

## FILM 335 Documentary Film

**Trimester 1 2013**

4 March to 3 July 2013

**20 Points**



*The Free China Junk* 2010 Dir. Robin Greenberg

### TRIMESTER DATES

Teaching dates:	4 March to 7 June 2013
Easter break:	28 March to 3 April 2013
Mid-trimester break:	22 to 28 April 2013
Last piece of assessment due:	7 June 2013

### WITHDRAWAL DATES

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at  
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds>

### NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Robin Greenberg email: [Robin.Greenberg@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Robin.Greenberg@vuw.ac.nz) 83 Fairlie Tce, Office 311 Phone: 463 6824

Office hours Thurs. 11am-1pm

Dr Paul Wolfram email: [Paul.Wolfram@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Paul.Wolfram@vuw.ac.nz) 85 Fairlie Tce, Office 105 Phone: 463 6823

Office hours Wed. 3 -4pm

Bernard Blackburn email: [Bernard.blackburn@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Bernard.blackburn@vuw.ac.nz) 85 Fairlie Tce, Office 106 Phone: 463 9760

Office hours Wed, Thurs, Fri. 9.30 – 11.30am

## CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

### Lectures

Wednesday	10.00am-12.50pm	77 Fairlie Terrace room 208
Friday	10.00am-12.50pm	77 Fairlie Terrace room 205/Murphy 221 (Mac Lab)

## TEACHING LEARNING SUMMARY

Course delivery will comprise a mixture of lectures, technical workshops, practical exercises and discussions of student work. You are expected to take active part in all practical work and discussion.

## COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information about the course and all changes will be communicated at the start of each workshop; posted on Blackboard; notice boards in 85 Fairlie Terrace; and via email.

If you are not going to use the Victoria email address set up for you, we strongly encourage you to set a forward from the Victoria email system to the email address you do use.

## COURSE PRESCRIPTION

A critical and practical study of documentary filmmaking.

## COURSE CONTENT

Documentary Film Production aims to provide students with a broad understanding of the forms and styles of documentary. The course will focus on stylistic and structural aspects of the documentary form as a basis from which to inform the productions produced within the class.

Students will be given intensive workshop session on equipment and facilities. In addition to the in-class practical training students will be expected to conduct their own research and training in their own time and with other class members. The course practical sessions will cover camera work, sound recording, basic lighting set ups, interviewing techniques, camera movement and post-production training.

Students will be expected to collaborate on several assignments and to fulfill assigned roles within a production crew.

The major assignment in this course is a short documentary at a maximum 12 minutes in length. Students will be assessed on their particular role within a production crew and are expected to thoroughly research their assigned role and demonstrate their creative, intellectual and technical ability within the scope of their assigned position.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1 To develop an understanding of the diversity of documentary film history.
- 2 To develop analytical skills for appraising documentary films.
- 3 To enhance skills for presenting ideas.
- 4 To enhance technical skills in core aspects of film production.
- 5 To demonstrate artistic or craft abilities in an aspect of documentary film production – directing, producing, cinematography, audio, editing or post-production.
- 6 To demonstrate an ability to work collaboratively.

### EXPECTED WORKLOAD

The University anticipates that you should be able to devote 200 hours or about sixteen hours per week to a 20-point course. On average, you should expect to spend at least seven hours outside of the class periods, becoming familiar with equipment, designing and writing shooting scripts, and shooting and editing your films. The course is highly practical, and the demands on your time will probably increase as you move into the production phases of your project.

In addition to the time spent in class, students will be expected to attend various technical workshops/tutorials on the use of equipment. Attendance at all sessions is necessary, both as a prerequisite for checking out equipment, and also for students to develop skills in the various crew positions.

### GROUP WORK

Students will undertake a range of formal and informal group activities during the course. During workshops, the team aspect of film making will be stressed. Each student will assume an assigned role in a production crew made up of other class members. In addition to on-set production crews, it is anticipated that students will involve themselves in pre- and post-production activities, such as location scouting, interview support, logistics, and editorial and sound mixing assistance.

The in-class screenings, lectures and demonstrations are intended to be interactive, and will require a high level of attention and participation. When students present the concept work for their films, the class as a whole will act as a critique team to help fine-tune the project.

