

DOCUMENTARY!



New Trends, New Formats

SYLLABUS

July – September 2015



Universidad
Carlos III de Madrid

INTRODUCTION

The course, *Documentary! New Trends, New Formats*, presents the new trends and formats in audiovisual contemporary documentary, focusing on the most innovative practices developed in an interactive and multiplatform environment. It also includes an overview of the most important genres and authors in the field, and a selection of interviews with documentary filmmakers and other field-related professionals and academics.

Students' learning experience is enhanced through a wide range of videos and audiovisual resources, from a global perspective. Multimedia contents are presented from an interdisciplinary approach. The resources and materials of the MOOC are related both to breakthrough and long-lasting documentary narratives in order to provide the students with an array of creative strategies. These resources and materials can also be useful in the students' professional undertakings.

If this is your first course on edX, do not hesitate to enroll in the Demo course to get to know the courseware: <https://www.edx.org/course/demox-edx-demox-1>.

OBJECTIVES

After finishing this course, the student should:

- Have acquired a global perspective on documentary film and its evolution.
- Be familiar with the main issues surrounding documentary film.
- Be able to recognize the different documentary genres and styles
- Be able to identify the new trends and formats in documentary film.
- Be aware of the major elements of documentary narrative.

COURSE STAFF

- **PILAR CARRERA:** Associate Professor at Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. Content Creation and General Supervision of the MOOC.
- **PEDRO VALIENTE:** Adjunct Professor at Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. Audiovisual Production.
- **CLARA SAINZ DE BARANDA:** Assistant Professor at Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. Audiovisual Production.
- **EVA HERRERO:** Assistant Professor at Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. Production Assistant.

COURSE STRUCTURE

WEEK 1: **Documentary Film is in Vogue**

The documentary mode has been around since the beginnings of cinema. Nonetheless, in the 21st century, its popularity has skyrocketed. In this introductory section we speculate about the reasons why the documentary is currently in the limelight and is so well received by the public.

WEEK 2: ***Flashback: Introduction to Documentary Film History***

This is an overview of the milestones in documentary filmmaking and the men, women and circumstances behind them.

WEEK 3: **Webdocs: Reinventing Documentary Film on the Internet**

What are the new formats and narratives emerging out of the confluence between the documentary genre and the Internet? We approach here the online existence of documentary film.

WEEK 4: **Cyberactivism and Political Documentary in a Viral Ecosystem**

Many documentaries throughout history have had a "militant" component, overtly committing to a cause. But, how effective is documentary in affecting the hearts and minds of the people, changing their perceptions or moving them to action?

WEEK 5: ***F for Fake or False Documentary Moving to the Rhythm of Social Networking***

This section deals with what is known as "mockumentary", a fiction dressed with the clothes and expressive means of documentary. There is nothing like a false documentary to unveil the rhetoric of documentary film.

WEEK 6: **News and Thematic Documentary: Nature, Culture, History, Science**

These are among the most popular subgenres in the documentary field. Mostly made for TV (but not exclusively), they tell the present, take us to the past, to exotic places or into the secrets of science in an understandable way for the uninitiated.

WEEK 7: **Creative Documentary Film in Times of Crowdfunding**

Internet is a global, collaborative medium. Some documentary projects are being funded through crowdfunding platforms and many more try their luck every day, trying to convince users to contribute to the cause with micro donations.

WEEK 8: ***Brand Documentary: New Strategies in Advertising***

Brands have traditionally made use of documentary TV films for publicity purposes. Now, the way they use documentary seems to be changing. It would appear that big corporations no longer want to be the stars of their self-promotional films. The new documentary strategy seems to consist in associating the brand with audiovisual storytelling meant to promote "disinterested knowledge" or social awareness.

COURSE METHODOLOGY

Each theme is structured around a short expository video in which the teacher explains the main issues of the addressed topic, slideshows that further explore particular issues, interactive charts, timelines, interviews with scholars and documentarians and short reportages.

For each of the topics addressed, the students will have to watch a documentary that will be made available over the edX platform. The viewing of a second well-known documentary, suggested in the syllabus, is highly recommended in order to enhance the course experience and get the maximum grade.

