

June 26- July 28, 2023 (5 weeks)

Mostly Asynchronous/ All Online /Synchronous Discussion Time: (1 hr, Wednesdays 10-11am PST)

Instructor: Amy Reid (she/they)

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Summary of Course: This is a senior seminar that addresses long-standing ethical dilemmas including filmmaker/participant relationships, ethical ethnographic filmmaking, and conversations regarding the role of social media and new media. This course covers issues such as allyship, privilege, and insider/outsider responsibilities for filmmakers working with topics such as class, the environment, gender, feminism, race and sexuality.

Learning Goals for the Course:

- **Identify** ethical concerns in documentary filmmaking such as questions of allyship, privilege & power, insider/outsider responsibilities for filmmakers.
- **Develop reflexive thinking** about our position as documentary filmmakers within the context of race, gender, class, ability, etc. *(see note about reflexive thinking on page 7)*
- **Critically consider** the ethical impacts documentary films have in our world, from cultural perceptions to public policies in the United States and globally.
- **Be able to summarize** the historical trajectory of ethics and documentary from the early 20th century examples to contemporary conversations about ethics and the documentary form.
- **Feel comfortable to engage** in “messy” conversations in both your writing and peer to peer dialog.
- **Develop tools** to engage with these above points through writing and close readings of both texts and films.



A bit about me as a filmmaker and person: I am a filmmaker and 4th year PhD Candidate in the Film and Digital Media Department at UCSC. I originally hail from the east coast (Born in CT, grew up in South FL, high school in Baltimore, and undergrad and many years in NYC). I have been living in California since 2014 and went to UCSD for my MFA.

My main interest as a filmmaker is representing women-identifying people, and their relationships to work, US history, and personal identity. I have made a feature-length experimental documentary called [Long Haulers](#) (2020) about female truckers and am currently working on another feature experimental documentary film about women, quilting, and US 19th century history called [Grandmother's Garden](#). If you're curious about these projects, I am happy to share more about these projects during office hours or during our discussion hour. I spend years working with the participants in my films, building relationships of trust and collaboration. These projects are also partially filmed on 16mm and video. My written dissertation work explores early feminist documentary film practices in the 1970s in the US and Latin America.

When I am not making films, or being a PhD candidate, I enjoy jumping in the ocean and going for epic adventures with my dog Jolene, and cooking elaborate meals (my dad is a chef, so I have a real love of food because of that!)

Some Things to Know About Me as an Instructor: I care deeply about teaching and filmmaking and want to create an atmosphere where we all feel comfortable to question, explore, and learn about the complicated topics around ethics and documentary film practices. Please see our ["Proposed Collective Agreements"](#) for a more detailed breakdown of the dynamics I am hoping we can create together this summer.

As I try to have healthy boundaries in my work and personal life, **I follow a 9am-5pm, M-F** schedule. This means I won't typically respond to emails before or after that point, and also may take 12-24 hours before responding to an email. I also do not correspond over the weekends.

Office Hours: By [appointment](#)

(I will also stick around for 30 minutes after our discussion time. Please note, for the required Office Hour you still must make an appointment)



A note about emails and notifications for this course: Summer courses move quickly, and I may need to communicate with you on short-notice. **Please check your email and/or canvas page regularly.** Here is a [link](#) for video instructions on how to edit your canvas notification settings to be of most use to you.

What are Office Hours?: Though you may think office hours are only for when you might need critical support, this time is really designated to support your overall needs as a student both for this course and at large. Office hours can be a space to talk through some of the complex questions you have about the films we are watching, a time to address an assignment, or a time to talk about post-college questions about the field of Film & Digital Media (both in and out of academia), or even film projects you're working on. It's best to use the link below if you want to make a zoom appointment with me if you may not be able to make it to my open office hour time. **One office hour meeting is required and built into the syllabus of this course.**

Link to make an appointment: <https://calendly.com/amcreid/office-hours>

Late Work Policy & General Tips to Succeed in this Course: I know the summer session can mean you are taking other courses, doing internships, or maybe working or caring for children and loved ones. School should never come before prioritizing your own physical and mental health. If things come up for you, please let me know. Together we'll find ways to meet your needs and the course's learning outcomes. Also, if you are foreseeing not being able to follow the deadlines for assignments please talk to me before the date something is due. As this is the summer session, there is not much wiggle room for deadlines, and turning in work late will limit the amount of feedback I am able to offer. **Unless you reach out to me and we decide on a course of action together, assignments submitted over 1 day late will receive an "incomplete"**.

