

Course number and section: ENGL 378.101 / CULT 300.101

Course Topic: Documentary and Docudrama

Credits: 3

Term: Winter T2, 2020 (Jan.-April, 2012)

Instructor: Dr. Daniel Keyes

Course Description:

In the context of mass culture where “reality” television genres dominate commercial television offerings and YouTube, Instagram, and Tiktok invite us to broadcast ourselves, this course investigates the reality effect of “film” by tracing its origins in the genres of documentary and docudrama. This course examines histo-photography—how history is shown, narrated, framed, edited with celluloid and now digital technologies. The first few weeks of this course investigate how the conventions of photographic realism and stage naturalism evolved via technological advances in photography and theatre. We will sample a 19th century play by Dion Boucicault to explore how documentary, docudrama, race, gender, class, and melodrama are bound together via technologies. In subsequent weeks, we will first examine early “primitive” documentary and historical docudrama and then move from modern to postmodern examples of these genres to look at interactive documentary.

Method of Course Delivery:

On-Campus. At present, Term 2 courses are scheduled to return to face-to-face, live classroom delivery in January 2021.

Tentative Reading List:

All readings for this course will be provided online via Canvas’s link to the library course reserves. Here is a little taste of the readings that will include a play, short story and many film criticism and historical theory type essays:

Boucicault, Dion. “The Octoroon.” *Meridian Classic Book of 18th and 19th Century British Drama*. Ed. Katherine Rogers. New American Library. 1996. Pp. 404-57.2.

Rotha, Paul. “Some Principles of Documentary.” *Film: An Anthology*. Ed. Daniel Talbot. Berkeley, CA: Berkeley, 1966. pp. 234-46.

Grierson, John. “First Principles of Documentary.” *Non Fiction Film and Criticism*. Ed. Richard Meran Barsam. New York: Dutton, 1976. pp. 19-30.

Brecht, Bertolt. “Epic Theatre.” *Marxism and Art: Essays Classic and Contemporary*. Selected and with Historical and Critical Commentary by Maynard Solomon. Detroit, Wayne State UP, 1978. pp. 360-95.

Rosen, Phillip. “Document and Documentary: On the Persistence of Historical Concepts.” *Theorizing Documentary*. Ed. Michael Renov. New York: Routledge, 1993. pp. 58-89; pp. 210-