

CANG 9162 & CANG 9262

B2_Sight and Sound: Documentary in Film & Radio

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Level: B2

Targeted Skills: listening comprehension, oral production, script writing, critical investigation.

Overview

Although documentaries are a great way of exploring other cultures and other lives, they are not mere windows showing us how things are; they are highly constructed art forms that invent and draw from diverse traditions of storytelling. In this module we will be looking at numerous documentary works as source material offering insights into different aspects of the English-speaking world (in particular the USA), as well as examining the methods they use to tell and shape their stories. In addition to the more familiar world of filmed documentaries, the examples presented will also include narrative documentaries made for radio. After studying a range of works, students will then be challenged to create their own short documentary podcasts using simple-to-use recording software.

Objectives

This module aims at developing both a critical and creative response to the documentary form, while continuing to work on language acquisition and practice.

By exploring in context a range of existing works for film and radio, students will deepen their understanding of English-speaking cultures, particularly North-American, while also developing a better appreciation of the methods used by documentary makers and the ethical and political questions these raise. It will also offer excellent opportunities to improve listening skills and build more specific vocabulary on a range of contemporary topics.

This growing body of knowledge will then help students realise the creative component of the module, namely recording, in small groups, a documentary podcast. This part will involve doing research, making editorial choices, conducting interviews or finding testimonies, scripting the programme, recording and editing... all in English of course! This will help students work on their spoken English skills, especially pronunciation and delivery of their finished scripts.

Grading

This is a project-based course. There will be two principle assignments:

- ◆ A critical study of one documentary work 30%
- ◆ A podcast, in small groups, that will be played to the class 50%

Investment in the course – doing all pre-class work as well as participating actively in class discussions and exercises – will also count towards the final grade. 20%