Accommodations & DRC: My goal is to create an inclusive classroom environment that facilitates your learning, with respect to class structure, activities, and flexibility regarding course policies. To create such inclusion, I would like to work with you to understand your learning needs and how I might serve you best. Please know that I am here to discuss any

concerns or ideas you have about your learning in my course during office hours, via email, or through your coursework.

I also encourage any student with particular needs or anyone seeking disability accommodations to contact the Disability Resource Center: 831-459-2089; or drc@ucsc.edu; <http://drc.ucsc.edu>

Participation & Attendance: Participation can take on a lot of forms for this class including reflections, peer feedback, and group discussions during our synchronous meeting time. In my experience both as a student and instructor, *learning occurs when we are able to engage openly and collectively talk through questions and observations we are making of the course material.* We also don't learn as much if the same people share in discussion, so I encourage you to step outside of your comfort zone as this space is intended to create questions and not necessarily arrive at "answers."

Academic Integrity: All members of the UCSC community have an explicit responsibility to foster an environment of trust, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility. All members of the university community are expected to present work that is original and self-generated. In the event a student is found in violation of the UCSC Academic Integrity policy, he or she may face both academic sanctions imposed either by the Provost of his or her college or by the Academic Tribunal convened to hear the case. Violations of Academic Integrity can result in expulsion from the university and a permanent notation on a student's transcript. [More on academic integrity.](#)

Important Dates

- **Add:** June 29
- **Drop:** July 3 (tuition reversed)
- **Holidays:** July 4th (observed)
- **Withdraw:** July 16th (no tuition reversal)
- **All Work Due:** Friday, July 29 (11:59pm)
- **Grades Posted:** August 3

Assignments (See Canvas for more details about Due Dates, Descriptions and Specs)

- **Weekly Ethical Reflections** (5 total) (10% of total grade)
- **Participation*** (25% of total grade) (12% weekly attendance/ 13 % see asterisks.)
- **Recorded Video Cafe Chat & Post Cafe Writing Reflection** (15% of total grade)
- **Hypothetical Film Proposal** (40% of total grade)
- **Required Office Hour Visit** and Discussion with Amy (20 minutes) (5%)

Grades: I'm going to be using "spec grading" in which **each assignment is going to be graded complete/incomplete/missing based off a set of specifications ("specs") provided** for each assignment. These specifications will be outlined in Canvas on the Assignment page. Please note that if you don't follow the specifications, you will get an incomplete which is 50% for the assignment. This way you will be rewarded for work and effort, rather than scored subjectively. If an assignment meets all of the specifications it will receive a "complete" and you'll get a 100% on it; if an assignment is missing specifications outlined it will receive an "incomplete", you'll get a 50% on it; if an assignment is "missing", you'll get a 0%. **Unless you reach out to me and we decide on a course of action together, assignments submitted over 1 day late will receive an "incomplete".**

At the end of the quarter, final grades will be determined by these scores:

95-100%: A+ 90-95%: A 5-90%: B+ 80-85%: B 75-80%: C+ 70-75%: C
65-70%: D+ 60-65%: D 0-60%: F

Time Management: [The UCSC Educational Opportunity Programs](#) recommends 3 hours of studying per a week, per unit. That means for a 5 credit course, that's 15 hours a week. Summer courses *move twice as quickly* (i.e. 30 hours a week). Instead of 30 hours a week, I recommend a study schedule of 15 hours a week. If you find you are taking longer, email me and we can work together to find a solution. This is a rough approximation of the various components for the course and a time breakdown:

