Syllabus

Ethics and Esthetics - Documentary Cinema and Hu - 50426

Last update 26-10-2014

HU Credits: 4

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: Communication & Journalism

Academic year: 2

Semester: Yearly

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Prof Raya Morag

Coordinator Email: raya.morag@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Monday, 12:15-13:15

Teaching Staff:
Prof Raya Morag
Course/Module description:
The course discusses central issues in documentary film theory, with an emphasis on the social documentary film. The discussion will be based on an analysis of prominent films of contemporary narrative and documentary cinema.

Course/Module aims:
Familiarity with cinema that deals with human rights in Israel and worldwide as well as with prominent theoretical paradigms of documentary film theory.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:
At the end of this course, students will be capable of independently analyzing documentary films through discussion of major ethical issues with regard to both human rights and theoretical models.

Attendance requirements(%):
100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Analysis of films and discussion of key research papers.

Course/Module Content:
1. 28.10.14 Introduction
2. 4.11.14 Human rights - between the narrative and the documentary cinema: Little Soldier - Annette K. Olesen (Denmark, 2008)
3. 11.11.14 Continued [Reading - item no. 2]
4. 18.11.14 Case Study A - War against terror? Standard Operating Procedure - Errol Morris (USA, 2008)
5. 25.11.14 Continued [Reading - item no. 9]
6. 2.12.14 Continued [Home reading and class discussion - item no. 5]
7. 9.12.14 Continued [Home reading and class discussion - item no. 6]
8. 16.12.14 Continued [Home reading and class discussion - item no. 7]
9. 23.12.14 Film screening and preparing to a meeting with a director (TBA)
10. 30.12.14 A meeting with a director
11. 6.1.15 Case Study B - Representations of human rights violation in Israeli and Palestinian cinema during the Intifada.
Or

12. 13.1.15 Continued [Home reading and class discussion [item no. 3, 10-11; or 12-13] until the end of the discussion of a case study]

13. 20.1.15 Continued. Students' presentations

14. 27.1.15 Continued. Students' presentations

15. 3.3.15 Continued.

16. 10.3.15 Continued.

17. 17.3.15 Continued.

18. 14.4.15 Continued.

19. 21.4.15 Continued. [Reading [item no. 14]

20. 28.4.15 Case Study C - The Act of Killing - Joshua Oppenheimer & anonymous directors (Denmark/Norway/UK, 2013)

21. 5.5.15 Continued [Home reading and class discussion [item no. 15]

22. 12.5.15 Continued [Home reading and class discussion [item no. 16]

23. 19.5.15 Continued [Home reading and class discussion [item no. 17]

24. 26.5.15 Continued [Home reading and class discussion [item no. 18]

25. 2.6.15 Continued [Home reading and class discussion [item no. 19]

26. 9.6.15 Continued

27. 16.6.15 Continued

28. 23.6.15 Summary

Required Reading:

Introduction:


Case Study A - Standard Operating Procedure - Errol Morris (USA, 2008)

Standard Operating Procedure, conference report, Jump Cut No. 52, summer 2010


5. Nichols, Bill. Feelings of revulsion and the limits of academic discourse


7. Williams, Linda. “Cluster fuck”: the forcible frame in Errol Morris’s Standard Operating Procedure
8. Leimbacher, Irina. Response to papers and comments on Standard Operating Procedure

http://opinionatorblogs.nytimes.com/2008/05/19/the-most-curious-thing/

Case Study B ‒ Representations of human rights violation in Israeli and Palestinian cinema during the Intifada.
Option 1:
Option 2:

Case Study C ‒ The Act of Killing - Joshua Oppenheimer & anonymous directors (Denmark/Norway/UK, 2013)

Additional Reading Material:
Course/Module evaluation:
End of year written/oral examination 0 %
Presentation 0 %
Participation in Tutorials 0 %
Project work 80 %
Assignments 0 %
Reports 20 %
Research project 0 %
Quizzes 0 %
Other 0 %

Additional information:
Course Requirements:
1. Active participation. Required reading of one journal article for each class meeting.
2. Required viewing of 4 films:
 Or
3. Submission of papers: (20% of final grade)
Topic of paper: representations of human rights violations in the Israeli and Palestinian cinema during the Intifada.
Length of report: Up to three pages (12 point font, double spaced). The questions are to be answered point by point and not as an essay.
Choose two films and two scenes, a scene from each film out of the required viewing list. At least one of the films is to be documentary.
1. Present a claim based on a comparison of the two scenes. 2. Describe the scenes briefly (two lines for each scene). 3. Analyze the scenes based on two cinematic strategies (one major strategy from each scene). Use two bibliographic entries from the list to support your argument: one from the items 2-3; and the second from the items 10-11 (option 1) or 12-13 (option 2) from the syllabus. 4. Explain the contribution of each of the scenes to the discussion of the claim. 5. Explain briefly what does each of the scenes contribute to the overall meaning of the film.
Submission deadline: Before 10:30 a.m. on 6.1.15. The paper should be turned in before the beginning of the class. No submissions will be accepted after the deadline.
 Students who chose to write a seminar paper will be required to present them in front of the class after corrections have been made.
4. Submission of final paper (80% of the final grade): Analysis of a documentary film (not discussed in the class) dealing with human rights violation. The film is to be chosen out of the Sight & Sound Critics’ 50 Greatest Documentaries of All Time.
2014 list: http://www.bfi.org.uk/sight-sound-magazine/greatest-docs (please ask me for approval of the films). The paper must include a comparison between the chosen film and one of the films discussed in the class. Bibliographic sources at least 5 items: 2-3 items from the syllabus and 2-3 items relevant to the chosen film. Film Reviews are not to be used. Length of the paper up to 10 pages. Deadline for submission: Four weeks after the last class meeting: before 13:00 on 27.7.15, to the Communication Department secretary. The submission must be recorded in the office. Detailed instructions will follow.

5. Submission of seminar paper. This submission is additional to the final paper. Analysis of a documentary film (not discussed in the class) dealing with human rights violation out of the Sight & Sound Critics’ 50 Greatest Documentaries of All Time 2014 list: http://www.bfi.org.uk/sight-sound-magazine/greatest-docs (please ask me for approval of the films). The paper must include a comparison between the chosen film and one of the films discussed in the class. Bibliographic sources at least 10 items: 5 items from the syllabus and 5 items relevant to the chosen film. Film Reviews are not to be used. Length of the paper up to 20 pages. Deadline for submission: according to seminar paper submission rules, before 13:00, to the Communication Department secretary. The submission must be recorded in the office. Detailed instructions will follow.