

POLITICAL DOCUMENTARY FILM (CMST 28201, COVA 28204)

Judy Hoffman, judyh@uchicago.edu; 773.973.3754

Lecture: T/TH 1:30 - 2:50 C425

Screening: TU 3:30 - 6:30 C425 or F 1:00 - 4:00 C307

This course explores political documentary film, its intersection with historical and cultural events, its relationship to the State, as well as its opposition to Hollywood and traditional media. We will examine documentary modes of production, from films with a social message, to advocacy and activist films, to counter-media and agit-prop, and interrogate how style effects the political. The relationship between the filmmaker, film subject and audience will be considered. How political documentaries are disseminated and hopefully become part of political struggle will be a major theme. The course will concentrate on political documentary film in the U.S. after WWII. The class grade will be determined by the quality of the class project. This syllabus is subject to change.

Required Texts:

The Communist Manifesto, Karl Marx & Frederick Engels.
available at Seminary Coop

Course Packet available at Classics copy center.

Suggested Texts:

Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov, edited by Annette Michelson, University of California Press, 1984.

The Wretched of the Earth, Franz Fanon

A People's History of the United States, Howard Zinn

The Necessity of Art, Ernst Fischer

Film on the Left: American Documentary Film from 1931 to 1942, William Alexander

WEEK ONE – INTRODUCTION

SEPT 28 what makes a film political

SEPT 30 Lumiere program and *Simba* by Martin & Osa Johnson

SCREENINGS:

In The Year of the Pig, Emile de Antonio, 1968, 103 min

The Peoples War, Newsreel, 1969, 40 min.

What Farocki Taught, Jill Godmilow, 30 min.

ON RESERVE AT FSC:

Hearts and Minds, Peter Davis , 1974, 112 min.

READINGS:

“The Port Huron Statement of the Students for a Democratic Society: 1962”
Courtesy Office of Sen. Tom Hayden.

“October 1966 Black Panther Party Platform and Program: What We Want; What We Believe.”

“Chicago Women’s Liberation Union Principles,” & “What is the Chicago Women’s Liberation Union?” from *Womankind*, December 1972.

“Newsreel Film and Revolution,” Bill Nichols, “*Cinéaste*,” Vol. V, No. 4, 1973, pp. 7 - 13.

“Radical American Film? A Questionnaire” “*Cinéaste*,” Vol. V, No. 4, 1973, pp.14 - 20.

“Radical American Film Questionnaire: Part II” “*Cinéaste*,” Vol. VI, No. 1, 1973, pp. 14 – 21.

WEEK TWO – WAR

OCT 5 the British and *Listen to Britain*, Humphrey Jennings
OCT 7

SCREENINGS:

Berkeley in the Sixties, Mark Kitchell, 1990, 118 min. California Newsreel
Columbia Revolt Part 1, Newsreel, 1969, 25 min.

READINGS:

“Documentary Modes of Representation,” *Representing Reality*, Bill Nichols, Indiana University Press, 1991, pp. 32 – 75.

“Towards A Third Cinema,” Fernando Solanas and Octavio Gettino, *Movies and Methods*, edited by Bill Nichols, University of California Press, 1976, pp.44 – 64.

“An Esthetic of Hunger,” Glauber Rocha, *Brazilian Cinema*, edited by Randal Johnson & Robert Stam, Columbia University Press, 1995, pp. 68 –72.

“For an Imperfect Cinema,” Julio García Espinosa, *Film Theory: An Anthology*, edited by Robert Stam & Toby Miller, Blackwell, 2000 pp. 287 – 297.

WEEK THREE – STUDENT POWER AND RESISTANCE

OCT 12
OCT 14 the Soviets, *Enthusiasm* by Dziga Vertov

SCREENINGS:

Society of the Spectacle, Guy Debord, 1973, 90 min.
Hour of the Furnaces, Fernando Solanas, 1968.

ON RESERVE AT FSC:

Seeing Red, Julia Reichert and Jim Klein
Creators of the Shopping World, Harun Farocki, 2001, 73min.

READING:

“The Communist Manifesto,” Karl Marx & Frederick Engels, 1847.

