Course Syllabus-
THE CREATIVE DOCUMENTARY: An Introduction to the History, Styles, Script Writing, and Methods of *mise en scène* in Documentary Film Making

**Language of Instruction:** English

**Professor:** Ricardo Íscar

**Professor’s contact and office hours:**

**Course contact hours:** 45

**Recommended credit:** 3 US credits-5 ECTS credits

**Course prerequisites:** There are no prerequisites for this course

**Course language requirements:** none

**Course description:**
The goal of this seminar is to provide the student with a basic, but professional, level of knowledge of documentary film making. Special attention will be given to the successful renewal of the Spanish -and in special cases, the Catalan- film scene in the last 15 years. The seminar includes a practical exercise where the student can discover his particular way of seeing Spanish reality. The seminar consists in theoretical and practical lessons. During five weeks (three days per week; each class meeting for three hours) students and the tutor Ricardo Íscar will meet and discuss ideas and the situation of the contemporary documentaries.

**Learning objectives:**
At the end of this course the students:

- Will be have a general theoretical knowledge of the history and styles of the Documentary
- Will learn how to write a script and a Documentary project
- Will participate in the shooting and editing of a short documentary movie.

**Course workload:**
Students will work in small teams of four people to develop a project suitable to be filmed and presented at the end of the course. At the beginning of the seminar, students will present a project idea to be approved by the professor. Films should be no more than 15 minutes long and will be shot Barcelona by each group.

**Methods of instruction:**
The seminar consists of lecture and practical lessons. During lecture classes the professor will present the history of Spanish and Catalan Documentary and will set the theoretical basis for the production of a Documentary. During practical sessions students will exercise this production, from the conception of the idea to the editing of the film; this process, of course, includes the writing of the script and shooting of the film.

**Method of assessment:**
Student’s final grade will be determined as it follows:

- Class participation: 25%
- Project synopsis: 25%
- Final Documentary Project: 50%
Absence policy:
Attendance to class is mandatory and will be monitored daily by professors. Missing classes will impact on the student’s final grade as follows:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Absences</th>
<th>Penalization</th>
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<td>Up to two (2) absences</td>
<td>Two absences are permitted and not penalized.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three (3) absences</td>
<td>-1 point out of final grade (on a /10 scale)</td>
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<td>Four (4) absences</td>
<td>-2 points out of final grade (on a /10 scale)</td>
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<td>Five (5) absences or more</td>
<td>The student receives an INCOMPLETE for the course</td>
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The Study Abroad attendance policy does not distinguish between justified or unjustified absences. The student is responsible to manage his/her absences around the two permitted ones. Emergency situations (hospitalization, family emergency…) will be analyzed on a case by case basis by the Director of UPF Study Abroad Programs.

Classroom norms:
- No food or drink is permitted in the classrooms
- Students will have a ten-minute break during each hour session
- Students will have access to UPF professional facilities and technical equipments necessary to develop the course and its assignments. The students are responsible for the appropriate use of materials borrowed from the UPF, including lamps, microphones, professional cameras and other materials. Students are also responsible for the correct use of the studios and facilities, etc. Students enrolled in this course will assume the responsibilities that the UPF audiovisual material loan implies, including eventual student’s dismissal from the program in the case of inappropriate use of facilities and/or materials.

Course schedule (please note that, given the hands on approach of this course, day and time meetings for class sessions may vary each week. Theory sessions will last 3 hours and practical sessions will last 4 hours)

**WEEK 1 HISTORY AND STYLES OF DOCUMENTARY**

**SESSION 1 INTRODUCTION** (Tu, June 7, 3 hours)
A brief history: Robert Flaherty and “Nanook of the North”. Discussion of the reality versus fiction, taking special care of the manipulation and the limits of reality in the films. The importance of how to look at reality and rediscover the world Observational filmmaking.

**SESSION 2 FRAMES AND INFLUENCES** (We, June 8, 3 hours)
The influence of Flaherty in Spanish contemporary filmmakers like José Luis Guérin, Mercedes Álvarez, and Ricardo Iscar. Exposition of the different ideas of the course participants. Public discussion.
SESSION 3  THE CINEMA WITH SOCIAL CONCERN  (Thu, June 9, 3 hours)
The British Documentary Movement (John Grierson, Cavalcanti, Wright ...)
Filming the work.

WEEK 2 HISTORY AND STYLES OF DOCUMENTARY. PRESENTATION OF SYNOPSIS

SESSION 4  TO WRITE A DOCUMENTARY SCRIPT  (Tu, June 14, 3 hours)
To write a Documentary Script: from the first idea to the Script.
Synopsis and Treatment.
Written examples and films.

SESSION 5  FIlMING THE REAL  (We, June 15, 3 hours)
Filming the real (cinéma du réel- cine de lo real).
Dziga Vertov and the Kino Pravda.
The beginnings of cinéma vérité with Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin (1960).
Cinéma Verité from Passsolini until today.
Main Features.

SESSION 6  THE CAMERA AS A WITNESS  (Thu, June 16, 3 hours)
The camera as a witness: The Direct Cinema in USA.
The films from Pennebacker, Leacock, Drew and Frederick Wiseman.
Differences between other styles.
Presentation of Sinopsis.

WEEK 3 SCRIPT AND GETTING READY FOR SHOOTING

SESSION 7  LOOKING BACK IN SPAIN  (Tu, June 21, 3 hours)
Looking back 15 years in Spain: how the production of new documentaries started up in Catalunya.
First Steps: the Importance of Transmission and Education.
Contemporary Spanish Documentaries.

SESSION 8  STUDENTS’ PROJECTS  (Thu, June 23, 3 hours)
Selection of students’ projects.
Each group (4/5 members) should rehearse the project, write and present the script, and discuss it with the reminder of the class.

WEEK 4 SHOOTING

SESSION 9  SHOOTING  (Tu, June 28, 3 hours)
Shooting of the different students’ projects. Each group will have a digital camera and sound equipment to shoot their projects around Barcelona.
Professor will host tutorials with each group to accompany their shooting.
*Please, note that students are expected to shoot the films outside of class meeting hours and will have access to audiovisual materials all throughout the week.

SESSION 10  SHOOTING  (We, June 29, 3 hours)
Shooting of the different students’ projects. Each group will have a digital camera and sound equipment to shoot their projects around Barcelona.
Professor will host tutorials with each group to accompany their shooting.
*Please, note that students are expected to shoot outside of class meeting hours and will have access to audiovisual materials all throughout the week.
**Week 5 Editing** (Classes will be meeting in editing rooms)

**Session 11 Editing** (Tu, July 5, 4 hours)
Editing of the material supervised by the tutor.
Each group will reserve a digital editing room to edit the documentary all throughout the week. The final project should have a maximal length of 15 minutes.
*Please, note that this class session will last 4 hours and will be meeting in the Editing Rooms).

**Session 12 Editing** (Thu, July 7, 4 hours)
Editing of the material supervised by the tutor.
Each group will reserve a digital editing room to edit the documentary all throughout the week. The final project should have a maximal length of 15 minutes.
*Please, note that this class session will last 4 hours and will be meeting in the Editing Rooms).

**Week 6 Editing and Film Viewings** (Classes will be meeting in editing rooms)

**Session 13 Final Editing** (Thu, July 12, 4 hours)
Final Editing of the material with supervision by the tutor.
*Please, note that this class session will last 4 hours and will be meeting in the Editing Rooms).

**Session 14 Final Project Viewings** (Thu, July 14, 3 hours)
Film viewings
Projection and analysis of the different projects.
Final conclusions and course closure

Last revision: March 2011

**Required bibliography**