**Professor Vinicius Navarro**

School of Literature, Media, and Communication

Skiles Bldg. # 324

Ext. 41739

E-mail: [vinicius.navarro@lmc.gatech.edu](mailto:vinicius.navarro@lmc.gatech.edu)

Office Hours: T 3:00-5:00 and H 10:00-11:00

**Course Title:** LMC 3258 Documentary Film

**Course Prerequisites:**

ENGL 1102 and (LMC 2800 or LMC 2500 or LCC 2500 or LMC 2400 or LCC 2400)

**Core Area/Attributes:** Core Area C Humanities

**Course Description:**

This course examines the nature of nonfiction cinema, analyzes its relationship with the social world, and discusses the political and ethical implications of this relationship. It explores concepts that are central to documentary filmmaking such as authenticity, authority, and responsibility. And it looks at different types of documentary, considering the aesthetic and rhetorical choices available to nonfiction filmmakers. Finally, the course situates these nonfictional genres in relation to specific cultural historical contexts.

**Learning Outcomes:**

- Students will understand and appreciate the differences between documentary and fiction cinema.

- Students will be aware of the traditions and conventions of documentary filmmaking, and they will be able to analyze those traditions and conventions in specific cultural contexts.

- Students will understand the specific nature of documentary’s relationship with the social world.

- Students will appreciate the aesthetic and rhetorical aspects of nonfiction filmmaking.

- Students will be able to describe relationships among different types of documentary.

**Required Texts:**

- Louise Spence and Vinicius Navarro, *Crafting Truth: Documentary Form and Meaning*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2011.

- Alan Rosenthal and John Corner, eds., *New Challenges for Documentary*, second edition. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005.

- Eric Barnouw, *Documentary: A History of the Non-fiction Film*, second edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

In addition to the texts listed above, students are required to read individual essays as indicated in the course outline.

**List of Graded Assignments:**

Quiz 1  10%

Quiz 2 10%

Midterm 25%

Research presentation 25%

## Final Exam 30%

**Attendance Policy:**

There will be tolerance for 5 (five) absences only. Beyond this limit, each absence will result in the deduction of a full letter from your final grade. Students with more than 8 (eight) absences will fail the course. It is your responsibility to research and learn the materials covered in the classes you have missed.

**ADAPTS Contact Information:**

Georgia Tech offers accommodations to students with disabilities. If you have special needs, please contact the ADAPTS (Access Disabled Assistance Program for Tech Students) Office at the beginning of the semester. Their Web site is: <http://www.adapts.gatech.edu>.

**Honor Code Statement:**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarizing is defined by Webster’s as “to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own; use (another's production) without crediting the source.” If caught plagiarizing, you will be dealt with according to the GT Academic Honor Code. All quotes must be properly and clearly indicated and should not constitute more than 10% of your work. Unless specifically identified as group work, quizzes, tests, presentations, etc. are to be completed alone. Cheating off of anyone else’s work is a direct violation of the GT Academic Honor Code and will be dealt with accordingly. For any questions involving these or any other Academic Honor Code issues, please consult me or www.honor.gatech.edu.

**Week by Week Schedule:**

Week 1: Defining Documentary; Spence and Navarro pp. 1-8; Dirk Eitzen, “When is a Documentary?: Documentary as a Mode of Reception,” *Cinema Journal* 35.1 (Fall 1995).

Week 2: Authenticity; Spence and Navarro pp. 11-23; André Bazin “The Ontology of the Photographic Image,” in *What is Cinema?* pp. 9-16.

Week 3: Evidence and Authority; Spence and Navarro pp. 36-82.

Week 4: Ethics and Responsibility in Documentary; Spence an Navarro pp. 83-109; Jay Ruby, “The Ethics of Image Making,” in Rosenthal and Corner pp. 209-219.

Week 5: Documentary Rhetoric; Spence and Navarro pp. 113-134; 174-181.

Week: 6: Social Documentaries and Propaganda Films: Barnouw pp. 85-172.

Week 7: Nonfictional Narrative; Spence and Navarro pp. 135-147, 161-174.

Week 8: Direct Cinema and Cinema Vérité; Barnouw pp. 231-262; Rosenthal and Corner pp. 280-292.

Week 9: Ethnographic Cinema: David MacDougall, “Visual Anthropology and the Ways of Knowing, in *Transcultural Cinema* pp. 61-92.

Week 10: Reflexivity and the Postmodern Documentary; Jay Ruby, “The Image Mirrored: Reflexivity and the Documentary Film;” Linda Williams, “Mirrors without Memories: Truth, History, and the New Documentary,” in Rosenthal and Corner pp. 34-47, 59-75.

Week 11: Documentary and Autobiography: Michael Renov, “New Subjectivities: Documentary and Self-Representation in the Post-verité Age,” in *The Subject of Documentary* pp. 171-181.

Week 12: Performance in Nonfiction Film: Spence and Navarro pp. 225-236;

Thomas Waugh, “‘Acting to Play Oneself’: Notes on Performance in Documentary,” in *Making Visible the Invisible*, ed. Carole Zucker pp. 64-91.

Week 13: Poetic Documentaries and Essay Films: Spence and Navarro, pp. 147-154, 181-184.

Week 14: Documentary Animation: Strøm, Gunnar. “The Animated Documentary,” *Animation Journal* 11 (2003); Bella Honess, “Absence, Excess and Epistemological Expansion: Towards a Framework for the Study of Animated Documentary,” *Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 6 (2011) pp. 215–230.

Week 15: Experimental Documentaries and New Media: Spence and Navarro pp. 154-157; Sharon Daniel, “The Database: An Aesthetics of Dignity,” in *Database Aesthetics*, ed. Victoria Vesna, pp. 142-182.

Week 16: Student Presentations