***Disclosure: Trans Lives on Screen* (2020)**

**Film background:** *Disclosure: Trans Lives on Screen* is a 2020 documentary directed by Sam Feder. It features interviews with many transgender actors, writers and producers, including Laverne Cox, Lilly Wachowski, Zackary Drucker, Jen Richards, MJ Rodriguez, Ser Anzoategui, and many others. The film uses extensive footage from film and television over the last 100 years to examine the history of trans representation on screen, and interviews trans members of the film industry about their experiences as actors, creators, and spectators. Much of the film focuses on how audiences--both trans and cis--are often impacted by the portrayals of trans people they see in film. Some films addressed in the documentary include *Paris is Burning, The Crying Game, Boys Don't Cry, Psycho, Ma Vie En Rose,* and *The Matrix,* among many others. Some television series discussed include *Transparent, Pose, Nip/Tuck* and the genres of daytime talk shows, police shows and hospital shows. Topics include cis casting of trans roles, historical stereotypes, appropriation, and trans visibility.

**Content warning:** *Disclosure* contains many brief clips of other films that include nudity, sexuality, references to sex work, transphobia and violence.

**Materials for this week:**

* Day 2: Aufderheide, Patricia. *Documentary Film: A Very Short Introduction.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. (Excerpt provided: Chapter 1: "Defining the documentary", pp. 1-19)
* Day 3: Nichols, Bill. *Introduction to Documentary.* Indiana UP, 2017. (Excerpt provided: pp. 104-110; 137-149)

**Lesson 1 – Close-Reading *Disclosure***

1. (7 min) Screening quiz.
2. (15 min) Student-led scene analysis.
3. (6 min) Start teacher-led scene analysis with screening clip (Opening scene, 0:00-2:53; closing scene, 1:40:53-1:43:43).
4. (6 min) Discussion prep.
5. What argument is made in the opening montage? How does Feder use formal elements to support that argument?

* *Argument: Primarily through editing together a montage of footage from film and television and including voiceover and interview clips with trans people in the film industry, Feder presents two broad narratives of trans representation: 1) Historically, trans people have been represented in dehumanizing ways, but the that there has been major progress in diverse and respectful representations in the last several years; 2) Trans representation does not necessarily equal progress for all trans people in America, and violence, particularly against trans women of color, persists.*
* *Dialogue/editing: The first line of the film is a clip from Sense8, in which Jamie Clayton’s character asks, “Do you know that feeling when you’re sitting in a movie theater and everyone’s laughing at something and you just don’t get it?” This line introduces some of the main elements of the film: Trans people are spectators of film, thinking about how they are being represented, and trans representation has often been “othering” in film, which Clayton’s question suggests. This film considers how filmmakers have assumed their audience to be cisgender by writing dehumanizing, objectifying and stereotyped roles for trans characters; Clayton speaks out against that in this opening question and in later interviews throughout this film.*
* *Voiceover/Editing/Framing: Laverne Cox speaks, saying “I never thought I would live in a world where trans people would be celebrated, on or off the screen.” By having Cox’s voiceover appear almost immediately, the film conveys that the “voice” it speaks with will be of the trans actors, writers, and producers who are interviewed throughout the film. This is paired with clips* *in which Daniela Vega appears in the film* A Fantastic Woman *and at the Academy Awards, where she was the first transgender presenter. In the clip from* A Fantastic Woman, *Vega flies towards the camera and looks directly it in a fantastical sequence. Because of the Cox’s voiceover, this shot is highlighted as a strong example of trans representation that celebrates trans people, rather than dehumanizing them. This opens the movie with an optimistic tone that speaks of progress being made. Showing Vega presenting at the Academy Awards also shows that one element of progress is trans characters being played by trans actors and being celebrated for their achievements.*
* *Editing: The film juxtaposes two clips of Oprah, one from 2011 when she asked Lea T invasive questions, and one from 2015 when she spoke to Janet Mock with respect. This juxtaposition suggests a shift in culture about how trans people are spoken to and treated.*
* *Voiceover/Editing: As Cox says, “Now, look how far we’ve come,” the film highlights trans representation that showcases the diversity of the trans experience, including a clip of Chella Man, a trans deaf Asian-American actor who appears in* Titans*, and of Asia Kate Dillion, a non-binary actor who appears in* Billions*. These examples highlight the importance of representing the diversity of trans experiences, rather than stereotypes that suggest a monolithic identity.*
* *Editing: The clip continues with interview clips of Jen Richards and Alexandra Grey, introducing the audience to the format of* Disclsoure, *which will include perspectives from a variety of voices in the film industry. It shows Cox in a courtroom scene, shortly before Cox speaks again, showing that the film will juxtapose actors’ comments in interviews and the roles they have played in film and television.*
* *Interviews: Cox, Tiq Milan, and Jamie Clayton begin discussing “the paradox” of trans representation: Milan says “The more we are seen, the more we are violated.” As the montage continues to show trans representations that celebrate diversity of trans experiences, Cox speaks of the murder rate, especially among trans women of color.*
* *Editing: The film juxtaposes a clip of Alex Newell, anxiously entering a bathroom in* Glee, *with a clip of an early film that shows a trans person in the bathroom. This suggests both continuity and change, as this issue persists in our society as a political football, but media representations no longer only position trans people as a joke.*
* *Voiceover/Editing: As Cox speaks of dehumanizing representations of trans people that “have suggested we are not real, have suggested we are mentally ill, that we don’t exist.” A montage of clips plays highlighting these dehumanizing representations. Then Cox says, “And yet, here I am. And yet, here we are, and we’ve always been here” and the montage cuts to her, so that she is represented as an individual.*
* *Score: The score includes slow piano, which is thought-provoking and serious, but not mournful. It suggests emotional intensity, but not tragedy.*

