**GC2Y 2000-13 Global Perspectives:**

**The Real World? Documentary in the Netflix Era**

Spring 2021

MW 3:30pm-4:45pm, Kilpatrick Hall 125

4thHour: every other Tues 3:30-5:20pm, Health Sciences 207

Professor:                      Dr. Lauren Pilcher

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Office:                            Arts & Sciences 3-08

Office Hours:               M 11am-1pm, Fri 10am-1pm, & by appointment (in person or Zoom)

Dr. Pilcher's Zoom meeting link: <https://gcsu.zoom.us/j/9409850043>

**Course Description**

This course considers the notion of “reality” in recent documentary films and television in a global context. We will view documentaries produced and exhibited in mainstream and festival circuits; nonfiction films produced for social justice and experimental aims; and docuseries that have become popular via streaming platforms. We will approach these recent films and television from an interdisciplinary perspective by reading scholarship that illuminates their historical, social, aesthetic, theoretical, cultural, national, and technological meanings.

These key questions will guide our discussions:

* How do recent documentaries approach actuality? Has this changed from earlier historical periods?
* Which disciplines and concepts help us to understand how recent documentaries relate to the real world?
* What kinds of techniques and aesthetics are used in recent docs to signify that the image is “real” or at least authentic in its relationship to reality?
* Do social privileges or bias play a role in how reality is depicted in recent documentary films and TV? How is race and ethnicity represented? Local, regional, or national culture? Gender and sexuality? Social class and status?
* How do notions of nation or culture affect documentary representations of reality?
* How does production cost and context affect a documentary’s view of reality?
* How do nonfiction films circulate today? Does where and how they circulate and where and how they are shown affect how they communicate about the world or a particular reality?
* How does our ability to access documentaries via streaming affect how view and consume them?

**Required Texts**

Bill Nichols. *Introduction to Documentary*, 3rd edition. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017. ISBN: 978-0-253-02690-3

Selected texts and online content, available on GeorgiaVIEW

Selected films and TV, available for streaming via online platforms for a small rental or purchase fee.

**Assignments**

*Discussion Posts*(10 x 20 pts = 200 points)

For 10 of the 16 weeks in the semester, students must post AND reply to a peer in our weekly discussion board on GeorgiaVIEW. **Posts are worth 15 pts, and replies are worth 5 pts. Both are due each Wednesday at noon**. Posts should be at least 150 words in length; your goal is to make a meaningful and thought-provoking connection between the week's reading and assigned documentary film(s) by thinking critically. Draw on specific details from the readings and films. Responses should be at least 75 words in length; your goal is to engage with your peer's ideas as you would in an in-person discussion on the topic.

*Documentary Analysis*(3-4 pages) (175 points)

Students will analyze the depiction of "reality" in a documentary film that we have screened in class.

*Documentary Film Comparison*(5-7 pages) (200 points + 50 pts for Draft & Peer Review)

Students will compare and contrast the representation of "reality" in two films that we have screened in class by analyzing their visual content and utilizing research.

*Final Project*(250 points)

Students will choose one of two options for their final assignment for the semester 1) make a short documentary film and write a vision statement that explains its approach to "reality" OR 2) write a review of a recent documentary film or series that consults and responds to other professional reviews of the series or film.

*Participation*(100 points)

Participation will be graded based on a students’ preparation for class, demeanor during class, and attendance record.

**Grades**

Final grades will be evaluated using a 1000-point system. If you receive 830 total points on all assignments, you will receive an 83/B in the class.

*Grading Scale*

A               900-1000

B                800-899

C                 700-799

D                600-699

F                       0-599

**COVID-19 Policies**

\*These policies will be enforced at all times. If a student fails to follow any of the policies, they will be warned once and, on the second occurrence, removed from class.

* MASKS ARE REQUIRED at all times in our classroom and in campus buildings. Masks should be tight-fitting and worn over your mouth and nose.
* Follow ENTER & EXIT signs on the classroom doors any time you enter or exit the classroom. Fill seats farthest from the entrance first and vacate seats closest to the exit first. Be patient—give other students time and social distance.
* MAINTAIN 6 FEET of social distance from others at all times.
* NO FOOD OR DRINKS allowed in the classroom.
* DO NOT MOVE CHAIRS from their socially distanced position. This position is marked on the floor with tape. Do not move or use extra desks that have been turned around or excluded from taped markings.
* DO NOT ATTEND CLASS if you feel sick, if you test positive for COVID-19, or you have contact with someone who tests positive. Get in touch with me via email, and we will determine a plan for missed work.

