

what is 367?

course info

meets

3:30—5:18
T: CC 218
Th: DE 307

instructor

Timothy
Trier
Jensen

email

jensen.
125
osu.edu

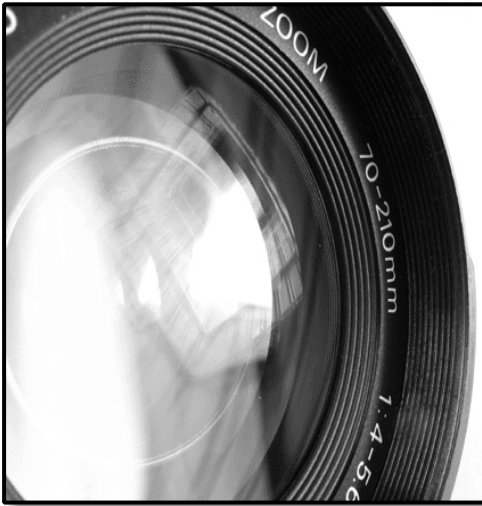
10-20

Office:
DE 503
Mailbox:
DE 421

This is an intermediate writing course that is required of all undergraduates that aims to provide students with a broad working knowledge of composition skills. Put differently, this course is designed to enrich and elevate one's *rhetorical consciousness*—the capacity to develop, as well as decode human communication.

To that end we will examine various texts with a critical eye to learn how to recognize, analyze, and evaluate persuasive strategies. You will, in turn, be asked to create your own persuasive arguments through a variety of mediums and genres, including formal academic essays, but also mixed-media assignments and informal writing commitments. Course work, assigned readings, and class discussions are all configured to facilitate the development of argumentation skills, especially use of evidence and arrangement of ideas. Assignments are engineered to have you build sequentially on the rhetorical skills gained during the quarter.

Although we will engage a variety of texts in this course, the central focus of this class is always on writing. Writing as a process will be stressed, with drafts, revisions, peer-editing and conferences structured into the course.



goals and objectives
for the general
education
curriculum

goals / rationale:

Writing courses across the disciplines develop students' skills in writing, reading, critical thinking, and oral expression.

learning objectives:

1. Students apply basic skills in expository writing
2. Students demonstrate critical thinking through written and oral expression
3. Students retrieve and use written information analytically and effectively

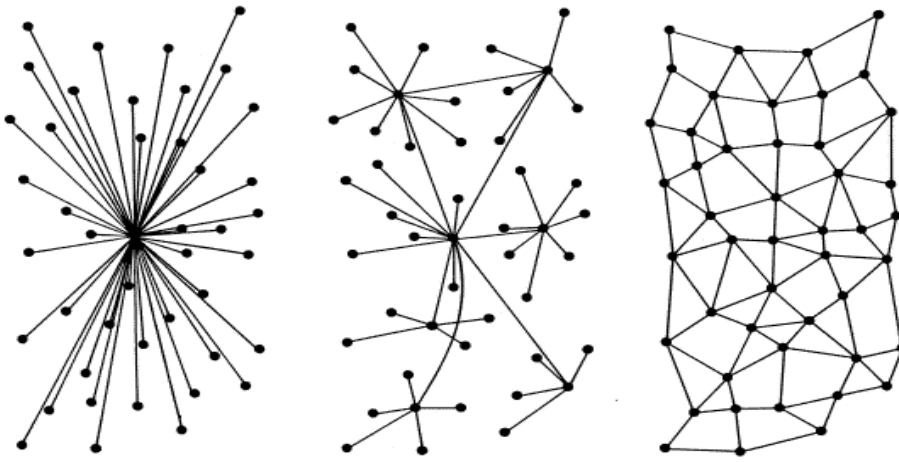
more specifically . . .

This particular section of 367 uses the genre of documentary film to develop analytical skills in thinking, reading, and composing. After becoming familiar with some of the rhetorical tropes and maneuvers closely associated with documentary film—a genre that is experiencing renewed attention and increased prominence—we will focus our energy on the relationship between documentaries and social activism, asking what elements of persuasion are working together to inform, reform, or revolutionize social practices. The quarter culminates with you making *your own digital documentary* that intersects with our course theme, but that is on a topic of your own choosing.