- **Watching Films:** 4 hours/ week (including writing notes)
- **Reading Texts:** 3.5 hours/ week
- **Group Discussion Time:** 1.5 hours/ week
- **Weekly Ethical Reflections on texts and films:** 1 hour/ week
- **Weekly Assignments** (including giving comments on peer's work): 5 hours/ week

* **A Note About Participating in this Course:** Since this course is primarily asynchronous and online, 12% goes to the weekly meetings/ make up work for those meetings. The other 13% of participation takes on the form of **commenting on** your classmates Weekly Reflections, the Proposed Collective Agreements, **and** the Self-Reflexive Guidelines Sheet, **Watching** a Cafe Chat of your classmates (1), **providing constructive feedback** on Hypothetical Film Proposal Assignment amongst other things.

Slug Support Program: College can be a challenging time for students and during times of stress, it is not always easy to find the help you need. [Slug Support](#) can give help with everything from basic needs (housing, food, or financial insecurity) to getting the technology you need during remote instruction. To get started with SLUG Support, contact the Dean of Students Office at 831-459-4446 or you can send an email at deanofstudents@ucsc.edu.

Counseling and Psychological Services: Many students at UCSC face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation. Visit the [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) for more information.

Resource Centers: UCSC has several identity-based resource centers: <https://resourcecenters.ucsc.edu/>. These include the African American Resource and Cultural Center, the American Indian Resource Center, the Asian American/Pacific Islander Resource Center, the Chicanx Latinx Resource Center, the Lionel Cantú Queer Center, and the Women's Center.

Title IX and CARE are available to all of you for support if you experience discrimination in this class. I encourage students experiencing any form of harassment in the context of this course to come either directly to the instructor or to take other appropriate action. Students should abide by the agreed upon Collective Guidelines, which you all will have a chance to edit and add to the first day of class.

What do we mean when we talk about Ethics?

In this course, when I am talking about ethics I mean a set of values that filmmakers and scholars have debated and practiced (or not) in the making of documentary films. This set of values, or you might say principles, have changed and expanded/contracted throughout the decades of filmmaking. As we move through the course together, our own understanding of ethics (I hope) will become more robust and clearer.

What do we mean when we are talking about documentaries?

“Creating reality is an act of power.” - Documentary Accountability Working Group

Filmmaker and scholar Trinh T. Minh-ha has said that there are no documentaries. I think what she means when she says a comment like this, and it is also reflected in a lot of the readings we will be looking at, is that “reality” is subjective. What I film and capture through my own camera is subjective to my experience, and how I understand “reality” even without my camera is informed and shaped by my own race, gender, sexuality, class, ability, and so forth. This is also true for all of the filmmakers we will be studying and for your own role as a filmmaker and burgeoning film scholar.

What is self-reflexive thinking?

The Documentary Accountability Working Group has said that when making a film they ask themselves, “What do I have to know or think about in order to mitigate any harm to the greatest extent possible?”

When I say reflexive-thinking, what I mean is being aware and reflecting on the different modes that filmmakers and writers are or are not addressing ethical dilemmas in their works. This means you are being an active viewer and thinker rather than a passive recipient of information. This might mean, you might be asking yourself: Is the filmmaker considering their identity (race, gender, sexuality, and so forth) in relation to the participant(s) in their films? Furthermore, what insights are you gaining and reflecting on in regards to the type of filmmaker/ film scholar you are aspiring to be?

Since this course is a Summer course, it moves twice as fast. With that in mind, I have a suggestion of how you might want to move through the material in this weekly calendar breakdown.

Please note that due dates for Weekly Reflections and Commenting on Your Peers Reflections are due the Thursday and Friday of each week.

Due dates for larger assignments will be posted on Canvas.

