

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

COMM 339 Video Documentary: Spring 2023

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Number & Section	COMM 339-20E
Class Time and Day	MONDAY: 4:15 PM to 6:45 PM
Room Number & Building	Water Tower – School of Communication – Room 015

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Name	Miguel Silveira
Phone Number	7343959578
Email Address	msilveira@luc.edu
Office Hours	By Appointment
Office Location	Loyola University Water Tower Campus, 111 E. Pearson St. School of Communication, 9 th Floor.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

COMM 339-20E is an advanced video production course designed to give students an introduction to researching, writing, producing, and distributing a documentary film as well as exposure to various types of documentary styles and subject matter. The course will explore the documentary process from concept through development to production and post- production with the intention of completing multiple projects. Working as a group, students will co-produce a segment of a group- sourced documentary that will serve to fulfill the Engaged Learning component for this course. Working individually, students will produce an additional second 3–5-minute film of their choice. To complement the process, we will critically analyze a variety of documentary films. In addition to completing several documentary assignments, students will learn about the narrative structure of non-fiction storytelling as they study and engage with the community and individuals.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- What defines different styles of documentary.
- How to write treatments/proposals to produce a documentary.
- The rules and techniques of Documentary Production.
- What goes on into the Post-Production and Distribution of a Documentary.
- Students will experience how to critically analyze contemporary documentary films and will engage in debate over content, style, and subject matter.
- Students will fulfill Loyola Engagement Learning Requirement.
- By the end of the semester, students will master the basic and fundamental techniques necessary for the successful completion of non-narrative genre films.

RECOMMENDED READING

The following books are not required, but they are strongly suggested, the titles in **bold** will be used throughout the semester. I will show you cheap purchase options on the first day of class.

- ***Introduction to Documentary, Third Edition by Bill Nichols.***
- *Crafting Truth: Documentary Form and Meaning by Louise Spence & Vinicius Navarro.*
- *Issues in Contemporary Documentary and Documentary in Practice by Jane Chapman.*
- *Directing the Documentary, Seventh Edition by Michael Rabiger.*
- ***Imagining Reality: The Faber Book of Documentary by Mark Cousins & Kevin MacDonald.***
- *Cross-Cultural Filmmaking by Ilisa Barbash & Lucien Taylor.*

SUPLIES REQUIRED

- “AA” batteries.
- Lens Cleaning Tissue.
- Mouse for personal computer editing.
- Roll of Clear Medical Tape.
- 2 Portable external hard drives.
- The Sony camera we are using this semester requires a Class 6 SDHC card. Sony recommends an 8 Gig card. This chart illustrates the various storage capacities for different size cards. It is **recommended that each student obtain at least 160 minutes of storage** in the form of multiple cards.

Class 6 SDHC card (Required)	2GB	4GB	8GB	16GB	32GB
Fine Mode (Best Quality)	20 min.	40 min.	80 min.	160 min.	320 min.

IMPORTANT: Should you currently have a drive that does not have a connection that is compatible with the school's MACs you may need to get an adapter or new drive. If you have a drive with a Firewire 400 or 800 connection this will not work with the computers without a cable that adapts to fit the port on the iMac computers. I recommend you purchase at least 1 TB drive. The drives should meet the following specifications: Minimum USB 3.0 port. If you have an older drive with only Firewire, you will need to purchase a converter cable that converts Firewire to Thunderbolt / USB C (current port on iMacs). It works best to not have a drive that you must plug into external AC power. Look for a drive that powers off the computer. With 4K, one TB is the minimum recommended. Minimum 7200 RPM recommended, especially for video/film concentrators. There are many different brands that will serve you will. Some brands to consider would be Toshiba, Maxtor, Seagate, Western Digital and Lacie. Many online and local retailers provide these kinds of drives. B&H in New York is the store most used by professional filmmakers. Local stores such as Best Buy, Apple, OfficeMax, Office Depot, etc., are good places to consider a purchase as well. **When possible, come to class with your hard drive without any material on it. If the drive is brand new, we will format in class.**