*Zoom option*

A Zoom option for class will be available to students who are sick, at risk, or in need of a virtual format. To utilize this option, you MUST contact me beforehand to explain your situation and get approval. This option is reserved for students who need to attend virtually, not for those seeking a disengaged alternative to attending in person. Students attending class via Zoom will be held to the same expectation for participation as students who attend in person.

**Course Policies**

*Class Preparation and Participation*

I expect all students to keep up with assigned materials and to participate actively during each class. Cell phones should be silenced and stowed away. Laptops will be used regularly for accessing class materials and completing activities. If using a laptop, I expect you to remain attentive and engaged. Inappropriate use of a laptop or device will affect your Participation grade and may result in dismissal from class.

*Attendance*

Class attendance is important for success in this course. Students should not miss more than 5 classes, and if this occurs, your final grade is in jeopardy. It is your responsibility to keep track of your absences and to communicate with me about them. Absences due to illness, emergencies, and COVID-19 will be excused if you contact me in a timely manner.

*Late Assignments and Extensions*

Late work for major assignments will be penalized by a letter grade for each day that the submission is late. I will consider extensions for an assignment due date if you request one at least 24 hours before the due date. No late work is accepted for discussion posts or peer review.

*Online Discussion Decorum*

Students may post written, audio, or video comments to discussion boards. All written, audio, and video content should be respectful and appropriate for a classroom setting. If using video, be aware of your attire and location.

*Georgia View*

Please use GeorgiaView to view the syllabus, course schedule, assignment sheets, and rubrics. You will also use GeorgiaVIEW to submit ALL written assignments, excluding drafts.

*Preparing and Submitting Written Documents*

The layout and organization of all written assignments should be formatted according to [MLA guidelines.](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_general_format.html) This includes general layout, in-text citations, and a Work(s) Cited page. Please submit a Microsoft Word document or pdf type when turning in written assignments on GeorgiaVIEW. **If I cannot open your file or you submit an incorrect file, you will receive a zero for the assignment.**

*Plagiarism*

It is crucial that you learn to distinguish your own, original work from the ideas of others (authors, online writers, classmates, and friends) in this course and throughout your time at GC and beyond. **ALL instances of plagiarism will result in an automatic zero for the assignment** and will be reported to and handled by the appropriate governing body. GC has an Honor Code and a procedure for handling cases when academic misconduct is alleged. Information about the Honor Code and the misconduct procedure may be found at <http://www.gcsu.edu/studentaffairs/codeofconduct>

Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to:

* Not placing quotation marks around a quoted words or lines from a source
* Not providing parenthetical citations for quotations
* Paraphrasing via changing a few words. This is plagiarism whether you provide a citation or not.
* Not including a Works Cited page
* Cutting and pasting from the Internet or ebooks
* Having your friend, family member, significant other, or any other person write any portion of your paper
* Copying, even a sentence, from your classmate
* Buying a paper from a person, organization, or service, and turning it in as your own effort and/or having your classmate write a paper for you is cheating
* Resubmitting writing that has already been submitted and graded in another class

*Communication with Professor*

If you have major questions about assignments, your work, or your progress in the course, please meet with me during my office hours (in person or over Zoom). If you have quick questions about clarifying a detail or deadline, feel free to email me.