A list of additional resources will be given to the students in order to allow them to go in depth into the different topics.

The estimated time students will need to complete each weekly session is 4 to 6 hours.

COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS

The **FORUM** will be used in order to encourage the engagement and interaction with students. The topics addressed during the weeks will be discussed in the forum, especially those issues regarding the analysis of required or additional documentaries.

EMAIL will be used to keep students up-to-date of the course development.

EVALUATION

Grading is mainly based on **TESTS** about the contents: videos and documentaries. Watching both the **REQUIRED** and **ADDITIONAL** documentaries will be evaluated. It is possible to pass the course just doing the tests corresponding to the required videos, but it will be a much more enriching experience if you also do the activities corresponding to the additional videos. There are 8 tests and each one is graded the 10% of the total grade (so the value of the tests is the 80% of the total grade).

The **PEER ASSESSMENT** in week number 8 is graded the 20%.

To **PASS THE COURSE** it will be necessary to obtain the 60% of the final grade.

CALENDAR

The course starts on 21 July and is 9 weeks long. The weekly videos will be posted on the courseware, together with the documentaries, exercises and additional resources, the first day of the week (on Tuesday).

The calendar is different, depending on the kind of activity: the tests will be available until 21 September, but the peer assessment has its own specific calendar, with two weeks for submission and an additional one for reviewing the essay of other three fellows.

WEEK 1: **Documentary Film is in Vogue**

21 July (00:00 UTC)

VIDEOS	Introducing the topic.
	<i>Slideshow.</i>
	Interviews.
ASSIGNMENTS	Required <u>Documentary screening</u> : <i>Burden of Dreams</i> (1982) by Les Blank (available on edX).
	Additional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Documentary screening</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Cuba 15</i> (1997) by Elizabeth Schub (available on edX). ○ <i>Man on Wire</i> (2008) by James Marsh (not available on edX). ○ <i>La promesa digital (The digital promise)</i> (2014) (only in Spanish) (available on edX). • <u>Video recording</u>: Students' assignment consists of making a video for YouTube or similar –running time will be less than one minute. Video will be produced on a mobile phone or similar device. The topic is “Why Documentary Film is in Vogue?” • <u>Discussion forum</u> about the week contents.
EVALUATION	Test relating to contents developed on the videos and documentary screening. Due date: 21 September (23:59 UTC).
RESOURCES	Additional resources in English or Spanish, mostly links with extra information about unit contents.

WEEK 2: **Flashback: Introduction to Documentary Film History**

28 July (00:00 UTC)

VIDEOS	Introducing the topic.
	<i>Slideshow</i> + Periodic table.
	Interviews.
ASSIGNMENTS	Required <u>Documentary screening</u> : <i>Las maestras de la República (Female teachers from Spanish Republic)</i> (2013) by Pilar Pérez Solano (available on edX).

	<p>Additional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Documentary screening</u>: <i>Night and Fog</i> (1955) by Alain Resnais (not available on edX). • <u>Discussion forum</u> about the week contents.
EVALUATION	Test relating to contents developed on the videos and documentary screening. Due date: 21 September (23:59 UTC).
RESOURCES	Additional resources in English or Spanish, mostly links with extra information about unit contents.

WEEK 3: **Webdocs: Reinventing Documentary Film on the Internet**

4 August (00:00 UTC)

VIDEOS	Introducing the topic.
	Reportage.
	Interviews.
EVALUATION	<p>Required</p> <p><u>Documentary screening</u>: <i>Estafeta, 1</i> from RTVE.es Lab Free access: links will be provided.</p>
	<p>Additional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Documentary screening</u>: <i>Joe Strummer. The Future is Unwritten</i> (2007) by Julien Temple (not available on edX). • <u>Discussion forum</u> about the week contents.
EVALUATION	Test relating to contents developed on the videos and documentary screening. Due date: 21 September (23:59 UTC).
RESOURCES	Additional resources in English or Spanish, mostly links with extra information about unit contents.