WEEK FOUR – CAPITALISM AND IMPERIALISM

OCT 19 Film and Photo League & *The Power and the Land*, Joris Ivens
OCT 21

SCREENINGS:

Four More Years, TVTV
American Revolution 2, The Film Group

ON RESERVE AT FSC:

Unprecedented: The 2000 Presidential Election, Richard Ray Perez and Joan Sekler, 57 min.

READING:

"Meta-manual," Michael Shamberg & Raindance Corporation, *Guerilla Television*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971, pp.1 – 37.

WEEK FIVE – ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

OCT 26
OCT 28 *Season's Change*, Bill Jersey, *What Trees Do They Plant*, Henry Ushigima

SCREENINGS:

Videogramme of a Revolution, Harun Farocki , 1992, 107 min.,
The Control Room if available
Outfoxed, available from Moveon

READINGS:

"Who Owns the Media," freepress.net, and "Media Monopoly Made Simple: Corporate Ownership & The Problem With U.S. Media," mediareform.net.

Media Carta Adbusters Manifesto

WEEK SIX – THE MEDIA

NOV 2 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, NO CLASS
NOV 4

SCREENINGS:

Red Squad, Steve Fishler and Howard Blatt, Pacific Street Films, 1972
The Murder of Fred Hampton, The Film Group,

ON RESERVE AT FSC:

Attica, Cinda Firestone
The End of the Nightstick, The Community TV Network

READINGS:

"Political Memesis," Jane Gaines, *Collecting Visible Evidence*, Vol.6, University of Minnesota Press, 1999, pp. 84 – 102

“How Have Documentaries Addressed Social and Political Issues?” Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, Indiana University Press, 2001, pp. 139 – 167.

“Finally Got the News; The Making of a Radical Film” Dan Georgakas, “Cinéaste,” Vol V, No 4, 1973, pp.2 – 6.

WEEK SEVEN – POLICE, MILITARY AND STATE POWER

NOV 9 *The Eternal Jew*, Fritz Hippler
NOV 11

SCREENINGS:

Finally Got the News, Stewart Bird, Rene Lichtman, and Peter Gessner with the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, 55 min., First Run/Icarus
Clockwork, Eric Breitbart, 25 min, 1982.
Taylor Chain 1 and 2, Kartemquin Films, 60 min

ON RESERVE AT FSC

Harlan County U.S.A., Cabin Creek Films
Native Land, Frontier Films, Paul Strand, 1942
The Killing Floor, Elsa Rasback, 90 min.
Salt of the Earth
Borinage, Joris Ivens

READINGS:

“Narration, Invention, & History: A Documentary Dilemma,” Jeffrey Youdelman, “Cinéaste,” Vol XII, No 2, 1982, pp. 8 - 15.

“Malpractice in the Radical American Documentary,” Dan Georgakas, “Cinéaste,” Vol XVI, Nos 1 - 2, 1987-88, pp. 46 – 49.

WEEK EIGHT – CLASS, LABOR AND WORK

NOV 16
NOV 18 *What's Happening at Local 70*, Judy Hoffman or Jerry Blumenthal

SCREENINGS:

The Chicago Maternity Center Story, Kartemquin Films, 60 min.
Union Maids, Julia Reichert, Jim Klein and Miles Mogulescu, 48 min.
Tongues Untied, Marlon Riggs,

ON RESERVE AT FSC:

Daughter Rite, Michelle Citron
The Times of Rosie the Riveter
Before Stonewall
Ethnic Notions
Trick Bag

The Life and Times of Harvey Milk

READING:

“Rethinking Women’s Cinema: Aesthetics and Feminist Theory,” Teresa de Lauretis, *Film Theory: An Anthology*, edited by Robert Stam & Toby Miller,, Blackwell, 2000, pp. 317 – 336.

WEEK NINE – RACE AND GENDER

NOV 23 Michelle Citron presentation
NOV 25 THANKSGIVING, NO CLASS

SCREENINGS:

Voices of Cabrini, Ronit Bezael, 30 min.
Territories, Isaac Julien
Farmingville
Patriot Acts, available from Bulletproof Films in Chicago.

ON RESERVE AT FSC:

Las Hurdes
Housing Problems, Anstley

WEEK TEN- IMMIGRATION AND LIVING CONDITIONS

NOVEMBER 30
DEC 2, UNDERGRAD READING

SCREENING:

ICE, Robert Kramer, 1969, 135 min.