may wish to make, the potential for an engaging story. Indicate any **stylistic** ideas you may be considering including the documentary genre you are working in, the people **(social actors/characters)** you may be including in the project and the **research** you have conducted.

The proposal should be around approximately 1500 words (no more than 5 pages) and you are

encouraged to include other material such as photographs, text, archival material or other references that help to describe the idea.

You are to summarise your proposal into a 10 minute presentation to be presented in class in Week 3.

Outlines will be assessed based on the following criteria:

Originality and strength of central idea

What is the central idea you are exploring? How original, interesting or imaginative is it? Does it offer potential for a documentary or could it be more easily explored via another medium? Does it have the potential to reveal something fresh about the given general topic? What themes does the idea suggest?

Story/Argument

Potential for engaging story and/or powerful argument about the given general topic.

Evidence of research

Successful documentaries are based on solid research. Research includes the factual, aesthetic and technical. Your research must demonstrate that the idea has depth. **You must also indicate further research that is required.**

Visual and aural potential

Research also includes considerations about style and approach. How does your idea lend itself to an exploration through sounds and images? Remember that digital video, as a time-based medium, is very different from a written text. Your proposal should demonstrate that your documentary concept contains the potential for an imaginative use of sounds and images. Please reference at least one screen work that is informing your visual style or perhaps works with a similar subject.

Awareness of documentary form

What kind of short documentary are you proposing? **Please try to avoid** the "current affairs" (infotainment) style. Documentary has a long history of conceptually and aesthetically innovative works. It is important that you begin to familiarise yourself with the range of possibilities available to you and consider the relationship between style and content.

Understand how to connect with an audience

Think about the intended audience for the documentary. Who will it appeal to? How will you reach these audiences? What kind of distribution strategy will this documentary utilize? What are the suitable festivals and distribution channels for this documentary?

Assessment criteria

1. Strength and originality of documentary idea.
2. Depth and strength of research.
3. Demonstrated visual and aural potential.

4. Demonstrated understating of documentary form and distribution strategies.

5. Writing style: clarity, expression, grammar, presentation.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and analyse the contexts and formal strategies of non-fiction screen media.

- Analyse and implement creative and technical strategies through a critical appraisal of a range of non-fiction screen works and digital production, post-posproduction and distribution methods.

- Synthesise organisational, technical and conceptual skills through the research, development and collaborative realisation of creative non-fiction screen productions.

- Implement digital screen media production strategies working in collaboration with peers, social actors, industry professionals and external partners in different learning environments, both on campus and off-site locations.

- Critically appraise one's own work and that of others by providing clear, evidence-based and constructive analyses.

On Screen Interview

Due: **Pt 1: Week 5; Part 2: Week 8**
Weighting: **30%**

Select a person (from your proposal) to feature as an interviewee, conduct an on-camera interview with the person and edit it into a 3 minute (maximum) piece including cutaways of additional images or sounds.

Part One:

Written Plan

Include a written plan of no more than 2 pages (around 1000 words) that includes:

- Name of character to interview. Justify your reason for selecting this person.

- Style of the interview. Justify the selection of style.

- Description of intended content, including cutaways (which may be accessed through sources that were researched in the project proposal or shot for the project during the interview shoot) and list of questions.

Include all production documents including interview schedule, call sheets, list of crew and equipment needed to capture interview and plan for accessing, crewing, transport and other aspects of production management such as release forms and insurance coverage.

PART ONE IS DUE IN WEEK 5 on iLearn.

Part Two:

Interview

Interview and record your subject using appropriate camera and microphones and lighting

INTERVIEWS MUST TAKE PLACE BEFORE CLASS IN WEEK 6. BRING DIGITAL INTERVIEW TO CLASS IN WEEK 6 FOR IN-CLASS EDITING WORKSHOP

Edit the interview to a coherent and engaging 3 minutes maximum and lay in cutaways to enhance structure and rhythm and create juxtapositions that add insight, visual or audio interest or perspective Draft interviews must be presented in class in WEEK 7, final interview cuts DUE IN WEEK 8. Final Interviews must be exported in full resolution and placed in a folder on the AVID server. Further details will be provided on iLearn.