### READINGS

#### Recommended Reading:

Bernard, Sheila Curran. *Documentary Storytelling: Making Stronger and More Dramatic Nonfiction Films*. 2nd ed. Amsterdam ; Boston: Focal Press, 2007.

De Jong, Wilma. *Creative Documentary: Theory and Practice*. 1st ed. Harlow, U.K: Pearson, 2012.

Nichols, Bill. *Introduction to Documentary*. 2nd ed. Indiana University Press, 2010.

Rabiger, Michael. *Directing the Documentary*. 5th ed. Amsterdam: Focal Press/Elsevier, 2009.

Rosenthal, Alan, and John Corner. *New Challenges for Documentary*. Manchester University Press, 2005.

Rosenthal, Alan. *Writing, Directing, and Producing Documentary Films and Videos*. SIU Press, 2007.

## MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

Most of the equipment, media and resources required for this course can be loaned from the Film Programme through either Paul Wolfram or Bernard Blackburn during the loaning and receiving hours of Monday – Friday, 9.30 – 11.30am. There will be some costs involved in the production of films as students are expected to supply their own consumable materials such as gaffer tape, lighting gels, transportation costs etc. Depending on the nature of the individual film projects, other costs such as location charges, wardrobe rental or construction, transportation rental and so on may also be encountered.

Video cameras, support equipment, lighting, and audio equipment are issued on loan from SEFTMS. Facilities for sound recording, mixing, and editing will be made available by reservation. School equipment must be treated with the utmost care and respect. The student is in exactly the same relationship to the SEFTMS as he or she will be in the outside world renting equipment from a supplier. Learning to bring the gear back on time, and better than you received it, is an important and valuable lesson.

It will be a prerequisite to checking out equipment that the student has gone through the safety, operation, and troubleshooting workshop for that piece of equipment. These sessions will be held early in the course, so that all students will be able to work with the gear for the maximum time.

Equipment bookings must be made with the proper lead time, must be strictly adhered to, and returns must be made on time; otherwise fellow students will be inconvenienced and their shooting schedules disrupted. Any gear damage, malfunction, or failure must be reported at once to the Senior Technical Officer at 04 463 6823 or 021 234 0814.

You are required to read *The Fat Book*, which is Film and Theatre's protocol handbook. This will help you understand the ground rules, and help you know what services, equipment, and facilities are available within the School. Printed copies of *The Fat Book* will be distributed during the first class.

## ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

1)	<b>-Documentary Analysis and Presentation –</b>	Due 20 March	(10%)
2)	<b>-Story Pitch –</b>	Due 27 March	(15%)
3)	<b>-Two Page Proposal –</b>	Due 10 April	(15%)
4)	<b>-Pre-Production Presentation –</b>	Due 8 May	(15%)
5)	<b>-HEALTH &amp; SAFETY BRIEFING –</b>	Due before filming begins	
6)	<b>-Group Work on Short Documentary –</b>	Due 7 June	(45%)

### **Assignment 1.**

#### **- Documentary Analysis and Presentation- (10%) Due 20 March**

Working in pairs, students will be assigned one of 10 documentary films to analyse. You should address the determining mode of the work, its function/s, its formal strategies, its “spine” or structure, and its surface content and deeper themes. You should also consider the filmmaker’s process, and any ethical questions and issues related to the film’s production.

Presentations will be 10 minutes long. Two students will present on each film, students must coordinate with each other as to which aspects of the film/filmmaker they will focus on.

Marking Criteria:

1. Fulfilling the set task in a direct, relevant and complete manner.
2. Clear evidence that you have understood the major structural and thematic features of the film.
3. Demonstrating your engagement with ideas and materials discussed and analysed in FILM 335.
4. Evidence of preparation.
5. Quality, fluency and coherency of expression.

### **Assignment 2.**

#### **- Story Pitch - (15%) Due 27 March**

In this individually assessed assignment you are expected to present an idea for a film in five minutes. The pitch should introduce subject, characters and key plot points, dramatic tension, and suggest the story resolution in a compelling way. REMEMBER: You are not telling the story. The pitch, story, concept and delivery should be designed and presented in a way that will appeal to your audience. You are trying to “sell” your idea and convince your classmates and teachers that your film is worthy of being translated into a short documentary. The pitch must be your own original work. The criteria for assessment will be emotional impact of the pitch, clarity of the idea, marketability (i.e how relevant to its target audience?), and strength of delivery.