The impact of digital connectivity on an unprecedented scale makes today's activism and social movements contrast sharply with the leader-oriented and institutional movements that have dominated collective protest in the past. Just as activist collectives and tactics during the "long sixties" (roughly '56 to '74) forced people to reexamine their understanding of protest and dissent, we are now in a period where digital communication structures have significantly altered how the invention, organization, distribution, and reception of radical rhetorics function. Documentaries and the mediums through which they circulate (Youtube, Netflix, Hulu, etc.) are crucial elements of this new frontier and thus form our point of departure.

Two axes will guide our investigations, the first containing issues of *micro* and *macro*. While debates of globalization and transnationalism are increasing both in quantity and depth of understanding, there is also an increased attention being placed on the local and community. The interrelated notions of *individual* and *collective* form the other axis for inquiry. While emerging communication technologies allow for collective connectivity and mobilization on a scale previously unimaginable, they also foster an individualism that provokes tension—both productive and inimical—with collective identity.

Our goal is to learn rhetorical and compositional skills through the tackling of these issues, which affect all of us personally, permeating our everyday actions.



course structure

This class is deemed a “hybrid” class—one day a week it meets in a more traditional classroom, and the other in a computer lab. This is because we will not only be analyzing others’ documentary work, but we will be creating our own. After several weeks of considering the various ways filmmakers capture and represent certain experiences, you will have the opportunity to construct your own documentary using the digital resources of the University. All the computer skills necessary for completing the assignments will be taught in class; you do not need to be tech-savvy upon entering the course in order to succeed.

Although the course includes several film screenings and lab time for creating a documentary, the overwhelming majority is dedicated to critical reading and analytical writing. You must come to class prepared each day to discuss the texts we are analyzing and the concepts under consideration in order to succeed. Because this class is experimental, your positive attitude and analytical thinking will be instrumental—be prepared for a high level of engagement everyday.

course goals

The goal of this class is the same as any humanities class: to make one more human—which is to say, more humane. As humans interacting with our surroundings, we are constantly in the process of refusing, arranging, and deciphering sensory information. In this process we develop perceptions that categorize and map experiences, thus creating models of how the world works in our mind’s eye. As we continue to interact with the world, our perceptions often change with new information, sensations, or environments, and as we start to “see” differently, we act differently. Because language is central to how we construct our worldview and thus forms the basis from which we act, our goal for this course is to become more aware of our own language processes as critical thinkers, readers and writers.

The man who cannot think for himself, going beyond what other men have thought, is still enslaved to other men’s ideas.

Obviously the goal of learning to think is even more difficult than the goal of learning to learn. But difficult as it is we must add it to our list.

- Wayne C. Booth -

+ targeted skills

Identify and be able to implement strategies, methods, and elements of persuasion, and understand their attendant assumptions, implications, and consequences



Recognize and evaluate patterns of cultural values disseminated through everyday rhetorics



Cultivate and actively practice skills in critically analyzing texts of all varieties



Refine effective researching skills, especially within University systems



Learn how to approach issues from a diversity of perspectives, and how to interrogate those views intellectually



Practice rhetorical *listening*—attuning the ear to how arguments are constructed and wielded

+ key questions

What elements contribute to effective communication? What is ethical, cogent and convincing discourse?



How do we harness the power in communication to motivate others to action?



What does it mean to be a critical thinker and how does one cultivate the skills and habits necessary to be considered one? In other words, how does one grow intellectually?



What is the best writing process for you personally?



What does it mean to do documentary work? How do filmmakers provoke certain thoughts or move us emotionally?



What compositional elements help constitute the genre of documentary film? Why is this important to recognize?

How will making a documentary help improve my writing skills?



What makes a film political or activist oriented?



How do activists make use of film and documentaries today in promoting their agendas?



What compels people to change their current way of life and engage in resistance activity?



How do you perceive activism and resistance?

+
He who does not study rhetoric will be a victim of it.

+
graffiti on a wall in Greece, 6th century B.C.

required materials

All readings for this class will be made available to you either through the Carmen site or handed out in class.