WEEK 4: **Cyberactivism and Political Documentary in a Viral Ecosystem**

11 August (00:00 UTC)

VIDEOS	Introducing the topic.
	Interviews.
ASSIGNMENTS	<p>Required</p> <p><u>Documentary screening</u>: <i>15M CC</i> (2011) by Stéphane M. Grueso (available on edX).</p>
	<p>Additional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Documentary screening</u>: <i>Fahrenheit 9/11</i> (2004) by Michael Moore (not available on edX). • <u>Discussion forum</u> about the week contents.
EVALUATION	Test relating to contents developed on the videos and documentary screening. Due date: 21 September (23:59 UTC).

RESOURCES	Additional resources in English or Spanish, mostly links with extra information about unit contents.
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WEEK 5: **F for Fake or False Documentary Moving to the Rhythm of Social Networking**

18 August (00:00 UTC)

VIDEOS	Introducing the topic.
	Reportage.
	Interviews.
ASSIGNMENTS	Required <u>Documentary screening</u> : <i>The War of the Worlds</i> (1938) by Orson Welles. Radio broadcast (free access. Links to the English and the Spanish version will be provided).
	Additional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Documentary screening</u>: <i>Opération Lune (Dark Side of the Moon)</i> (2002) by William Karel (not available on edX). • <u>Discussion forum</u> about the week contents.
EVALUATION	Test relating to contents developed on the videos and documentary screening. Due date: 21 September (23:59 UTC).
RESOURCES	Additional resources in English or Spanish, mostly links with extra information about unit contents.

WEEK 6: **News and Thematic Documentary: Nature, Culture, History, Science**

25 August (00:00 UTC)

VIDEOS	Introducing the topic.
	Interviews.
ASSIGNMENTS	Required <u>Documentary screening</u> : <i>New York Spin</i> (2002) by Pedro Valiente (available on edX).
	Additional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Documentary screening</u>: <i>Senna</i> (2010) by Asif Kapadia (not available on edX). • <u>Discussion forum</u> about the week contents.
EVALUATION	Test relating to contents developed on the videos and documentary screening. Due date: 21 September (23:59 UTC).
RESOURCES	Additional resources in English or Spanish, mostly links with extra information about unit contents.

WEEK 7: **Creative Documentary Film in Times of Crowdfunding**
1 September (00:00 UTC)

VIDEOS	Introducing the topic.
	<i>Slideshow.</i>
	Interview.
ASSIGNMENTS	<p>Required <u>Documentary screening</u>: <i>Otra noche en la tierra (Another Night on Earth)</i> (2012) by David Muñoz (available on edX).</p>
	<p>Additional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Documentary screening</u>: <i>Tarnation</i> (2003) by Jonathan Caouette (not available on edX). • <u>Discussion forum</u> about the week contents.
EVALUATION	<p>Test relating to contents developed on the videos and documentary screening. Due date: 21 September (23:59 UTC).</p> <p>Peer assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Submission</u>: due on 14 September (23:59 UTC) • <u>Review</u>: available from 15 September (00:00 UTC) until 21 September (23:59 UTC)
RESOURCES	Additional resources in English or Spanish, mostly links with extra information about unit contents.

WEEK 8: **Brand Documentary: New Strategies in Advertising**
8 September (00:00 UTC)

VIDEOS	Introducing the topic.
	Interview.
ASSIGNMENTS	<p>Required <u>Documentary screenings</u>: <i>From One Second To The Next</i> (2013) by Werner Herzog for AT&T (free access: links will be provided) / <i>Recuerdos que laten (Beating Memories)</i> (2012) by El Cañonazo Transmedia for Iberia (free access: links will be provided).</p>
	<p>Additional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Screening</u>: Apple Christmas 2013 TV Advert <i>Misunderstood</i> • <u>Discussion forum</u> about the week contents.
EVALUATION	Test relating to contents developed on the videos and documentary screening. Due date: 21 September (23:59 UTC).
RESOURCES	Additional resources in English or Spanish, mostly links with extra information about unit contents.

The course **Documentary! New trends, new formats** will finish on 21 September (23:59 UTC). The certificates will be available after this date.