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| **Course Schedule** | | |
| **DATE** | **READING & SCREENING DUE**  *ID = Introduction to Documentary*(3rd edition) | **DISCUSSION, ASSIGNMENT DUE** |
| **Week 1** | | |
| W, 1/20 | Syllabus & Course Introduction |  |
| **Week 2 — Trending in 2020** | | |
| M, 1/25 | ***Read***: [*ID*, "How Can We Define Documentary Film?" (p. 1-28)](https://gcsu.view.usg.edu/d2l/common/dialogs/quickLink/quickLink.d2l?ou=2140115&type=content&rcode=usgq-16739496) |  |
| T, 1/26—**4th hour** | ***Screening together***: [*Dick Johnson is Dead* (2020, dir. Kirsten Johnson)](https://www.netflix.com/title/80234465?source=35)[89 min, US] (Netflix) |  |
| W, 1/27 | ***Skim:***"How Did Documentary Filmmaking Get Started" (p. 89-103) | Post & reply in  Week 2 Discussion  due by noon |
| **Week 3** | | |
| M, 2/1 | ***Read***: *ID*, “Why Are Ethical Issues Central Documentary Filmmaking?" (p. 29-47) |  |
| W, 2/3 | ***Screen***: [*Collective* (2020, dir. Alexander Nanau) [109 min, Romania]](https://www.collectivemovie.com/watch-at-home/)(multiple platforms)  ***Read***: 1) [Manohla Dargis, "'Collective' Review: When Tragedy Consumes a Nation"](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/19/movies/collective-documentary-review.html" \t "_blank)*[The New York Times](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/19/movies/collective-documentary-review.html" \t "_blank)*[, 19 Nov. 2020.](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/19/movies/collective-documentary-review.html" \t "_blank)  2) [Jay Weissberg, "'Collective' Review: Exposé of Romanian Corruption Has Universal Resonance" *Variety*, 6 Sept. 2019.](https://variety.com/2019/film/reviews/collective-review-1203325599/) | Post & reply in Week 3 Discussion due by noon |
| **Week 4 — Unique Individuals** | | |
| M, 2/8 | ***Read***: *ID*, “What Gives Documentaries a Voice of their Own” (p. 48-68) |  |
| T, 2/9—**4th hour** | ***Screening together***: [*Miss Americana*(2020, dir. Lana Wilson)](https://www.netflix.com/title/81028336)[85 min, US] (Netflix) |  |
| W, 2/10 | ***Read***: 1) [Wesley Morris, "'Taylor Swift: Miss Americana' Review: A Star, Surprisingly Alone" *The New York Times*, 30 Jan. 2020.](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/30/movies/taylor-swift-miss-americana-review.html)  2) [Benjamin Lee, "Miss Americana Review - Taylor Swift Doc is Too Stage-Managed to Truly Sing" *The Guardian*, 24 Jan. 2020.](https://www.theguardian.com/film/2020/jan/24/miss-americana-review-taylor-swift-netflix-documentary) | Post & reply in Week 4 Discussion due by noon |
| **Week 5** | | |
| M, 2/15 | ***Read***: *ID*ch 4, "What Makes Documentaries Engaging and Persuasive" (p. 69-88) |  |
| W, 2/17 | ***Screen***: [*For Sama*(2019, dir. Waad Al-Kateab, Edward Watts)](https://video-alexanderstreet-com.us1.proxy.openathens.net/watch/for-sama) [100 min, Syria] (AVON, via GCSU library)  ***Read***: [Hugh Montgomery, "For Sama and the Female Perspective on War" *BBC Culture*, 13 Sept. 2019.](https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20190912-for-sama-and-the-female-perspective-on-war) | Post & reply in Week 5 Discussion due by noon |
| **Week 6** | | |
| M, 2/22 | ***Skim for key concepts***: 1) *ID*ch. 6, "How Can We Differentiate..." (p. 104-131) |  |
| T, 2/23—**4th hour** | ***Screening together***: [*LANCE*pt. 1 and pt. 2 (2020, dir. Marina Zenovich)](https://www.espn.com/espnplus/catalog/d58966fd-bc67-46d8-b5f3-2b0465102489/lance) [202 min US] (ESPN+) |  |
| W, 2/24 | ***Skim for main ideas***: [Travis Vogan, "ESPN Films and the Construction of Prestige in Contemporary Sports Television" *International Journal of Sport Communication*, vol 5 (2012): 137-152.](https://gcsu.view.usg.edu/d2l/common/dialogs/quickLink/quickLink.d2l?ou=2140115&type=content&rcode=usgq-21217642) | Post & reply in Week  6 Discussion due by noon on Thursday |
| **Week 7** | | |
| M, 3/1 | ***Read***: *ID*ch. 7, "How Can We Describe..." (p. 132-158)  (in class) [*Mack Wrestles* (2019, dir. Taylor Hess, Erin Sanger](https://www.espn.com/watch/player/_/id/d90bfa40-6c2b-4243-9315-afe30b94e82d?om-navmethod=espn%3Aglobalsearch%3Aresults)) [25 min, US] (ESPN+) |  |