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

This class is designed as a hands-on laboratory where students will engage in practical learning. All our lectures, all the readings, and all the films we will screen have the purpose of servicing the production of the documentary films students will create. Documentary **filmmaking** cannot be taught theoretically, for one to truly learn, one needs to **make** a documentary. Throughout the semester we will take a deep dive in the history of the documentary form, the modes and styles of documentary storytelling, the legal paperwork, and preparations a documentarian must understand before going into the field, the proposal development requirements for a successful documentary-making journey, but mostly, and I repeat, all our work in class is at the service of the production of your films. **Please be ready to hit the ground running.** NOTE: Watching films is a major component of this class, some films may upset some students. The instructor will be conscious and considerate about the student's feelings, but **the student is responsible for speaking (and reminding) to the instructor about trigger warnings prior to screenings.**

ASSIGNMENTS

Your final grade will be calculated using the following formula (Points – out of 100):

DETECTIVE ASSIGNMENT = 10%
PERSONAL DOCUMENTARY = 20%
10 FILM REPORTS / PARTICIPATION = 10%
GROUP PROJECT = 30%
SHORT DOCUMENTARY = 20%
PARTICIPATION = 10%

1) DETECTIVE ASSIGNMENT (10 points) due on FEBRUARY 6th:

This assignment is designed to teach how to “see” things as a documentarian. When you walk into your subject’s room, house or prison cell, every detail is important. You must learn how to see what a broken mirror, a dusty curtain, a carved name on a tree means to the individual you are working with, as well as to the story of your film.

This assignment will require that you get permission from a person you know but are not close to, such as your best friend’s aunt who lives in the suburbs and visit them in their house or place of work (Respecting all Covid 19 rules and restrictions). You will **(a)** take **30 (thirty) still images** during your visit of anything you feel is important to you and your story. You will hopefully be invited for coffee because you will need **to interview this person (b)**. I recommend you take the photos after the interview and after being granted permission. After the interview, you will look organize the pictures you took by **cataloguing them (c)**. The final step will be to come up with a documentary proposal for a short film about an aspect of that person’s life you learned about as you conducted your detective’s work; you will then **present this project (d)** to the rest of the class.

2) PERSONAL DOCUMENTARY ASSIGNMENT (20 points) due on MARCH 13th:

Applying the knowledge gathered in class as well as with the Detective Assignment, you will **(a)** approach one of your peers in class and get their permission to create a short 3-5-minute documentary film about them. This project must include a **(b)** proposal, a **(c)** shooting script, and must be shot, edited, and screened **(d)** in class. Your personal documentary will not be about yourself, but about a classmate. You will need at least one person to help you with production and that person cannot be the subject of the film.

3) FILM REPORTS (10 points) due every week until week 12.

A lot can be learned by watching films, especially documentary films. We will watch dozens of films, short and feature length, during class and outside of class, and these viewings will be discussed with the purpose of pointing out the different styles, modes, and techniques utilized by the filmmakers. Every film report, which should be 1-2 page long, is worth **1%** of your grade. Your **participation points (10%)** will be connected to these reports. EX: If you fail to deliver 3 of these reports, you will not be given 3 points associated to the reports, and you will also lose 3 participation points. If you deliver all reports with the quality expected from a Loyola student, you will guarantee all film report points as well as all your participation points (total 20 points). These reports are a very important element in the way I designed the class, therefore I will not accept late submissions.

4) GROUP PROJECT (30 points) due on APRIL 3rd:

The group project is intended to combine all your gathered skills. The production will function as it would in the “real world”:

(a) Each student will present a possible theme to the rest of the class. The themes must follow these guidelines: **Service-learning** – In this course students will complete 25+ hours of service work in the community or a community-based project connected to the content of the course. Course assignments and final projects synthesize classroom - and community - based learning. This engaged learning course offers students the opportunity to engage directly with and reflect on service and justice issues in the community. Students will produce a 3–5-minute video that will serve a Chicago non-profit organization they have partnered with. Each student will be required to submit a service-learning agreement, project delivery confirmation, as well as keep a record of time spent working on this project.