Unless I specify otherwise, you are expected to print

out each reading and bring it with you to each class. Because we will continually refer to these readings throughout the quarter it is important that you not solely rely on electronic copies of these works. Please make sure you have adequate resources for printing. Your BuckID allows you to print fifty free pages each quarter at University computer sites, with additional pages costing ten cents each. Since there are days where you will be required to bring in multiple copies of your own work, always plan in advance for printing.

Because you will be creating digital works of your own, you will need an external hard-drive or a flash/jump drive for accessing files when we are scheduled in the computer classroom. I recommend that you either purchase one immediately online for the best price, or you secure the means for doing so; that way, when the project begins, you'll be prepared. If you plan to save your working iMovie files on a flash drive, I recommend getting one with *at least* 16 gigabytes of storage space. On days we have lab time, you will be asked to bring a pair of headphones with you.

Although optional, I encourage you to secure means for renting films in the likely event you will want to review a film while writing a paper. A Columbus Public Library card allows you access to a rich catalogue of resources for free; Netflix or equivalent is another avenue for getting films.

resources

The **Ombudsman of the Writing Programs**, Dr. Matthew Cariello, mediates conflicts between teachers and students in 110 and 367. You can contact him at 292-5778 or cariello.1@osu.edu. His Autumn 2009 office hours in Denney Hall 412 are Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 11.30-3.00. Other times are available by appointment. All conversations with the Ombudsman are confidential.

The **OSU Writing Center** is a *free* service that provides professional consultation/tutoring at any stage of the writing process. You may set up an appointment by calling 688-5865 or by dropping by the center at 485 Mendenhall Labs. The writing center provides an incredibly valuable service for all writers (from undergrads to faculty). I strongly encourage all to visit this great service.

The Office for Disability Services, The Office for Disability Services, located in 150 Pomerene Hall, offers services for students with documented disabilities. Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me to discuss your specific needs. You can contact ODS at 2-3307.

The **Digital Media Project** (DMP) in the English department and **Classroom Services** (located in the basement in Central Classrooms) check out media equipment to students. I will provide more information on these resources as the quarter advances. Feel free to check them out on the web at <http://dmp.osu.edu/> and <http://classroom.osu.edu/>

The **Digital Union** is located on the third floor of the Science and Engineering Library. They have a wealth of technology, plenty of space to work, and a knowledgeable staff to guide you. I encourage you visit and play around with some of the technology we will be using this quarter. <http://digitalunion.osu.edu/>

classroom policies

- *NO* cell phones are to be active while in class. If your phone must remain on for emergency purposes please set it to vibrate. If your cell phone rings while class is in session, it is course policy that you answer it, put it on speakerphone, and allow the entire class to ask the person calling what is so important that it necessitates interrupting class.
- *NOTE: Syllabus is subject to change* at instructor's discretion. You will be notified when changes occur via your OSU email account. Be sure to check this account regularly. I frequently send updates and clarifications to the class, so reading the *entire* email thoroughly is important.
- *Attendance* is crucial to the success of this class and to your development as a writer. Therefore, each unexcused absence after two will result in the lowering of your final grade by a third of a grade. Excused absences, such as those for documented illness, family tragedy, religious observance, or travel for inter-collegiate athletics, will not affect your grade. **It is program policy that five unexcused absences will automatically result in failure for the course.**
- *Tardiness* is disruptive to the classroom environment, and prevents you from fully participating and assimilating the information and materials discussed in class. Excessive or chronic lateness will incur the same penalties as absences.
- *Plagiarism* is the unauthorized use of the words or ideas of another person. It is a serious academic offense that can result in referral to the Committee on Academic Misconduct and failure for the course. Please remember that at no point during the writing process should the work of others be presented as your own.
- *Student Work* must be completed and submitted on time. No late work will be accepted without consent from me (and this will only be given in the most rare of emergencies). If you have an excused absence scheduled for the day an assignment is due, your assignment must be handed in and receipt confirmed *before* the due date.
- *Paper Format*: double spaced, 12 point font, standard 1 inch margins, your name, instructor's name, the class (English 367), and the date should appear in the upper left corner of the first page; pages should be stapled and numbered; paper should have a title.
- *Mandatory Conference*: Students must attend a mandatory conference with me in the quarter. Failure to attend this conference will result in a class absence.
- *Class Cancellation Policy*: In the event of an emergency or celebrity sighting, I will contact you via email and/or request that a note be placed on the door. In addition, I will contact you as soon as possible following the cancellation to let you know what will be expected of you for our next class meeting.