SUN (previous Sunday to the Week)	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
Watch Film 1/ Take Notes for Reflection	Watch Film 2 & 3/ Take Notes for Reflection	Reading 2 / Take Notes for Reflection	Proposed Discussion Meeting Time	Submit Weekly Reflection	Submit Comments on Peer's Reflection	
Work on Assignment	Reading 1/ Take Notes for Reflection	Complete / Extra Work Assignments	Reading 3/ Take Notes for Reflection	Work on Assignment	Work on Assignment	

Week 1/ Intro to Documentary & Ethics

To Watch 🎥👁️:

- 1) [Cameraperson](#) Kirsten Johnson (2016) / TRT: 108 min
- 2) [Titicut Follies](#) Frederick Wiseman (1967) / TRT: 84 min (UCSC Course Reserves)

To Read 📖👁️

- 1) ***From Reflection to Release: Framework for Values, Ethics, and Accountability in Nonfiction Filmmaking***/ Documentary Accountability Working Group (45 pages)
(this text is not 45 pages of strictly texts, but includes multiple pages of charts, images, and graphics. I see this as being a good resource for your own "Ethics Self-Reflexive Checklist")
- 2) ["I am Camera"](#) / Michael Koresky (2016) (4 pages, Online)

To Do & Think About 💬👉 (Exact Due Dates in Canvas)

- 1) Reflection via Padlet Post on both films and From Reflection to Release
- 2) Comment on 2 classmate's Padlet Post
- 3) Create an Ethics Self-Reflexive Guidelines for watching films for the course
- 4) Sign-up for one required Office Hour meeting
- 5) Make a comment/suggestion/ or pose a question about ["Proposed Collective Agreements"](#)
- 6) Take Syllabus Survey

Week 2/ Visibility & Invisibility

To Watch 🎥👁️:

- 1) ~~[Tijuana Projection](#) / ['Proyección en Tijuana](#), Krzysztof Wodiczko (2001) / TRT: 6 min~~
- 2) [Maquilapolis](#), Vicky Funari and Sergio De La Torre (2006) / TRT: 68 min
- 3) ~~[Vampires of Poverty](#) (*La Agarrando Pueblo*), Luis Ospina and Carlos Mayolo (1977) / TRT: 28 min~~

To Read 📖👁️:

- 1) ~~“Why are Ethical Issues Central to Documentary Filmmaking?” / Bill Nichols (2017) pp. 29-47 (19 pages)~~
- 2) [“Documenting the Invisible: ‘The Undocumented Everyday’ Challenges the Idea of the Other”](#) / Toni Bell (2019) IDA Website (This is Optional and Helpful for the Schreiber text)
- 3) “Refusing Disposability: Representational Strategies in Maquilapolis: City of Factories” in *The Undocumented Everyday: Migrant Lives and the Politics of Visibility* / Rebecca M. Schreiber (2019) pp. 159-192 (33 pages)
- 4) ~~“Pornomiseria: Or How Not to Make a Documentary” / Michele Faguet (2009) pp. 5-15 (Read pages 12-15 at the very least.)~~

To Do & Think About 💬✍️ (Exact Due Dates in Canvas)

- 1) **Reflection via** Writing Reflection on 1 film **and** 1 reading (250 words each)
- 2) **Recorded Cafe Chat** with classmate (Amy assigned partners)
- 3) **Review & Comment** on your Cafe Partner’s **Ethics Self-Reflexive Guidelines** (comment on document itself in Canvas)
- 4) **Read & Comment** on **2** classmate’s Reflections (not your Cafe Chat Partner) from Week 1
- 5) **Read & Comment** on **2** classmate’s comments/suggestions/ or questions from the [“Proposed Collective Agreements”](#)

Week 3 / Documentary, Colonialism & Othering

To Watch 🎬👁️:

- 1) [Our Trip to Africa](#) Peter Kubelka (1966) / TRT: 12 min
- 2) [Reassemblage](#) Trinh T. Minh-ha (1982) / TRT: 40 min
- 3) [Nanook of the North](#) Robert Flaherty (1922) / TRT: 78 min
- 4) *Les Maitres Fous* Jean Rouch (1955) / TRT: 28 min

To Read 📖👁️:

- 1) “Unraveling the Ethnographic Encounter: Institutionalization and Scientific Tourism in the “Oeuvre” of Jean Rouch” / Peter J. Bloom (2013) pp. 79-83 and 90-94 (8 pages out of 15 pages)
- 2) [“Navigating the River: The Hidden Colonialism of Documentary”](#) / Edwin Martinez (2016) IDA Website
- 3) “The Camera and Man” Jean Rouch (1974) pp. 37-44 (8 pages)