(b) The proposed ideas should reflect the access a student has, or has gained, with a community in Chicago. It should also follow the safety, legal, as well as ethical guidelines of this course. Out of the proposed projects, three will be selected based on the elements listed above as well as on the “likability of completion” of each idea selected.

(c) Groups will be formed, and projects assigned. From this point onwards, you will have a month to research, get permission, write the script and proposal, pre-produce, direct, edit, and present the film to class. You will also make it available to the community you worked with.

Grades will be assigned individually.

5) SHORT DOCUMENTARY (20 points) due on the last day of class – MAY 1st:

The short documentary film is yours to choose. You will make the film you want to make. The idea is that this project showcases the culmination of everything you’ve learned during this semester. It is supposed to be your most personal project, the project you will have the most freedom creating, and the one that will display more advance narrative techniques as well as your technical proficiency. This film, which will run **8-12 minutes** in length, is intended for film festivals and it will have to follow all legal practices of a professional production. This film will need to start being prepared in the very beginning of the semester if you want to create something worthwhile. When you present your previous project on April 3rd, all your efforts should be dedicated to the production of this film, which by then should be ready to be produced. You will need the help from your peers to complete this project with excellence. All films will be screened in their final version on May 1st at the latest. **No late films will be accepted and the grade of “0” will be given if the film is not screened at the scheduled date.**

LETTER GRADE SCALE

100-95% = A
94.99- 90% = A-
89.99-87% = B+
86.99-83% = B
82.99-80% = B-
79.99-77% = C+
76.99-74% = C
73.99-70% = C-
69.99-67% = D+
66.99-65% = D
64.99%- and Below = F

ENGAGED LEARNING REQUIREMENTS

To advance the mission of Loyola University Chicago and to “expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice, and faith,” the Engaged Learning requirement of the Core Curriculum is designed to support the mission by embedding opportunities in courses through the many different forms of experiential learning, helping students enhance their knowledge, skills, and values. All undergraduate Loyola University Chicago students will be required to complete one three (3) credit course designated as Engaged Learning as part of their Core Curriculum.

What is expected in this course.

Service-learning – In this course students will complete 25+ hours of service work in the community or a community-based project connected to the content of the course. Course assignments and final projects synthesize classroom - and community - based learning. This engaged learning course offers students the opportunity to engage directly with and reflect on service and justice issues in the community. Students will produce a 3–5-minute video that will

serve a Chicago non-profit organization they have partnered with. Each student will be required to submit a service-learning agreement, project delivery confirmation, as well as keep a record of time spent working on this project.

Illegal Activity

Documenting with either audio or video, being present at an illegal activity or knowingly violation of any local, state, or federal laws related to the execution of any assignment will automatically exclude it from being accepted for a grade. In addition, the same exclusion applies if you learn after the fact that your actions were of an illegal nature. Incorporating the use of inappropriate or socially unacceptable images or audio into your work will automatically exclude it from being accepted for a grade.

PLAGIARISM STATEMENT

All student work must be wholly original. Academic dishonesty, such as cheating or plagiarism, will result in a failing grade. Please read the SoC *Statement on Academic Integrity* ([linked here](#)).

RULES OF CONDUCT

Please turn off cell phones and other electronic devices such as iPods before entering class. Once class has started, do not sign onto a classroom computer unless instructed to do so. Non-compliance will have a negative impact on your participation grade. Be respectful of other people's opinion in discussions. Do not take naps or fall asleep during class. It is disrespectful toward the other students and the instructor. If you sleep during class, you will be asked to leave, and your participation grade will be negatively affected. Do not leave class early. Do not come to class to take a quiz and then leave. If you foresee that you will not be able to stay the whole class, let me know beforehand. If you have any questions or concerns, let me know as soon as possible.

ATTENDANCE

Regular and on time attendance is essential for the educational process to work. Loyola University expects all students to attend every scheduled class on time. Exceptions may be made for university sponsored or work-related activities, illness, or valid emergency situations.

LATE WORK OR FAILURE TO COMPLETE ASSIGNMENTS

Any work turned in after the designated due date will receive a 10- point grade reduction for each week it is late unless documented illness. No work will be accepted after two weeks have passed from the due date and that assignment will receive a 0 or incomplete grade.

