

The Documentary Film
High School of American Studies
Mr. Thoman

Course Description:

We all have experienced plenty in our lives. We have often tried to convey these experiences in writing, or more simply, in conversations with others. Thanks to modern technology, we have a new, and very exciting medium in which to convey reality: the documentary film.

This class will take a close look at what makes for a compelling documentary film by not only viewing and critiquing well-known documentary films (Elinson), but also making our own mini documentaries (Thoman). We will have the use of all the following technology for the class:

- video camcorders for film footage
- digital cameras for stills
- microphones for narration
- Macintosh computers for editing footage
- I Film and Final Cut software for editing, transitions, inclusion of a soundtrack, and other tools available for film making
- IDVD software to burn our final movie to DVD format

Requirements:

Students will be expected to show up to class on a timely and regular basis. Much of the work done in the class will build on what we have learned in previous classes. If you miss any class, it will be very hard to catch up.

While this is an elective, and hopefully a fun one at that, the class still culminates in a grade. This is a REAL grade that goes on your high school transcript.

You will have to be ready to work with one or two other students. We don't have enough equipment to allow each of you to create fully independent projects. Therefore, much of the class will be group-oriented.

The grade will be Pass / Fail for the first two marking periods. For the last marking period, the grade will be a numerical grade that is largely a reflection of the effort made in the making of the documentary. involvement in projects:

Projects (one project per marking period)

1. A simple, rough-cut movie: Devise a simple movie that takes place on school grounds, eg. School lunch, math class, waiting for the bus, etc. This will allow you to familiarize yourself with the technology, and the intricacies of movie editing. We will work on a fairly simple I_Movie program to create these movies.
2. Story Board: Plan out your "big" movie with a story board. We will discuss how storyboards are made, and a well-developed story board will be created for each film in the class.
3. Mini Documentary: This is the culminating project in the class. The movie is to be 5-10 minutes in length, and chronicle something of interest in your life. We will discuss possible topics at a later time.

Lab Sessions:

Starting in March, there will be two hours of lab time available after school for editing purposes. Unless you have the editing software at home, you will probably need to make use of this time to make real headway with your movie.

Tentative Calendar for first marking period

	Day 1	Day 2
Week #1 9/8	Intro	
Week #2 9/112	Evaluation of some home made mini documentaries	Working with the camcorder: capturing footage on campus
Week #3 9/19	Viewing and discussion of captured film; planning for next shoot	Capturing footage for rough cut on campus
Week #4 9/26	Viewing of film; introduction to Editing with I Movie	Working with I Movie : tutorial
Week #5 10/3	Editing	Editing
Week #6 10/12	Final Edit	Viewing of Rough Cuts