

English 110c Assignment #4: Documentary Film Project

Weight: 40% of final grade

Format : The final film project should be between 5-10 minutes in length and should be submitted to me as a Quicktime movie saved to a recordable DVD-R. With the film, you should submit a copy of your annotated research bibliography and all of the signed permissions for anyone who agreed to be filmed as part of your project. The name of everyone in your group should be written on the disc, as well as my name and the course number.

Description : One of the misconceptions about writing academic research papers is that they deal with subjects that have little or no consequence to our everyday lives. This assignment is asking you to think about the research process a little differently. For this project, you should work in groups to think about an issue or trend related to our discussions of identity and difference that you feel has some larger relevance to our culture or society (you will be working on researching the context of this issue and its potential implications in Assignment #3. While trying to think about a topic, consider our discussion of *kairos* or timeliness. What issues seem to be of importance right now in our society and why? After you have thought about a general topic, you should think about how you could localize and document that issue within the context of your own city, community, or campus life. For instance, if you were interested in researching how certain social norms and ideologies are maintained within society, you might want to look at fraternity/sorority practices of initiation and belonging. If you were interested in exploring the “beauty myth” and its effect on women, you might focus on addressing the anxieties that young women face within your own dorms. Whatever you choose to analyze, you will then film and edit a 5-10 minute documentary creating a visual argument that considers multiple perspectives in order to further a claim (or thesis). In creating this film, you should be aware of the rhetorical strategies that you are employing in order to achieve a purpose, and be able to discuss them in a short (2-3 pages) reflection paper.

Word to the Wise:

- When choosing primary sources, have a clear design in mind.
- Imperative for this assignment will be to address the “So What?” question—what does this reveal about contemporary society, and also the “Why Now?” question—what cultural conditions exist that allow this representational trend to occur?
- Think in terms of the themes (identity and difference) and critical frames that we covered in the class.
- Work with a variety of materials (audio, video, still images) in order to be creative and remain visually interesting. Think about how you frame your shots.

Criteria for Evaluation:

A strong documentary will accomplish the following...

- Demonstrates the group's complex questioning of a primary source or representational trend as a result of engaging with both the methods of analysis offered in the course and those found through research.
- Moves beyond simple agreement/disagreement
- Demonstrates facility with rhetorical analysis and application of key rhetorical concepts and methods in the course.
- Clearly introduces the themes and issues, and indicate where the analysis is headed
- Develops and evolves a specific thesis
- Uses specific concrete examples and visual illustrations from primary sources to support analytical claims
- Creates a visually interesting and varied piece that uses a variety of shots and audio to further its visual argument