assignments

Essay #1 :: Definition Essay :: 20%

This assignment will be a focused 3-4 page essay that seeks to cogently define one of the following key terms:

activism; activist; documentary (the genre); or social movement. You will receive further criteria and guidelines for this assignment on Tuesday, September 29th.

Essay #2 :: Rhetorical Analysis :: 25%

For this 4-5 page essay you are asked to analyze the *how* of the documentary film, *Born into Brothels: Calcutta's Red Light Kids*. That is, you will analyze *how* the film communicates a particular message with specific choices and rhetorical maneuvers. You will receive further criteria and guidelines for this assignment on Tuesday, October 6th.

Digital Documentary Project :: 3 parts totaling 30%

The final assignment is comprised of three parts: 1) Proposal; 2) Digital Documentary Video; 3) Analytical Summary; they are weighted 5%, 20%, 5% respectively. Here you will apply analytical frameworks and rhetorical methods using the medium of film. Writing, as we will see, is an essential component of any video project; from brainstorming and conceptualizing, to production and editing, writing will play a crucial role in making your video informative and persuasive. I will introduce the final project on Tuesday, October 20th.

Ruminations :: 3 total :: 5% each = 15%

Throughout the quarter you'll be asked to reflect on your own personal experiences, desires, and principles in these 2-4 page narratives. You will receive a set of prompts/questions to choose from that ask you to contemplate the intersection between social issues and personal development and involvement. You will receive the prompts no less than one week before each assignment is due. Designed as an informal genre for exploring new terrains of thought and revisiting old ones, grading for these assignments will operate off a three-tier system: check plus; check; check minus.

Engagement :: 10%

Success in this class demands sustained and invigorated participation and cooperation. For me, this is largely about *respect*: respect for yourself and your abilities and potential as an intellectual and citizen, respect for the resources at your disposal, respect for your classmates, and respect for the opportunity to further your critical thinking and communication skills in a safe and productive atmosphere. This translates into *coming to class prepared* to engage ideas and peers, active listening, and keeping an open mind. Concrete activities will facilitate this engagement, through in-class, informal writing assignments and "call-outs," where individual students will be given a task to complete for the next class period, such as looking up a definition, finding example texts, or leading class discussion with prepared questions.

The death of
democracy is not likely
to be an assassination
from ambush. It will be
a slow extinction from
apathy, indifference,
and undernourishment.

- Robert Maynard
Hutchins -

teaching statement

true learning

=

self-discovered

There are three fundamental, interrelated principles that structure my pedagogical approach.

The first is a strong belief that true learning—that which is integrated into one's daily actions and personal sense of ethics—must be self-discovered and self-appropriated. Significant learning only occurs when one is uniquely invested in the process, assimilating knowledge through personal experience. Because of my firm belief in this notion, my goal is to create a classroom atmosphere where students cultivate the intellectual strategies and self-confidence to teach themselves long after the class ends.

rhetoric

=

epistemic

Secondly, I believe that rhetoric is epistemic; it simultaneously describes, discovers, and creates knowledge. Because language is central to how we construct our worldview and thus forms the basis from which we act, it is of utmost importance that we become more aware of our own language processes as critical thinkers, readers, and writers. Therefore I impress upon you the seriousness of our study, but suggest an approach that emphasizes the playful nature of intellectual inquiry.

civic duty

=

active, ethical
communication

Finally, a strong sense of civic duty informs my teaching persona. As a rhetorician, I have accepted the challenge of cultivating critical thinking and writing skills that allow for and encourage active participation in the public sphere. The ability to both encode and decode persuasive messages in a variety of mediums—from alphabetic-based to multi-modal texts—is essential for fostering critical citizenship in an age deluged with information. Strategies of analysis are applied to aspects of everyday life and are therefore associated with one's responsibility for thoughtful engagement at all times.