1. What argument is made in the closing montage? How does Feder use formal elements to support that argument?

* *Argument/Voiceover/editing: The film juxtaposes Laverne Cox on the cover of Time magazine, which proclaimed that 2014 representing “The Transgender Tipping Point,” with a voiceover of her speaking and explaining that “we always have to be skeptical when a few people are elevated and the majority of people are still struggling.” By juxtaposing the magazine cover against Cox’s comments, this clip encourages us to be skeptical of the media and to examine closely the narratives that are being put forth. Rather than simply celebrating progress, as this magazine cover did, this moment allows audiences to understand the duality of Feder’s narrative and his closing argument: While trans representation in film and television has made significant strides in recent years, that does not necessarily equate to improved living conditions for the vast majority of transgender people living in the US. More work must be done to break down structural barriers for genuine change to take place.*
* *Voiceover/mise-en-scene: Susan Stryker’s voice, from an interview in this film, plays over a clip from* A Fantastic Woman. *Stryker explains,* *“Having positive representation can only succeed in changing the conditions of life for trans people when it is part of a much broader movement for social change. Changing representation is not the goal, it’s just the means to an end.” In this fantastical sequence from the film, Vega’s character walks along the street but the wind picks up, preventing her ability to move forward. As she pushes back against the wind, she is held in place. This clip symbolically represents Stryker’s claim: While this is a beautiful scene that represents a step forward for cinematic representations of trans women, film alone cannot change the material conditions that threaten trans people’s survival. Just as Vega pushes against a seemingly insurmountable and invisible threat, so too do many trans people who struggle against discriminatory conditions.*
* *Voiceover/mise-en-scene/argument: Cox explains in a voiceover that until people start fighting for the rights of trans people in their communities, “all that energy from the silver screen won’t be enough to better the lives of trans people off the screen.” This is juxtaposed against a clip from* The Magicians, *in which a large crowd of figures stands outside a stone wall, waiting. This clip seems to symbolically represent the community of trans people who face challenging obstacles due to discrimination, and illustrates Feder’s final call to action: Through the pairing of Cox’s comment with this clip, Feder calls on the audience to break down barriers (represented by the wall) that threaten trans people’s ability to survive and thrive.*

