Coms 133 – Documentary Film

Spring 2022

***Man with a Movie Camera***

Credits & Questions

Released: 1929

Running Time: 1:07

Directed, Written, and Edited by: Dziga Vertov

Written by: Dziga Vertov

Cinematography by: Mikhail Kaufman & Gleb Troyanski (uncredited)

Questions:

1. What did you know about *Man with a Movie Camera* before watching it? Where your expectations met?
2. Did any of the film images appear to be distinctly Russian? Without knowing the film was made in the U.S.S.R, would you have been able to place the setting?
3. Where any of the film scenes shocking or surprising, overriding your preconceptions of 1920s’ Soviet Union?
4. In which ways does *Man with a Movie Camera* function as a Soviet propaganda film?
5. Many different DVDs have a different soundtrack for this film. How much power over the viewing experience does the music used in this DVDs version?
6. Do you agree with *Man with a Movie Camera*’s appointment as one of the first great documentary films (Sight & Sound magazine)?
7. What do you think Vertov was trying to say by filming the camera operator?
8. Were you engaged throughout the film? Were there any parts of the film that seemed superfluous, or any that seemed underdeveloped?
9. At one point in the film, we are presented with still images and then shown the moving reel from which they are taken. Did you find the still or moving images to be more powerful?
10. What do you think Vertov’s intended message is opening and closing the film with shots of an audience in a cinema?