

BCN 589/HIS 589
Doing Visual History
Mondays 3:30-6:20
Carmichael 002

(3:3)

No prerequisites/corequisites

This course is intended as an elective for Broadcasting & Cinema students interested in aspects of documentary production and visual history. It is also intended for advanced undergraduates in History or related disciplines or for students in the MA program in History.

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Office hours: 10:00-12:00 Mondays, or by appointment.

Catalog Description: This course explores the interstices of history, documentary production, and personal narratives.

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Define what oral history is.
2. Recognize the variety of ways in which personal narratives are used in documentary history work.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship of personal narratives within the various genres of documentary filmmaking.
4. Discuss the legal issues and ethical considerations surrounding the collection of personal narratives, as well as the role of memory and recall in personal testimony.
5. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of various interviewing techniques.
6. Demonstrate that they can conduct both an oral history and video history interview.
7. Demonstrate that they can do a nonlinear edit of oral/visual recordings.

Teaching Methods and Assignments for Achieving Learning Outcomes:

Study of written materials (SLO # 1, 2, 3, and 4); in-class discussions (SLO # 1, 2, 3, and 4); essays (SLO # 1, 2, 3, and 4); completion of oral/video history interviews (SLO # 5); completion of menu-driven DVD from raw interviews (SLO # 6); completion of final project (SLO # 2 and 3).

Grading and Evaluation (Undergraduates):

Completion of Oral History Interview	10%
Completion of Two Video Interviews	20%
Production of Menu-Driven DVD from Raw Interviews	15%
Short essays on <u>Working</u> and <u>Let Us Now Praise Famous Men</u>	15%

Class Participation	15%
Final Paper	25%

Grading and Evaluation (Graduate Students):

Completion of Two Oral History Interviews	10%
Completion of Three Video Interviews	15%
Production of Menu-Driven DVD from Raw Interviews	15%
Short essays on <u>Working</u> and <u>Let Us Now Praise Famous Men</u>	15%
Class Participation	10%
Final Paper	25%
Research paper on oral/visual history w/oral presentation	10%

Required Texts/Readings:

Agee, James and Walker Evans, Let Us Now Praise Famous Men, (Houghton Mifflin, 1988)

Donald A. Ritchie, Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide 2nd ed. (Oxford University Press, 2003)

Studs Terkel, Working (New Press, 1997)

Though some of these books are older than five years, all are standard works in the field.

Additional required course readings are included on the course schedule and are available through blackboard.

Topical Outline/Calendar:

August 20: Introduction

August 27: Oral History: Definition and Theory

Readings: Doing Oral History, 11-29; Portelli, “Research as an Experiment in Equality”; Thompson, “The Voice of the Past”; Grele, “Movement Without Aim”; Portelli, “What Makes Oral History Different”; Begin reading Let Us Now Praise Famous Men.

September 10: The Oral History Interview: Conducting Audio and Video Recordings

Readings: Doing Oral History, ch. 3; Morrissey, “Oral History Interviewing”; Thompson, “The Interview.”

Clips from documentary interviews

Discussion: video operations, the Sony PD 170 camera, Digital formats, time code, manual operations of the camera, tripod operations, focus, iris, zoom, white balance, viewfinder systems, operating the onboard menu system, manual vs. automatic audio levels, the lavalier mic, xlr cables. manual white balance, color temperature. Aesthetic issues (camera placement, vectors, headroom, leadroom, zoom shots, camera movements)

September 17: The Oral History Interview: Conducting Audio and Video Recordings

Readings: Doing Oral History, 57-63 and ch. 5; Sipe, “The Future of Oral History and Moving Images”

Discussion: Aspects to be covered: 3 point lighting, fresnel/open-faced lights, eye light, scrims, diffusion materials, placement of interviewer

September 24: The Oral History Interview: Conducting Audio and Video Recordings

Readings: Slim and Thompson, “Ways of Listening”; Kikumura, “Family Life Histories”

The Art of Interviewing

Finding the subject

Narratives within interviews

The interview as an end product in and of itself

Practice interview techniques

October 1: The Oral History Interview: Conducting Audio and Video Recordings

Readings: Frisch, “Oral History and Hard Times”; Terkel, Working (assigned sections).

Writing the questions

Doing the interview—it’s not a conversation.

Logistics—camera set-up time, tear down.

Explaining the purpose of the interview

Writing of treatments

Creative listening

Communication with the videographer

Filming objects, documents

October 8: Legal Matters and Ethical Considerations

Readings: Neuenschwander, Oral History and the Law; Blee, “Evidence, Empathy, and Ethics”; Doing Oral History, 75-78, 182-183, 215-221, Appendix 1, and Appendix 2; K’Meyer and Crothers, “If I See Some of

This in Writing, I'm Going to Shoot You."

The Institutional Review Board. The IRB Certification Test. Consent forms.

October 22: Memory and Recall in Personal Narratives

Readings: Doing Oral History, 30-40; Portelli, "The Death of Luigi Trastulli"; Loftus, "Tricked by Memory"; Alice and Howard Hoffman, "A Psychological Overview of Memory."

Discussion: History from the ground up. A new view of history and the social sciences. Visual culture, the shift from the word. The power of images

October 29: Memory and Recall in Personal Narratives.

Discussion of Let Us Now Praise Famous Men. The relationship of visual history and documentary filmmaking. Discussion about various documentary genres and their relationship with interviews. Documentary Clips

November 5: Preservation of Oral/Visual Narratives as Archival Data

Nonlinear Editing of Oral and Visual Recordings

Readings: Wilmsen, "For the Record: Editing and the Production of Meaning in Oral History"

Introduction to the Final Cut Pro Edit System. Digitization, logging, Transcribing

Readings: Doing Oral History, 64-74 and ch. 6; Wallot and Fortier, "Archival Science and Oral Sources"

The Shoah Foundation for Visual History. The Southern Oral History Program at UNC-Chapel Hill. The Library of Congress. Internet-based archives

November 12: Nonlinear Editing of Oral and Visual Recordings.

The Final Cut Pro. Organization of material, timelines

November 19: DVD Production. In class demonstration by Tom Lipscomb

November 26: DVD Production. In class demonstration by Tom Lipscomb

December 3: Presentation of edits, in-progress projects

December 10 Student Presentations

Academic Honor Code:

Each student is required to sign the Academic Honor Policy on all major work submitted for the course. For additional information, see the UNCG Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletins.

Attendance Policy:

Since this class meets once a week, attendance at and participation in all class meetings is essential. Any unexcused absences will adversely affect a student's grade.