Marking Criteria:

1. Fulfilling the set task in a direct, relevant and complete manner.
2. Clear evidence that you have engaged in the pitching process a creative way that expresses your own original ideas.
3. Demonstrating your engagement with ideas and materials discussed and analysed in FILM 335.
4. Evidence of preparation.
5. Quality, fluency and coherency of expression.
6. Feasibility of proposed project.

### **Assignment 3.**

#### **- Two Page Proposal (15%) Due April 10**

In this assignment you are required to present the core elements of your proposed documentary in manner that exhibits your understandings of the practical and creative aspects of your project. You should aim to prove that the story you want to tell is not only achievable in the time frame and with your limited resources but also compelling and cinematically engaging. Why is the film you want to make important? Why should others care about your subject, issue or topic? Remember you are aiming for four/five shooting days and a three-week edit.

Proposal must include:

1. Logline / film statement
2. Background
3. Approach and style
4. Outline
5. Production schedule
6. Audience
7. Budget

Marking Criteria:

1. Fulfilling the set task in a direct, relevant and complete manner.
2. Clear evidence that you understand and have researched your key creative role.
3. Clear evidence that you have engaged with the pre-production process in a creative way that expresses your own original ideas as well as complimenting the script, if you are not the director you should also complement the directorial vision.
4. Evidence of preparation and research for presentation.
5. Quality, fluency and coherency of expression.

### **Assignment 4.**

#### **- Pre-Production Presentation - (15%) Due 8 May**

In your key creative role as: director, producer, cinematographer, editor, or sound you will prepare for your film project by presenting a creative pitch to the class. This group presentation is delivered as a production group but the assessment and grade will be based on your individual contribution to the presentation, and your alignment with the overall group presentation. The group must communicate a cohesive stylistic vision for their film. Directors should demonstrate their overall directorial vision for all aspects of visuals, sound, and cutting. However, each member of the group must outline how their role will specifically contribute to the realisation of that vision. This will involve researching the nature of your particular role and demonstrate understanding of that role. As part of this assignment, your group will present a storyboard (or shooting plan) of a number of shots from one sequence from the film. This will help prepare you for your actual shoot. This assignment will develop your creativity, enhance your understanding of key creative roles in filmmaking, improve your ability to work as part of a team, and develop your organisational and oral communication skills.

Marking Criteria:

1. Fulfilling the set task in a direct, relevant and complete manner.
2. Clear evidence that you understand and have researched your key creative role.
3. Clear evidence that you have engaged with the pre-production process in a creative way that expresses your own original ideas as well as complimenting the script, if you are not the director you should also complement the directorial vision.
4. Evidence of preparation and research for presentation.
5. Quality, fluency and coherency of expression.

**Assignment 5.**

**PRODUCTION HEALTH AND SAFETY BRIEFING- Due before shooting begins.**

No points weighting is given to this briefing, but you will not be loaned equipment until you have completed this 40 minute briefing. This session is to be arranged by the Producer and must be attended by all crew members in the course and any other people filling major production roles, with Dr Wolfram.

**Assignment 6.**

**Group Work on Short Documentary – (45%) Due 7 June**

Completion of a **short documentary film**, from the preliminaries of scouting and research, through shooting, recording and on through final editing and post-production. In this group assignment you will be given an individual mark that reflects the overall accomplishment of the group and your own achievement in your assigned production role. There will be four production groups (each with 5 members). Delivery of finished films will be as a file on the server drop box (details will be provided).

Marking Criteria:

1. Fulfilling the set task within the production group in a direct, relevant and complete manner.
2. Clear evidence that you understand and have researched your key creative role.
3. Clear evidence that you have engaged with the production process in a creative way that expresses your own original ideas as well as complementing the original pitch. If you are not the director you should also complement the directorial vision.
4. Evidence of preparation and research for the filming.
5. Quality, fluency and coherency of expression in your assigned production role.

**ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEETS**

Assignment cover sheets and extension forms can be found on Blackboard or outside the Administration office: 83 Fairlie Terrace. Remember to fill in your tutor's name.

**COLLECTING MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

Your marked assignment will be handed back in class or tutorials. Any uncollected assignments can be picked up from the Programme Administrator after the last day of teaching. Assignments will be held in the Administration office until the end of the following trimester. You need to show your student identification to collect marked assignment from the Administration office.