Assessment criteria:

- Effective and appropriate planning and technical competence;
- Coherence, structure, and engaging revelation of character through selection of subject, interview questions, shots, and sounds;
- Juxtaposition of image and sound to create associations and deeper meanings of character and themes;
- Critical appraisal own work and that of others; providing clear, evidence based and constructive responses during process and in-class screenings.

On successful completion you will be able to:
- Identify and analyse the contexts and formal strategies of non-fiction screen media.
- Analyse and implement creative and technical strategies through a critical appraisal of a range of non-fiction screen works and digital production, post-posproduction and distribution methods.
- Synthesise organisational, technical and conceptual skills through the research, development and collaborative realisation of creative non-fiction screen productions.
- Implement digital screen media production strategies working in collaboration with peers, social actors, industry professionals and external partners in different learning environments, both on campus and off-site locations.
- Critically appraise one's own work and that of others by providing clear, evidence-based and constructive analyses.

Non Fiction Screen Work

Due: **incrementally weeks 12 to 13**
Weighting: **40%**

Screen Production

Create a coherent, short non-fiction screen production based on your project proposal (Assignment 1). You may use elements that you have shot in completing the Interview Assignment (Assignment 2). However, you need to record and employ additional elements for your film. Shape these elements into coherent short documentary of less than 15 minutes in length. You are encouraged to complete the production and post-production aspects of this assignment in small groups (3 or 4 members) although you will be marked individually. An assembly cut of the film is due in Week 12. A fine cut is due in Week 13 and the final submission is due in Week 14. Final films must be exported in full resolution and placed in a folder on the AVID server. Further details will be provided on iLearn.

Along with the film, you need to submit:

1. all production documents including release forms, call sheets, shot lists, schedules, etc.

2. a report of around 1000 words analysing and evaluating the ways technical and aesthetic considerations have combined to realise (or not) the original concept. This report is to be approached critically - this means that if the project has in some way not achieved its original goals, this should be addressed. Statements such as 'the production is really good' are not convincing. Think deeply about the work. Could it be improved? Discuss it in relation to other films (e.g. of a similar genre or style). How has your role contributed to the technical and aesthetic realization of the production? What more could you have done to improve the production? Outline the major learning challenges you faced in your crew role during the process and how you resolved it. Also critically assess the contributions of each member of your team (peer assessment); one or two sentences for each member should be sufficient. This report is to be submitted individually in Week 13 on iLearn.

3. Production portfolio of documents demonstrating your technical and creative research, preparation and process undertaken in your crew role and any other involvement you have in the production. For example, if you have chosen to edit the film, outline the strategies you took to learn AVID Media Composer. The portfolio is to be submitted individually in Week 13 on iLearn.

Assessment Criteria for Screen Production:

1. Originality and structure of completed project.

2. Effectiveness of creative choices in mise en scene, composition, shot construction, lighting, sound, design, editing, direction, production and logistics management, etc.

3. Degree that completed project has achieved creative goals.

Assessment Criteria for Report & Portfolio:

1. Coherence, structure and argument of critical analysis.

2. Clarity of writing style, grammar and appropriate referencing.

3. Demonstrated effectiveness of contribution in crew role as evidenced in final production.

4. Demonstrated commitment in crew role as evidenced by attendance at workshops, production meetings, technical workshops, tests, shoot and post-production and other activities as necessary.

5. Demonstrated creative and technical preparation for crew role as evidenced in documentation provided.

6. Capacity to critically reflect on learning experience.

On successful completion you will be able to:
- Identify and analyse the contexts and formal strategies of non-fiction screen media.
- Analyse and implement creative and technical strategies through a critical appraisal of a range of non-fiction screen works and digital production, post-posproduction and distribution methods.
- Synthesise organisational, technical and conceptual skills through the research, development and collaborative realisation of creative non-fiction screen productions.
- Implement digital screen media production strategies working in collaboration with peers, social actors, industry professionals and external partners in different learning environments, both on campus and off-site locations.
- Critically appraise one's own work and that of others by providing clear, evidence-based and constructive analyses.