- 4) “Of Mimicry and White Man: A Psychoanalysis of Jean Rouch’s *Les Maîtres Fous*” Kien Ket Lim (2002) **only** pp. 40-44, ending before “Village Disputes” (4 pages)

To Do & Think About (Exact Due Dates in Canvas)

- 1) **Reflection** on 1 film **and** 1 reading via Video Posts (3 minutes)
- 2) **Read & Comment** on 2 classmate’s Reflections from Week 2
- 3) **Write** Post Cafe Writing Reflection (300 words)
- 4) **Review** Hypothetical Film Proposal
- 5) **Mind Map** Hypothetical Film Proposal **with** internal dates for getting this done for yourself.
- 6) **Look at** 1-3 Documentary Grant Organizations for Hypothetical Film Proposal

Week 4/ Documentary Interventions & Transactional Dynamics

To Watch :

- 1) **Ronnie**, Curt McDowell (1972) / TRT: 7 min
- 2) [The Good Woman of Bangkok](#), Dennis O’Rourke (1991) / TRT: 82 min
- 3) [The Panhandler Project](#), Barbara DeGenevieve (2012) / TRT: 28 min

To Read :

- 1) [“Lower Your Pants! An Introduction to Curt McDowell”](#) / Daniel & Clara (2013) Online Article (**Read:** Beginning/ “The Frisco Fornicator” / “Confessions (1971), Loads (1976), Ronnie (1972)
- 2) “The Ethics of intervention: Dennis O’Rourke’s The Good Woman of Bangkok” / Linda Williams (in *Collecting Visible Evidence*) pp. 176-189 (13 pages)
- 3) [“Twenty Interrogations About Barbara DeGenevieve’s Panhandler Project”](#) / Sina Hagani (2011) Online Blog Post
- 4) [“Money Changes Everything--or Does It?: Considering Whether Documentaries Should Pay for Play”](#) / Lisa Leeman (2004) IDA Website

To Do & Think About (Exact Due Dates in Canvas)

- 1) **Reflection** on 1 film and 1 reading in “5 Images and 5 Captions”
- 2) **Read & Comment** on 2 classmate’s Reflections from Week 3
- 3) **Draft** Film Treatment **and** Ethics Statement from Hypothetical Film Proposal
- 4) **Peer Review** Cafe Partner’s Film Treatment and Ethics Statement (guide provided)

Week 5 / Trauma, Violence, and Memory

To Watch 🎬👁️:

- 1) [*The Act of Killing*](#), Joshua Oppenheimer, (2012) / TRT: 122 min
- 2) [*The Look of Silence*](#), Joshua Oppenheimer, (2014) / TRT: 99 min

To Read 📖👁️:

- 1) ["The Art of Truth: How Much Truth Comes from the Lie that Tells the Truth?."](#) Sara Vizcarrondo (2013) IDA Website
- 2) "It's All About Finding the Right Excuse" in Joshua Oppenheimer's *The Act of Killing*, Warren Crichlow (2013) pp. 37-43 (7 pages)

To Do & Think About 💭✍️ **(Exact Due Dates in Canvas)**

- 1) **Reflection via** Writing Reflection on BOTH films **and** 1 reading (250 words each)
- 2) **Read & Comment** on **2** classmate's Reflections from Week 4
- 3) **Complete** Hypothetical Film Proposal
- 4) **Give feedback** on one classmate's Hypothetical Film Proposal

Weekly Reflections & Reading and Commenting your Peer's Reflections Weeks 1-5

Your Own Reflections: 10% of Grade

Commenting on Others Reflections: Part of Participation (20% of Grade)

Due every Thursday and Friday of each Week

(Exact Due Dates for each component can be found in Canvas)

As this course is primarily asynchronous, you are required to contribute to weekly reflections on the course readings and films we are dealing with each week. These reflections will take on multiple formats, from more straightforward written responses to Padlet and video reflections (the video reflection please note is different from the "Cafe Chat" assignment.) Please note you are required to respond to **both** a film and a reading each week, in some cases it might be specific films or texts, so **please look at the assignment details in Canvas.**