1. (17 min) Whole class discussion.
2. What argument is made in the first scene we saw? What evidence is used to support that argument?
3. **Additional questions, if needed:** Why do you think the film opens with Jamie Clayton’s character in Sense8 asking, “Do you know that feeling when you’re sitting in a movie theater and everyone’s laughing at something and you just don’t get it?” How does that question showcase some of the film’s focus?
4. What points does Laverne Cox make throughout her voiceover?
5. What did you see in the montage? What kinds of representations were shown? How did those pair with the voiceover and interviews we saw?
6. Towards the end of the clip, Cox, Jamie Clayton and Tiq Milan begin speaking of the “paradox” of trans representation. What are they speaking about?
7. Overall, what formal elements are introduced in this sequence that structure the film’s voice and argument throughout *Disclosure?*
8. What argument is made in the closing montage? How does Feder use formal elements to support that argument?
9. Consider the moment that begins this sequence: Cox speaking over a magazine cover on which she appears. Consider what she’s saying v. what the cover says. What’s the effect of this choice on the audience?
10. Consider the pairing of Susan Stryker’s comments over the clip of Daniela Vega pushing against the wind in *A Fantastic Woman.* How does this clip visually represent Stryker’s words?
11. How does the last clip, from the show *The Magicians,* visually represent Cox’s voiceover that is paired with it? How does this convey Feder’s closing argument? What is this film ultimately asking the audience to do?
12. **Extension question:** Do you agree with the arguments the film makes in its opening and closing monologues? Why or why not?

**Lesson 2: Examining *Disclosure* Alongside Patricia Aufderheide’s “Defining the Documentary”**

1. (5 min) Personal reflection. Choose a question to respond to.
2. What’s a movie or TV show that *Disclosure* addressed that you were familiar with? Did *Disclosure* change your perception of that movie or TV show?
3. What’s a movie or TV show that *Disclosure* addressed that you’re unfamiliar with, but are interested in watching? Why?
4. What’s one argument made in *Disclosure* that you thought was interesting? Explain why you found it interesting.
5. (7 min) Discuss.
6. (4 min) Screen today’s clip (Police and hospital shows 37:51-41:20. **Note:** This clip contains violence against trans women in order to critique this trope in film. You could swap out this scene for another one if you think this would not be the best choice for your class.)
7. Discussion prep.
8. What are the most important points that Aufderheide makes in “Defining the Documentary?” What evidence is used to support that?

* *Defining the documentary: Aufderheide defines documentary as a film that “tells a story about real life, with claims to truthfulness” (2). She also cites John Grierson’s definition of a documentary as a film with an “artistic representation of actuality” (3).*
* *Objectivity v. truthfulness: She draws a distinction between objectivity and truthfulness, arguing to truthfulness: “Viewers expect not to be tricked and lied to…We do not demand that these things be portrayed objectively, and they do not have to be the complete truth….But we do expect that a documentary will be a fair and honest representation of somebody’s experience of reality” (3). She explains that many documentary films do “not strive for balance in representing [all] point[s] of view” but do “strive for accuracy in representing the problem” they examine (7). Many films are “made for action” (7) and are therefore rooted in a persuasive argument.*
* *“Regular documentary” form: Aufderheide speaks of people’s assumptions about what makes a “regular documentary” and lists the formal elements that people tend to think of when they imagine a conventional documentary: a “’voice-of-God’ narration, an analytical argument rather than a story with characters, head shots of experts leavened with a few people-on-the-street interiews, stock images that illustrate the narrator’s point…perhaps a little educational animation, and dignified music” (10). However, she points out that these are merely “a package of choices that became standard practice in the later twentieth century on broadcast television” (10), but many documentary filmmakers make entirely different formal choices.*
* *Tools: Aufderheide provides a list of some tools available to documentary filmmakers: “sound (ambient sound, soundtrack music, special sound effects, dialogue, narration); images (material shot on location, historical images captured in photographs, video or objects); special effects in audio and video, including animation, and pacing (length of scenes, number of cuts, script or storytelling structure) (11). Aufderheide points out that there is a great deal of overlap between the formal choices documentary and nondocumentary filmmakers make: “cinematographers, sound technicians, digital designers, musicians and editors may work in both modes. Documentary work may require lights, and directors may ask their subjects for retakes; documentarians add sound effects and sound tracks” (12)*
* *Shift away from narration: “The choice against narration, which became fashionable in the later 1960s, allowed viewers to believe that they were being allowed to decide for themselves the meaning of what they saw” (12)*
* *Narrative structure: Aufderheide states that documentaries are “stories, they have beginnings, middles, and ends; they invest viewers in their characters, they take viewers on emotional journeys. They often refer to classic story structure” (12)*