Delivery and Resources

MECO 835 will be delivered through weekly classes, seminars, workshops or consultations. The workshops are conducted on campus or at production sites off campus. Details of locations will be provided on Ilearn.

Students will learn the basics of video and sound acquisition and the non-linear editing system AVID Media Composer which will be required for the successful completion of assignments. Students are also encouraged to contact the department's technical staff for additional workshops in these subjects. Students are encouraged to attend Screen Production Workshops held during the mid-semester break from 20 to 23 September 2016. The mid-semester workshop is not compulsory.

 Students will be expected to do two types of independent research:

 - academic research into non-fiction screen production forms, styles, histories and theories

 - creative research in preparation for their own productions.

Use of the MQ library's extensive collection of documentaries and books is encouraged, as is independent online research into recent non-fiction forms and productions. Some specific readings and sites will also be assigned.

MECO 835 READING LIST

WEEK 1 – WHAT IS A DOCUMENTARY

Fox, B. (2010). Documentary media: History, theory, practice. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. A Brief History of Documentary Movements and Modes".

Aufderheide, P. (2007). Documentary film: A very short introduction. Oxford: Oxford University Press. PP 1-44

WEEK 2 – ETHICS PITCHING & WRITING

Nichols, B. (2010). Introduction to documentary. Chapter: Why Are Ethical Issues Centralto Documentary Filmmaking?

Bernard, S. C. (2007). Documentary storytelling: Making stronger and more dramatic nonfiction films. Amsterdam: Focal Press. PP 137 -174

Das, Trisha, (2009) 'How to Write a Documentary Script'. Unesco. Page 1 of 52.

WEEK 3 – NEW FORMS

Rhodes, G. D., & Springer, J. P. (2006). Docufictions: Essays on the intersection of documentary and fictional filmmaking. Jefferson, N.C: McFarland & Co. PP. 2-26

Schenkel, Hanna. A lie that tells the truth: How fictional techniques enhance documentary storytelling Screen Education Issue 74 (Jun 2014)

Bruzzi, S. (2000). New documentary: A critical introduction. London: Routledge. Chapter: Contemporary documentaries: performance and success. PP 221 - 253

WEEK 4 – DIRECTING THE DOCUMENATAY

Fox, B. (2010). Documentary media: History, theory, practice. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. Chapter:

"A Brief History of Documentary Movements and Modes". PP 49-74

Rosenthal, A., & Rosenthal, A. (1996). Writing, directing, and producing documentary films and videos. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

PP. 33-55

WEEK 5 – MAKING THE DOCUMENTARY 1

Barbash, I., & Castaing-Taylor, L. (1997). Cross-cultural filmmaking: A handbook for making documentary and ethnographic films and videos. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapter 2 From Fieldwork to filming. PP. 35-50

WEEK 7 - The Future

Lee-Wright, P. (2010). The documentary handbook. London: Routledge.Part IV Watch The Figures 313 -369

Cholodenko, A. Jean Rouch's *Les maîtres fous:* Documentary of Seduction, Seduction of Documentary. In Rothman, W. (2009). Three documentary filmmakers: Errol Morris, Ross McElwee, Jean Rouch. Albany: SUNY Press.