"I realize that I am only interested in being a learner, preferably learning things that matter, that have some significant influence on my own behavior ... I find that one of the best, but most difficult ways for me to learn is to drop my own defensiveness, at least temporarily, and try to understand the way in which another's experience seems and feels to the other person. I find that another way of learning is for me to state my own uncertainties, to try and clarify my puzzlements, and thus get closer to the meaning that my experience actually seems to have."

~ Carl Rogers

"This is no time for phony rhetoric"

- Lou Reed -

Daily Schedule

Readings are due the day listed ("R" = readings due)

All readings will be made available on Carmen unless otherwise notified

①

Th 9.24 :: Introductions & Overview ::

Syllabus handout

Strenuous calisthenics

"A video camera has become one of those objects you pack for a protest"

- Tish Stringer, video activist -

②

T 9.29 :: Introducing Critical Analysis & Rhetoric ::

Discussion: What is analysis? What is critical thinking? What are we doing when we say we're analyzing claims and arguments? What is rhetoric?

Where is it? Why pay attention to any of this stuff?

Introduce Assignment #1 prompt: Definition essay

R: Paul Ward, "Defining Documentary," *Documentary: The Margins of Reality*

Th 10.1 :: Introduction to Rhetoric Continued :: Visual Rhetoric ::

Practicing rhetorical analysis

Academic genre and persuasive critical discourse; argumentation theory

R: Bill Nichols, (chapter 1) "Why are Ethical Issues Central to Documentary Filmmaking?" *Introduction to Documentary*

F 10.2 :: DUE :: Ruminations #1 :: deposit in Carmen drop-box by 5 pm ::

"Histories make men wise; poets, witty; the mathematics, subtle; natural philosophy, deep; moral, grave; logic and rhetoric, able to contend"

- Francis Bacon -

3

T 10.6 :: Active Screening ::

Born into Brothels: Calcutta's Red Light Kids (Dir. Kauffman and Briski, 85 min)

Introduce Assignment #2: Rhetorical Analysis of *Born into Brothels*

DUE: Rough draft of Definition essay :: deposit in Carmen drop-box by 3 pm

Th 10.8 :: *Born into Brothels* Under the Lens ::

Analytical activities on movie

Discussion: What constitutes activism? Where do we see it today? What is the relationship between activism and persuasion? How do documentaries and activism intersect?

"People only see what they are prepared to see"

– Ralph Waldo Emerson –

4

T 10.13 :: Round-table :: Collective Action & Social Movements ::

Discussion: What is a social movement? How is collective action similar or different? What is unique about social movements in an age of globalization? What is the role of rhetoric in generating, sustaining, and directing collective action?

R: Kevin Deluca, "The Rhetoric of Social Movements," *Image Politics*

R: Charles Tilly, Lesley J. Wood, "Social Movements as Politics," *Social Movements 1768-2008*

R: Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, "Inventing Network Struggles," *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*

Th 10.15 :: Round-table Follow-Up :: Writing Workshop ::

Investigating questions generated from previous discussion

Peer-Reviewing Definition Essays

Developing claims when writing about rhetoric

DUE :: Polished Draft, Definition Essay at beginning of class :: bring on flash drive or email copy to yourself

"Good writing is re-writing"

– Truman Capote –

5

M 10.19 :: DUE :: Definition Essay :: deposit in my mailbox, 421 Denney (English department main office), by 4 pm

T 10.20 :: **Introduction to Final Assignment** ::

Introduce Digital Documentary Project

R: Selections from *The Video Activist Handbook*

R: Selections from *The No-Nonsense Guide to Human Rights*

Th 10.22 :: **Digital Documentaries in an age of Human Rights**

Contextualizing the Final Assignment

Discussion: What are Human Rights? How has the development and democratization of video impacted Human Rights? What issues are important to consider when making a film about Human Rights?

