

Coms 133 Documentary Spring 2022

Lecture 1 – Part 1

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- Golden age began in the 1980's.
- Documentaries have a wider social and creative scope than regular commercial films.

Common Traits of Documentaries

- John Grierson 1889-1972.
- Scottish documentary maker and social critic.
- Coined the term “documentary” in the 1930.

- “Creative Treatment of Actuality”

Three Common Assumptions

- 1 – Documentaries are about reality; they're about something that actually happened.
 - Documentary films speak about actual situations or events and honor known facts; they do not introduce new, unverifiable ones.

- 2- Documentaries are about real people.
- Documentaries are about real people who do not play or perform roles.

- 3 – Documentaries tell stories about what happens in the real world.
- A documentary is not a reproduction of reality, it is a representation of the world.
Who's story is it?

Complete Modified Description

- Documentary film speaks about situations and events involving real people (social actors) who present themselves within a framework. This frame conveys a plausible perspective on, the lives, situations, and events portrayed. The distinct point of view of the filmmaker shapes the film into a way of seeing the historical world directly rather than into a fictional allegory.

Fuzzy Concepts and Change

- Documentaries tend to cluster into different types and modes.
- Documentaries do not have to follow as many “rules” as commercial feature films.

What brings about Changes?

- 1. Institutions
- 2. Filmmakers
- 3. Films
- 4. Audiences

Institutions

- An Intuitional Framework.
- Support for Documentaries and the Distribution of them.

Filmmakers

- A Community of Practitioners.
- Creative Efforts of the Filmmakers
Themselves.

Reasons 3 & 4

- Next Week.