| W, 3/3 | ***Screen***: [Too Fast to Be a Woman?: The Story of Caster Semenya (2011, dir. Maxx Ginnane)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-UX0LE_tCg) [50 min, South Africa] |  |
|  |  | **Documentary Analysis Paper** |
| **Week 8 — Governments & Politics** | | |
| M, 3/8 | ***NO CLASS*** |  |
| T, 3/9—**4th hour** | ***Screening together***:[*Welcome to Chechnya* (2020, dir. David France)](https://play.hbomax.com/page/urn:hbo:page:GXr8Ocg88_cLCAAEAAARx:type:feature?camp=googleHBOMAX) [107 min, Russia] (HBOmax) |  |
| W, 3/10 | ***Read:***[Joshua Rothkopf, "Deepfake Technology Enters the Documentary World" The New York Times, 1 July 2021.](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/01/movies/deepfakes-documentary-welcome-to-chechnya.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article)  ***Skim for main ideas***: ID, "How Have Documentaries Addressed Social and Political Issues" (p. 159-193) | Post & reply in Week 8 Discussion due by noon |
| **Week 9** | | |
| M, 3/15 | ***Read***: [Michael Renov, "Video Confessions," *Resolutions: Contemporary Video Practices*](https://gcsu.view.usg.edu/d2l/common/dialogs/quickLink/quickLink.d2l?ou=2140115&type=content&rcode=usgq-17353655)(pdf) |  |
| W, 3/17 | ***Screen***: [*One Child Nation*(2019, dir. Nanfu Wang, Lynn Zhang)](https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.78b6c458-debc-6e30-f653-a9b7aca940cf?autoplay=1&ref_=atv_cf_strg_wb) [89 min, China] (Amazon) | Post & reply in Week 9 Discussion due by noon |
| **Week 10** | | |
| M, 3/22 | ***Read***: [Stella Bruzzi, "Introduction," New Documentary: A Critical Introduction" (p. 1-7)](https://gcsu.view.usg.edu/d2l/common/dialogs/quickLink/quickLink.d2l?ou=2140115&type=content&rcode=usgq-21762421) |  |
| T, 3/23—**4th hour** | ***Screening together***: [*Boys State*(2020, dir. Jesse Moss, Amanda McBain)](https://tv.apple.com/us/movie/boys-state/umc.cmc.1aatz9gwjhnpfqqt8noafagq?itscg=MC_20000&itsct=atvp_brand_omd&mttn3pid=a_google_adwords&mttnagencyid=1625&mttncc=US&mttnsiteid=143238&mttnsubad=OUS2019862_1-456719015999-c&mttnsubkw=110363103024_kwd-920630125129_YSMcDPrT_&mttnsubplmnt=) [109 min, US] (AppleTV+) |  |
| W, 3/24 | ***Read***: 1) [Joe Morgenstern, "'Boys State' Review: Politics Alarming and Disarming," *The Wall Street Journal,* Aug. 13, 2020.](https://gcsu.view.usg.edu/d2l/common/dialogs/quickLink/quickLink.d2l?ou=2140115&type=content&rcode=usgq-21768463)  2) [Richard Brody, "'Boys State,' Reviewed: A Frustratingly Hermetic View of Texas Teen Politicos"*The New Yorker*, Aug. 20, 2020.](https://www.newyorker.com/culture/the-front-row/boys-state-reviewed-a-frustratingly-hermetic-view-of-texas-teen-politicos)  3) [Manohla Dargis, "'Boys State Review: Give Me a Teen and I'll Show You a Politician"](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/13/movies/boys-state-review.html" \t "_blank)*[The New York Times](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/13/movies/boys-state-review.html" \t "_blank)*[, Aug. 13, 2020.](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/13/movies/boys-state-review.html" \t "_blank) | 1) Post & reply in Week 10 Discussion due by noon |
| **Week 11 — Capturing Community** | | |
| M, 3/29 | ***Listen***: ["A Murderous Rampage in Georgia," The Daily podcast, *The New York Times* (March 18, 2021)](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/18/podcasts/the-daily/asian-american-hate-crime-atlanta-shooting.html) [28 min]  ***Read***: [sample student comparison paper](https://gcsu.view.usg.edu/d2l/common/dialogs/quickLink/quickLink.d2l?ou=2140115&type=content&rcode=usgq-21833491) |  |
| W, 3/31 | **NO CLASS**  ***Screen*(on your own)**: [*Far East, Deep South* (2020, dir. Larissa Lam)](https://gcsu.kanopy.com/video/far-east-deep-south) [Kanopy] |  |
| TR, 4/1 | **Extra Credit Event @6pm - A Virtual Discussion with the Filmmakers of *Far East, Deep South* (2020).**  Zoom registration link: [**https://tinyurl.com/79nefzja**](https://tinyurl.com/79nefzja) |  |
| F, 4/2 |  | Post & reply in Week 11 Discussion due by 5pm |