COURSE COMPONENTS

Students will be given multiple homework assignments to be completed outside the normal scheduled classroom. Some assignments may be conducted working with assigned partners. Students will do their best to coordinate times to work on each project at the same time.

GROUP PARTICIPATION

Some assignments may involve working in teams. This will require individuals to be responsible to their teammate(s) for meeting deadlines, be it to shoot an assignment or to edit an assignment. It's expected that these assignments are to be completed as a team. Inevitably, there are always individuals who show up late or not at all, and yet they expect the others in the group to "carry" the load for them. When this occurs and is brought to my attention, there will be a one-grade reduction for that assignment to the individual responsible for letting their team down. If this occurs on more than one occasion, a failing grade will be awarded to the student for that assignment.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Students are urged to contact me should they have questions concerning course materials and procedures. If you have a special circumstance that may have some impact on your course work and for which you may require accommodations, please contact me early in the semester so that arrangements can be made with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD). Additional information about the services available at Loyola, including eligibility for services, is on the SSWD website: <http://www.luc.edu/sswd/index.shtml>

LIABILITY ISSUES

Students will be instructed prior to their first assignment on the general nature of privacy and trespassing laws. From time-to-time students may find themselves in a position where someone may not approve of them capturing their image. In cases such as this, it is best to honor the wishes of this person. Even though you may very well be within your rights to gather this information to include both audio and video, it would be best if students "walk away" from the situation before it escalates. **In the event something does occur, please contact your faculty advisor and/or the department head.**

EQUIPMENT USE

You may use your own equipment, but first clear this with me before any assignment. The School of Communication provides cameras, tripods, microphones, lighting and editing equipment that can be checked out from the Equipment Room in SOC 004 (OWL Lab). This equipment passes through the hands of many students and to assure that the equipment remains in good working

order, treat it like your own. **You** are financially responsible for all the equipment you use and should treat it with great care. This kind of equipment is not indestructible, and it is susceptible to various environmental situations such as a dirt, dust, rain, snow, water, and heat. Caution should be taken when transporting all equipment as this equipment is fragile and can easily be damaged. Be aware of your environment and where you are, always. **This type of equipment is popular with thieves and can easily be pilfered if you are not paying attention.** Do not rely on others to be the one responsible for “watching” the equipment. In the event something should happen, everyone in the group will be considered a responsible party. **Do not leave equipment in a parked vehicle where it can easily be stolen from the backseat.** If you do have to leave equipment in your car, do so by placing in the trunk. But again, as a reminder, do not let the equipment roll around uncontrollably. **Students are responsible for careful handling of all equipment, and for abiding by all rules and regulations governing the use of the facility.**

FACILITY AND EQUIPMENT RULES

School of Communications Production facilities: Water Tower Campus SOC 51. E Pearson.
Audio and Visual Production Coordinator: Paul Quinn - OWL Lab SOC 004 - 312.915.8830

- Schedule all equipment use through The OWL LAB. Do not assume equipment is reserved unless you have confirmation from the OWL LAB. Equipment and use of facilities are available on a first come first serve basis. We **strongly encourage** you to make a reservation well in advance for the use of equipment.
- To make a reservation, go to <https://equipmentloan.luc.edu>, enter your Loyola ID and password and click on “Owl Lab.” You can find detailed instructions for using the reservation system if you click on the question mark at the top of the page. You will note that the Digital Media Lab in the Info Commons has some (but not all!) similar equipment, e.g., cameras. DML is good for back-up lighting or sound needs.
- You can also come to the lab as a walk-in, but equipment is available on a first come, first served basis. This means that the camera you need for your project due on Monday might be checked out. Therefore, it's always best to make a reservation in advance.
- When a student anticipates a problem with either showing up late to pick up the equipment or returning equipment late, they should contact Paul to explain the situation. Anyone more than 15 minutes late for equipment pick-up may forfeit the use of the equipment at that time. Students who are repeatedly delinquent may lose their equipment privileges.
- Equipment must be signed out in room SOC 004 with authorized personnel. Students are responsible for returning equipment and materials in their original condition. Students must report immediately any damage or theft of equipment. Failure to do so may result in a suspension or loss of equipment privileges.
- Students may bring additional crew members, if needed, to the lab for production.
- There is no smoking in any lab space. No eating or drinking at any work/edit station.