1. How does Disclosure demonstrate Aufderheide’s claims about documentary?

* *Objectivity v. truthfulness: Disclosure is truthful, but not objective. Feder clearly has a particular message he wants to communicate, and he does so using a variety of tools, including interview clips with trans people in the film industry, clips from film and television, etc. The pairing of interviewees’ commentary and clips to support their claims illustrate the particular message he intends to communicate. If this film was “balanced” or “objective,” it would be entirely different—and it wouldn’t be able to communicate its claim as clearly. This film is a good example of documentary’s investment in persuasion and argument.*
* *Shifts away from “regular documentary:” While* Disclosure *is clearly a documentary, it avoids some of the conventional tools that people associate with documentaries: There is no “voice-of-God” narration, the interviews are with individuals who speak of their own emotional experiences, not just their “expertise,” and there are no “people-on-the-street” interviews. This highlights that there is no singular documentary “look.” The film does not include “narration,” and instead, the interviewees showcase pluralistic perspectives that are sometimes at odds with each other. For example, Zeke Smith and Michael Cohen speak of the way they identified with Brandon Teena in* Boys Don’t Cry *and how powerful the film was for them, but Tiq Milan speaks of how the erasure of Philip Devine from the film’s narrative alienated and frustrated him as a Black trans person.*
* *Narrative structure: As Aufderheide argues is typical of documentaries, this film has a beginning, middle and end. The beginning and end include opening and closing claims, and the narrative of the film is generally a story of progress, as it traces the history of trans representation from its most dehumanizing to more positive recent representations.*

1. What argument is made in the scene we just watched? How does Feder use formal elements to support that argument?

* *Voiceover/argument: An interview with Nick Adams from GLAAD provides the central argument for this clip: “Unfortunately, Hollywood has spent many years, especially on police shows and hospital shows, perpetrating the transgender victim narrative. It usually follows into a couple of different tropes: one, someone is murdered because they’re transgender; or the other version in the hospital drama is that they come into the ER and their hormones are killing them, or the trans person is dying from some cancer that is affiliated with their birth sex.”*
* *Mood/Interviews/Editing: While the shows depicted here are generally TV melodramas, interviews with actors Alexandra Billings, Alexandra Gray and Candis Cayne undercut the narrative presented by mocking the grave mood of these shows and their emphasis on trans death. “I was on a lot of hospital shows! I died. A lot. They kept killing me,” Billings explains. This is intercut with clips of her learning, on multiple shows, that she has cancer. As she mocks the storylines she is given for their clichés, and the rapid editing shows how similar these storylines are,* Disclosure *undercuts the ability of these shows to present a single, controlling narrative and mood in which trans representation = trans death.. Cayne continues to undercut the controlling narrative and mood of TV crime shows by mocking them: “I’m sitting there, dead, rolling my eyes, like I cannot believe I’m dealing with this. I wanted to sit up off the table and be like, ‘you guys, that’s bullshit, that is so stupid.’ By including voiceovers of Billings and Cayne over images of them on television, Feder asks the audience to be skeptical of the representations of trans people they see: the film encourages us not to assume that all trans representation is inherently good, and to remember that trans actors aren’t necessarily in control of the narratives that are written for them.*

1. Whole class discussion.
2. What are the most important points that Aufderheide makes in “Defining the Documentary?” What evidence is used to support that?
3. Review p. 2 and 3. How does Aufderheide define the documentary has a genre?
4. Review p. 3 and 7. How does Aufderheide explain the distinction between objectivity and truthfulness? Why is this an important distinction? (Have you ever heard someone complain that documentaries are “biased?” How does Aufderheide’s explanation respond to that critique?)
5. Review p. 10. How does Aufderheide explain the conventions people associate with documentaries? Have you seen these conventions in documentaries? Have these conventions shaped your impression of documentaries as a genre?
6. Review p. 11-12. What tools does Aufderheide identify as available to documentary filmmakers?
7. Review p. 12. How does Aufderheide explain the shift away from narration in documentary?
8. Review p. 12. How does Aufderheide explain the narrative structure of documentaries?
9. How does Disclosure demonstrate Aufderheide’s claims about documentary?
10. Consider Aufderheide’s comments about objectivity v. truthfulness. How does *Disclosure* illustrate her claim?
11. Consider Aufderheide’s comments about people’s impression of “regular documentary” form—does *Disclosure* use those conventions?
12. Consider Aufderheide’s comments about narrative structure – what’s the narrative structure of *Disclosure?*
13. What argument is made in the scene we just watched? How does Feder use formal elements to support that argument?
14. What does Nick Adams argue in the interview that opens this clip?
15. How do the interviews and clips of Alexandra Billings, Alexandra Gray and Candis Cayne affect this scene? How do their comments critique the tone and narrative of the trans storylines in police and hospital dramas?
16. What’s the impact of seeing these actors mock and critique the roles they are given? Ultimately, what is Feder reminding the audience to consider as we see trans representation?
17. **Extension question:** Have you seen storylines like the ones spoken about in this scene? Does this clip change your perspective of them? Why or why not?