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| **Week 12** | | |
| M, 4/5 | ***No Reading***— Peer review of drafts & follow-up discussion of *Far East, Deep South*(2020) | **Draft of Documentary Comparison Paper**(minimum 4 full pages) |
| T, 4/6—**4th hour** | ***Screening together***: [*Hale County This Morning, This Evening*(2018, dir. RaMell Ross) [US]](https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B07FT6WXD6/ref=atv_dl_rdr) [76 min] (Amazon) |  |
| W, 4/7 | ***Read***: 1) [Richard Brody, "The Experimental High Notes of 'Hale County This Morning, This Evening'" *The New Yorker*(Sept 19, 2018)](https://www.newyorker.com/culture/richard-brody/the-experimental-high-notes-of-hale-county-this-morning-this-evening)  2) [Glenn Kenny, "Review" A Multiplicity of Moments in under 80 minutes in 'Hale County'" *The New York Times*(Sept 13, 2018)](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/13/movies/hale-county-this-morning-this-evening-review-ramell-ross.html) | Post & reply in Week 12 Discussion due by noon |
| Sun, 4/11 |  | **Documentary Comparison Paper** |

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| **Week 13** | | |
| M, 4/12 | ***Read***: 1) [Richard Brody, "'Honeyland' Reviewed: A Gripping, Frustrating Documentary About a Beekeeper's Fragile Isolation" *The New Yorker*(Aug 1, 2019)](https://www.newyorker.com/culture/the-front-row/honeyland-reviewed-a-gripping-frustrating-documentary-about-a-beekeepers-fragile-isolation)  2) [David Sims, "'A Rare Nature Documentary that Tells a Deeply Human Story," *The Atlantic*(July 25, 2019)](https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2019/07/honeyland-review/594685/)  ***Screen (in-class)***: [*Birders*(2019, dir. Otilia Portillo Padua)](https://www.netflix.com/title/80244682?source=35) [37 min, Mexico & US] (Netflix) |  |
| W, 4/14 | ***Screen***: *[Honeyland](https://www.hulu.com/watch/3c74b61a-71f5-4ca0-8a65-7bfbcda9ad7b" \t "_blank)*[(2019, dir. Tamara Kotevska, Ljubo Stefanov)](https://www.hulu.com/watch/3c74b61a-71f5-4ca0-8a65-7bfbcda9ad7b" \t "_blank)[87 min, Macedonia] (Hulu) | Post & reply in Week 13 Discussion due by noon |

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| **Week 14 — Humans & Habitats** | | |
| M, 4/19 | ***Screen***: [*My Octopus Teacher* (2020, Pippa Ehrlick and James Reed) [85 min, South Africa] (Netflix)](https://www.netflix.com/title/81045007) |  |
| T, 4/20 | ***Optional screening of tomorrow's film (in person as usual & Zoom)*** |  |
| W, 4/21 | ***Screen***: [*Sherpa* (2015, dir. Jennifer Peedom) [90 min, Nepal] (Amazon rental)](https://www.amazon.com/Sherpa-Jennifer-Peedom/dp/B01E4PS7OM) | Post & reply in Week 14 Discussion due by noon |

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| **Week 15** | | |
| M, 4/26 | ***No Reading*** | **Final Project Prep** |
| W, 4/28 | ***Screen***: [*Feels Good Man* (2020, dir. Arthur Jones)](https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.24b9e27b-ad25-f035-69b0-fd0bb64ba966?ref_=imdbref_tt_wbr_pvt_aiv&tag=imdbtag_tt_wbr_pvt_aiv-20) [93 min, US] (Amazon rental) | Post & reply in Week 15 Discussion due by noon |

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| **Week 16** | | |
| M, 5/3 | ***Start (in class)***: [*Bloody Nose, Empty Pockets* (2020, dir. Bill Ross IV, Turner Ross)](https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.9aba8192-f8d7-83f7-c203-d027c8bf909d?autoplay=1&ref_=atv_cf_strg_wb) [98 min, US] |  |
| T, 5/4—**4th hour** | ***Screening together (finish)***: [*Bloody Nose, Empty Pockets* (2020, dir. Bill Ross IV, Turner Ross)](https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.9aba8192-f8d7-83f7-c203-d027c8bf909d?autoplay=1&ref_=atv_cf_strg_wb) [98 min, US]  ***Read***: TBA | Post & reply in Week 16 Discussion due by noon |
| **F, 5/7** |  | **Final Project (by 11:59pm)** |