SCHEDULE:

JANUARY

WEEK 1

JANUARY 23

Last day to add and swap class

Assignment: Detective, Report 1.

- Go over the syllabus.
- Introductions.
- 6 modes of documentary.
- Film Examples.
- In class brainstorm for assignment 1: DETECTIVE.

WEEK 2

JANUARY 30

Last day to withdraw without a "W" grade

Assignment: Film Report 2.

Due: Detective and Film Report 1.

- The DETECTIVE assignment presentation.
- Comments and analysis of student work.
- Film examples.
- Documentary techniques and styles.
- Preparation for assignment 2: Personal.

FEBRUARY

WEEK 3

FEBRUARY 6

Assignment: Film Report 3.

Due: Film Report 2 and TBD.

- Documentary gear/equipment lecture.
- Gear/equipment Exercise, and gear Check List.
- Pre-Production and Budgets.
- Film examples.
- Personal assignments check and group project discussion.

WEEK 4

FEBRUARY 13

Assignment: Film Report 4.

Due: Film Report 3 and TBD.

- Documentary pre-production: The Shot List.
- Sound.
- Light.
- Camera work.
- Interview test.
- Personal assignments check, group project check, and Final Film Discussion.

WEEK 5

FEBRUARY 20

Assignment: Film Report 5.

Due: Film Report 4 and TBD.

- Pre-production meeting for Personal Project.
- Final Pre-Production Discussion for PERSONAL PROJECT
- Group project check, and Final Film PITCH ideas.
- Film Examples.

WEEK 6

FEBRUARY 27

Assignment: Film Report 6.

Assignment: FINISH PERSONAL FILM.

Due: Film Report 5 and TBD.

- Semester Review.
- Reports discussion.
- Film Examples.
- Group project check. Final Film PITCH.
- **Have you edited your personal project yet?**

MARCH

WEEK 7

MARCH 6

*******SPRING BREAK NO CLASS*******

WEEK 8

MARCH 13

Assignment: Film Report 7.

Due: Film Report 6 and TBD.

Due: PERSONAL FILM.

- SCREENING OF ALL PERSONAL FILMS.
- Group project check. Final Film PITCH.

WEEK 9

MARCH 20

Assignment: Film Report 8.

Due: Film Report 7 and TBD.

- Film Examples.
- Potential guest (TBD).
- Group Project Workday.
- Individual Meeting about Final Projects.

WEEK 10

MARCH 27

Assignment: Film Report 9.

Due: Film Report 8 and TBD.

- If necessary, Group Project Workday (Editing).
- TBD.

APRIL

WEEK 11

APRIL 3

Assignment: Film Report 10.

Assignment: Final Film Prep Materials Part 1.

Due: Film Report 9 and TBD.

Due: GROUP PROJECTS.

- GROUP PROJECT SCREENINGS.
- TBD.

WEEK 12

APRIL 10

Assignment: Final Film Prep Materials Part 2.

Due: Film Report 10 and TBD.

Due: Final Film Prep Materials Part 1.

- Final Project Materials Presentation.
- Film Festival Lecture.
- Grants and Distribution.
- Film Examples.

WEEK 13

APRIL 17

Assignment: Final Film Screening Part 1.

Assignment: Final Film VIMEO upload.

Due: Final Film Prep Materials Part 2.

- Screening of Rough Cuts.
- Film Examples.
- TBD

WEEK 14

APRIL 24

Assignment: Final Film Screening Part 2.

Due: Final Film Screening Part 1.

- Screening of Final Films part 1.
- TBD.

WEEK 15

MAY 1

Due: Final Film Screening Part 2.

- Screening of Final Films part 2.
- Film Festival assessment.
- TBD.

*******IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT SYLLABUS*******

This syllabus is subject to changes.

DREAM.