Additionally to your own weekly responses, you are asked to engage with your peer's ideas via comments back to other people's reflections. You are asked to respond to 2 peer's each week, providing **thoughtful responses and questions back to your peers.** Your comments can reflect multiple angles (perhaps contrasting to your own experience of the film/text) or it might be more of an echoing and deepening of a point your peer brought up in their reflection. Either way, these chats are intended for you to have long-distance and delayed conversations with each other. I encourage you to both repeat threads with the same classmates and also comment on different people each week in order to see the breadth of perspectives we each have.

The primary form of feedback you'll receive on these reflections will be from each other and not from me. Though I may comment on some points, these reflections will not be commented on in the same way your other assignments will be for the course.

Recorded Video Cafe Chat & Post Cafe Writing Reflection (15% of Grade)
Due Week 2

(Exact Due Dates for each component can be found in Canvas)

Video Component

You and your classmate are meeting in a “virtual cafe” (aka Zoom) to have a 5-7 minute conversation about the ethical considerations (or not) of one of the films *in relation* to one of the readings from either week 1 or 2.

Prior to meeting you must:

- **Decide** with your partner on **one** film and **one** text you'll talk about.
- **Each person** has come with a **list of questions** you'd like to ask one another.
- **Each person** chooses **one scene** and **one section/quote/ paragraph** from the text you've chosen to touch on (this could be in relation to your questions.)
- Consider your own position on the film before you have your “Cafe Chat.”

Then record this conversation.

Post Cafe Writing Reflection (individually done, 300 words)
Due Week 3**After Meeting You are Required to touch on these points:**

- What new insights did you and your partner discuss?
- What things felt confusing in general about the film and text?
- Did the film and text offer ethical solutions, create ethical issues, or did it feel somewhere in between? (expand)
- What new questions came up?

Hypothetical Film Proposal / 40% of Grade

Due Weeks 3, 4, and 5

(Exact Due Dates for each component can be found in Canvas)

You are applying for a film grant with a foundation called “The Society for Ethics and Documentary,” for a \$25,000 grant to help with a feature length documentary you are developing with the intention of being the director. The \$25,000 is strictly assigned to help provide community compensation and help with the facilitation of community-engagement.

This grant is asking for:

- A film treatment (500-700 words and Sketches)
- A Director’s Ethics Statement, (500-700 words)
- Timeline of Completion (1-2 pages) (10%/ Assignment)
- Community Impact and Intended Audience (300 words)
- Community Compensation Narrative (300 words)

* Please note that within each section of this overall assignment there will be smaller components that will be asked for, such as Foundation/Grant Website Examples, a mind map of the overall assignment, etc. These components will be clearly outlined in Canvas once the assignment is posted.

Required Points for your Film Treatment

- Title for your documentary. Give your treatment a film title, even if it’s just a working title for your film.
- Logline. (This is a short sentence summarizing the premise of your film.)
- Plot summary.
- Key characters. Provide a breakdown of key characters, including their arch or how their character develops in the story.

A good resource to look at for your treatment can be found [here](#).

Required Points to Consider for your Director’s Ethics Statement

- How do you define ethics in relation to your practice as a filmmaker?
- What filmmakers/films do you look to for guidance in your projects? (cite at least 2 films)
- How are you navigating questions of ethics in relation to this particular film?
- What texts influence your practice as a filmmaker? (cite at least 1)

Required Points to Consider for your Community Impact and Intended Audience

- Who is your intended audience?
- What ways do you see your film activating community engagement?
- Do you have any additional ways you want your film to be engaged through things such as workshops, reading groups, or public events? Please explain.

Required Points to Consider for your Community Compensation Narrative

- How will you use these funds with the intention of compensating the people in your film? You may want to consider the amount of hours/ weeks you'll be spending, and look towards resources that flesh out an hourly ratio for things such as oral history work.
- Please elaborate how you'd use the funding to create community engagement as well. You don't have to look up specific price points for things like venue rental, etc, but you'll need to have a general idea.