**Lesson 3: Examining *Disclosure Alongside* Bill Nichols’ *Introduction to Documentary***

1. (5 min) Compare/contrast.
2. Prior to watching *Disclosure,* what’s another documentary you’ve seen? How was *Disclosure* structured similarly to or differently from the other film you’re thinking of? What formal choices did Feder make that were similar or different?
3. (5 min) Discuss.
4. (5 min) Screen today’s clip (Talk shows, 52:44-57:51).
5. (15 min) Study groups.
6. What are the most important ideas in the excerpts you read from Nichols’ book? What evidence was most important for supporting those claims?

* *Nichols provides a similar definition of documentary to Aufderheide’s: “a form of cinema that speaks to us about actual situations and events. It adheres to known facts rather than creating a fictional allegory. It involves real people who present themselves to us in stories that convey a plausible proposal about or perspective on the lives, situations and events portrayed” (104)*
* *Voice and perspective: Nichols explains further the interpretive and argumentative nature of documentaries, as well as their sense of voice: “Documentaries are not documents. They may use documents and facts, but they always interpret them. They usually do so in an expressive, engaging way. This lends documentaries the strong sense of voice that non-documentaries lack…This perspective is more personal and more impassioned than that of a document” (104-105).*
* *Models and modes: Most of this reading focuses on understanding the different subtypes of documentaries that Nichols identifies. He breaks this down into many models—nonfiction forms that predate documentaries—and six cinematic modes that are unique to documentaries because they involve cinema (105). Nichols explains that these models and modes are not mutually exclusive. He encourages readers to “ask of any documentary two questions: What model does it adopt from other media? What mode does it contribute to as cinema?” (107).*
  + *Nichols identifies “preexisting nonfiction models” that documentaries sometimes adopt, such as the diary, biography, or essay. A table on 106-107 provides a list of major nonfiction models and their descriptions.*
  + *He also identifies six cinematic modes that are unique to documentary filmmaking and do not predate film. A table on 108-109 lists the six cinematic modes – expository, poetic, observational, participatory, reflexive, and performative.*
* *Participatory mode: The second excerpt from Nichols’ book is a closer look at the participatory mode, which is the mode that* Disclosure *relies on most (as well as* United in Anger*). In this mode, emphasis shifts from the interaction between filmmaker and subject to the one between viewer and assembled material” (138).* 
  + *Interviews intercut with content: As Nichols explains in his description of Errol Morris’s films, the participatory mode often involves “face-to-face interaction [being] limited to a formal interview setting, but these straightforward scenes are intercut with a dizzying array of diverse images and arresting music that creates extraordinary impact” (143).*
  + *Interviewees’ perspectives emphasized, rather than a singular perspective from the filmmaker: “Morris seeks less to isolate the truth in any given case than to explore truths internalized and articulated by his subjects and amplified in myriad ways by the sounds and images he chooses as accompaniment to what they say” (143). “Filmmakers make use of the interview to bring different accounts together in a single story. The filmmaker’s voice emerges as it weaves together contributing voices and supporting material” (146).*
  + *Two forms of participatory mode: “Filmmakers who seek to represent their own direct encounter with the surrounding world and those who seek to represent the broad social issues and historical perspectives through interviews and compilation footage constitute two large components of the participatory mode” (143)*
  + *Personal and political: “This mode often demonstrates how the personal and political intertwine to yield representations of the historical world from specific perspectives that are both contingent and committed” (144)*
  + *“The interview and the archive”: “The filmmaker may wish to introduce a broader perspective, one that is often historical in nature. How? The most common answer involves the interview and the archive. The result often takes the form of a compilation film and recounts history from above (about major figures and events) or from below (about the experience of ordinary people in relation to a historical event. The vast archive of previously shot footage that now exists provides historical footage to accompany the voices of those who were there or who know about what happened” (146).*

1. What elements of *Disclosure—*in the scenes we’ve reviewed this week or other scenes you recall—illustrate how it exemplifies the participatory mode? What other choices could Feder have made in terms of models or modes? What does the participatory mode provide for Feder?