## EXTENSIONS AND PENALTIES

Extensions will be granted only in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. Issues of workload do not constitute exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. If you require an extension, you must complete an extension request form (available on your course Blackboard site) prior to the assignment due date. This must be accompanied by relevant documentation (e.g. a doctor's certificate) where appropriate. Tutors cannot grant extensions.

Work submitted after the deadline will be penalised by a 2.5 percent deduction from your total mark per work day. Late work also receives only minimal comments from your marker.

## MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible to gain a pass in this course you must:

- Submit the written and practical work specified for the course, on or by the specified dates (subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of work)
- Have attended and fulfilled the requirements of the Health and Safety briefing.
- Have at least 85% attendance at all classes and workshops.

## CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students. You can find out more information on Class Representatives on [www.vuwsa.org.nz](http://www.vuwsa.org.nz).

## STATEMENT ON LEGIBILITY

You are expected to present work that meets appropriate standards. Work submitted during the course (i. e. work that is internally assessed) should be typed or prepared on a computer. Where handwritten work is required you are expected to write clearly. If this is deemed 'illegible', you will be given a photocopy of the work and asked to transcribe it to an acceptable standard (preferably typed) within a specified time frame.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.



Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism>

#### WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study).

Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at

[www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress). Most statutes and policies are available at

[www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy), except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar) (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about\\_victoria/avcacademic](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic).

**COURSE PROGRAMME**

<p>Week 1</p>	<p>March 6</p>	<p><b>Welcome and Administration, Course Outline.</b></p> <p>Introduction to documentary film history and genres.</p> <p>Introduction to Assignment 1: How to analyse a film.</p> <p>Exploring style, structure and storyline.</p>
	<p>March 8</p>	<p><b>Workshop:</b> Introduction to Camera. (interview)</p>
<p>Week 2</p>	<p>March 13</p>	<p><b>Vist to the New Zealand Film Archive.</b></p> <p>Presentation by Mark Sweeney:</p> <p>Introduction to early documentary film history in New Zealand.</p> <p>Tour of Film Archive, and viewing in Media Library.</p>
	<p>March 15</p>	<p><b>Workshop:</b> Camera II. (observation and movement)</p>
<p>Week 3</p>	<p>March 20</p>	<p><b>Assignment 1: Documentary Analysis and Presentation</b> (deliver in class).</p> <p>Introduction to Assignment 2: How to pitch.</p> <p>Key concepts, style and storyline, and feasibility as a short film.</p>
	<p>March 22</p>	<p><b>Workshop:</b> Introduction to location audio recording.</p>
<p>Week 4</p>	<p>March 27</p>	<p><b>Assignment 2: Story Pitch</b> (deliver in class).</p> <p>Introduction to interview styles, techniques and ethical issues.</p>
<p><b>Easter Break:</b></p>		<p>Thursday 28 March to Wednesday 3 April 2013</p>
<p>Week 4</p>	<p>April 5</p>	<p><b>Workshop:</b> Lighting</p> <p>Guest: cinematographer Waka Attewell</p>
<p>Week 5</p>	<p>April 10</p>	<p><b>Assignment 3: Two Page Proposal handed in at start of class.</b></p> <p>Exploring creative processes, from idea to fruition.</p>
	<p>April 12</p>	<p><b>Workshop:</b> Introduction to editing with FCP X</p>

Week 6	April 17	Filming on location: preparations, challenges and trouble-shooting.  Guest lecture: filmmaker Costa Botes
	April 19	<b>Workshop:</b> Working as a crew. Films selected and groups assigned.

**Mid Trimester Break:** Monday 22 to Sunday 28 April 2013

Week 7	May 1	Pre-Production phase begins. (Lecture and groups)
	May 3	Pre-Production (Advanced Editing)

Week 8	May 8	<b>Assignment 4: Group Pre-Production Presentations</b> (delivered in class)
	May 10	Producers to arrange health and safety meeting with Dr Wolfram and groups.  Production begins.

Week 9	May 15	Production
	May 17	Production

Week 10	May 22	Post-Production begins.
	May 24	Post-Production

Week 11	May 29	<b>Rough cut screening</b>
	May 31	Post-Production

Week 12	June 5	<b>Fine cut screening</b>
	June 7	<b>Assignment 6: Films handed in at start of class.</b>