R: Selections from *The No-Nonsense Guide to Human Rights*

F 10.23 :: DUE: Draft of Rhetorical Analysis essay :: Carmen drop-box, 5 pm

“The way to do research is to attack the facts at the point of greatest astonishment”

– Celia Green –

6

T 10.27 :: **Round-table** :: **Subjects & Subjectivity** :: **Individuals in Action** :: **Individuals in Peril**

Discussion: What constitutes a subject? What are ways of thinking about subjectivity? What is the relationship between individual action and collective change?

R: Subjectivity according to Kierkegaard (packet)

R: Subjectivity according to Foucault (packet)

R: Derrick Jensen, “Forget Shorter Showers” *Orion Magazine*

R: Derrick Jensen, “Seeing Things,” *The Culture of Make Believe*

Optional, encouraged reading: Kelly Oliver, “Identity as Subordination, Abjection, and Exclusion,” *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*; Wendy Brown, “Subjectivity without Subjects: Circulation from Vision to Visions,”

Subjectivity without Subjects

Th 10.29 :: Round-table Follow-up :: iMovie Introduction ::

Investigating questions generated from previous discussion

iMovie Workshop #1

Sign-up for individual conferences

F 10.30 :: DUE :: Ruminations #2 :: deposit in Carmen drop-box by 5 pm ::

“There is no way I could have ever dared to make a documentary, much less have the money to make a documentary, if it was on 16mm. But, with the magic of digital . . .”

– Lloyd Kaufman –

7

T 11.3 :: Individual Conferences :: Held at Wexner Center Café

No Class

DUE :: Polished Draft of Documentary Proposal; specific list of questions

Th 11.5 :: Writing Workshop :: Documentary Review :: iMovie Workshop

Peer-Reviewing Rhetorical Analysis Essays

Reviewing and critiquing rhetorical maneuvers of documentary films

iMovie Workshop #2

“Give us adequate images. We lack adequate images. Our civilization does not have adequate images. And I think a civilization is doomed or is going to die out like dinosaurs if it doesn't develop an adequate language for adequate images”

– Werner Herzog –

8

M 11.09 :: DUE :: Rhetorical Analysis Essay :: deposit in my mailbox, 421

Denney (English department main office), by 4 pm

T 11.10 :: Material Collection ::

No class

Gather A- & B-roll footage

DUE :: Documentary Proposal :: deposit in Carmen drop-box, 5 pm

Th 11.12 :: iMovie Workshop :: Studio Time

Bring footage to work with in-class

iMovie Workshop #3

R: Bernard, "Documentary Storytelling"

R: Lambert, "Digital Story Telling Cookbook" (pages TBA)

"Reality changes; in order to represent it, modes of representation must change"

– Bertolt Brecht –

⑨

**T 11.17 :: Revisiting Collective Action & Transnational Activism ::
Documentary Review**

Discussion: What are the possibilities for collective action today? Where are we headed? How do we situate individual activity within social movements? What can be said about the rhetoric of activist discourses that have been globalized?

Critiquing documentaries with rubric

R: TBD

Th 11.19 :: Studio Time ::

In-class: Developing your digital documentary

F 11.20 :: DUE :: Ruminations #3 :: deposit in Carmen drop-box by 5 pm ::

"In documentary we deal with the actual, and in one sense with the real. But the really real, if I may use that phrase, is something deeper than that. The only reality which counts in the end is the interpretation, which is profound"

– John Grierson –

⑩

T 11.24 :: Student-led Round-table (Part I) :: Documentary Workshop ::

Class members will determine discussion readings, questions, and analytical activities developed out their documentary projects on Human Rights

Workshop drafts of student documentaries

Draw for Presentation Group Designation

Th 11.26 :: Thanksgiving

No Class

“From a certain point onward, there is no turning back; that is the point that must be reached”

– Franz Kafka –

⑩

T 12.1 :: Student-led Round-table (Part II) :: Course Review ::

Class members will determine discussion readings, questions, and analytical activities

Th 12.3 :: Presentations :: Group A ::

⑪ — (Exam Week)

T 12.3 :: Presentations :: Group B ::

Final Projects Due Tuesday, December 3rd, in class

“The least of the work of learning is done in the classroom”

- Thomas Merton -