A link to all readings will be provided by the library.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central. Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html

Grade Appeal Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html

Disruption to Studies Policy (in effect until Dec 4th, 2017): http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html

Special Consideration Policy (in effect from Dec 4th, 2017): https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the Learning and Teaching Category of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in eStudent. For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

Additional information

MMCCS website https://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/faculties_and_departments/faculty_of_arts/department_of_media_music_communication_and_cultural_studies/

MMCCS Session Re-mark Application http://www.mq.edu.au/pubstatic/public/download/?id=167914

Information is correct at the time of publication

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit http://students.mq.edu.au/support/

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- Workshops
- StudyWise
- Academic Integrity Module for Students
- Ask a Learning Adviser

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the Disability Service who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy. The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Analyse and implement creative and technical strategies through a critical appraisal of a range of non-fiction screen works and digital production, post-posproduction and distribution methods.
- Synthesise organisational, technical and conceptual skills through the research, development and collaborative realisation of creative non-fiction screen productions.
- Implement digital screen media production strategies working in collaboration with peers, social actors, industry professionals and external partners in different learning environments, both on campus and off-site locations.
- Critically appraise one's own work and that of others by providing clear, evidence-based and constructive analyses.

Assessment tasks

- Project Research Proposal
- On Screen Interview
- Non Fiction Screen Work

PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Identify and analyse the contexts and formal strategies of non-fiction screen media.
- Analyse and implement creative and technical strategies through a critical appraisal of a range of non-fiction screen works and digital production, post-posproduction and distribution methods.

- Synthesise organisational, technical and conceptual skills through the research, development and collaborative realisation of creative non-fiction screen productions.
- Implement digital screen media production strategies working in collaboration with peers, social actors, industry professionals and external partners in different learning environments, both on campus and off-site locations.
- Critically appraise one's own work and that of others by providing clear, evidence-based and constructive analyses.

Assessment tasks

- Project Research Proposal
- On Screen Interview
- Non Fiction Screen Work

PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Identify and analyse the contexts and formal strategies of non-fiction screen media.
- Analyse and implement creative and technical strategies through a critical appraisal of a range of non-fiction screen works and digital production, post-posproduction and distribution methods.
- Synthesise organisational, technical and conceptual skills through the research, development and collaborative realisation of creative non-fiction screen productions.
- Implement digital screen media production strategies working in collaboration with peers, social actors, industry professionals and external partners in different learning environments, both on campus and off-site locations.
- Critically appraise one's own work and that of others by providing clear, evidence-based and constructive analyses.

Assessment tasks

- Project Research Proposal
- On Screen Interview
- Non Fiction Screen Work

PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Identify and analyse the contexts and formal strategies of non-fiction screen media.
- Analyse and implement creative and technical strategies through a critical appraisal of a range of non-fiction screen works and digital production, post-posproduction and distribution methods.
- Synthesise organisational, technical and conceptual skills through the research, development and collaborative realisation of creative non-fiction screen productions.
- Implement digital screen media production strategies working in collaboration with peers, social actors, industry professionals and external partners in different learning environments, both on campus and off-site locations.

Assessment tasks

- Project Research Proposal
- On Screen Interview
- Non Fiction Screen Work

PG - Effective Communication

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Identify and analyse the contexts and formal strategies of non-fiction screen media.
- Analyse and implement creative and technical strategies through a critical appraisal of a range of non-fiction screen works and digital production, post-posproduction and distribution methods.
- Synthesise organisational, technical and conceptual skills through the research, development and collaborative realisation of creative non-fiction screen productions.
- Implement digital screen media production strategies working in collaboration with peers,

social actors, industry professionals and external partners in different learning environments, both on campus and off-site locations.

- Critically appraise one's own work and that of others by providing clear, evidence-based and constructive analyses.

Assessment tasks

- Project Research Proposal
- On Screen Interview
- Non Fiction Screen Work

PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Analyse and implement creative and technical strategies through a critical appraisal of a range of non-fiction screen works and digital production, post-posproduction and distribution methods.
- Synthesise organisational, technical and conceptual skills through the research, development and collaborative realisation of creative non-fiction screen productions.
- Implement digital screen media production strategies working in collaboration with peers, social actors, industry professionals and external partners in different learning environments, both on campus and off-site locations.
- Critically appraise one's own work and that of others by providing clear, evidence-based and constructive analyses.

Assessment tasks

- Project Research Proposal
- On Screen Interview
- Non Fiction Screen Work