* *“Viewer and assembled material”: Nichols explains that in the participatory mode, the “emphasis shifts from the interaction between filmmaker and subject to the one between viewer and assembled material” (138). This is true in* Disclosure, *since Feder never appears, and because the viewer is asked to consider the impact of the “assembled material” of the film archive alongside the perspectives of trans people.*
* *Pluralistic perspectives, rather than filmmaker’s perspective: In explaining Errol Morris’s work, Nichols explains, “Morris seeks less to isolate the truth in any given case than to explore truths internalized and articulated by his subjects and amplified in myriad ways by the sounds and images he chooses as accompaniment to what they say” (143). “Filmmakers make use of the interview to bring different accounts together in a single story. The filmmaker’s voice emerges as it weaves together contributing voices and supporting material” (146). Feder foregrounds a variety of trans voices, and they don’t always agree with each other. The audience is given the opportunity to learn from a variety of perspectives and synthesize their claims.*
* *The personal and the political (144): This film illustrates Nichols’ points that interviews often demonstrate the interconnection between the personal and the political, and show how individuals’ experiences are structured by social factors and institutional power.*
* *“The interview and the archive”: Nichols speaks of films that connect interviews conducted by the filmmaker and a “vast archive of previously shot footage” (146) to explain historical events and their impact on individuals. Disclosure is somewhat unique (similar to* The Celluloid Closet) *in that it uses the archive of film and television footage as its historical focus, rather than speaking of wars or other historical events as many “compilation films” do.*

1. What argument is made in the scene we just watched? How does Feder use formal elements to support that argument?

* *Argument: This scene suggests that talk shows tend to dehumanize trans people by focusing on medicalization, treating trans identity as a spectacle, and presenting cis people as entitled to ask invasive questions or mock trans people. However, the scene also shows that for some trans spectators, talk shows in the 1980s and 1990s presented a rare opportunity to see oneself represented in some form on screen, and that some major trans activists, such as Leslie Feinberg and Kate Bornstein, used this format to communicate effectively with a mass audience.*
* *Interviews/Editing/Pacing: Jen Richards and Ser Anzoategui ask rapid-fire questions that summarize the depiction of trans people on talk shows. Their comments are voiceovers over fast-paced editing that showcases the singular narrative presented again and again in these talk shows of a trans person as spectacle for the voyeuristic cisgender audience in the studio and at home. Their interviews critique the invasive nature of the questioning and the “circus” that these shows created.*
* *Editing/Interviews/Clips of Cossey: The clips of Caroline Cossey speaking on talk shows and the clips of Laverne Cox and Ser Anzoategui responding to her show the horrific objectification she endured, but also celebrate her humor and grace in responding to objectification. While the shows she was on objectified her, the use of these clips in tandem with trans spectators responding to her creates a new way of thinking about these clips; to Ser Anzoategui, she was heroic for her impressive ability to fend off the most invasive and humiliating elements of this TV format.*
* *Editing/Interviews/Clips of Bornstein and Feinberg: Zackary Drucker and Jen Richards speak of the power of seeing trans representation in spite of the dehumanization of these shows, and Drucker speaks of the “monuments” who used this format to effectively communicate; this is cut together with a clip of Kate Bornstein, a famous trans writer, explaining what gender identity is on a 1991 episode of* The Phil Donahue Show. *Drucker explains, “it was an opportunity to get paid and tell their story. And it did reach us.” In this moment, Drucker is not only an actor and producer, but also a spectator, speaking of her experience as a trans audience member watching these shows and learning from them. This scene, like many others, disrupts the assumption that the audience of film and television is cisgender, and helps show how trans people respond to positive and negative depictions of trans identity on screen. This section of the scene shows how, despite the narrative generally constructed throughout this format, trans people were able to resist objectification and communicate to a mass audience about trans identity in a humanizing way. The* Joan Rivers Show *clip also supports this claim, and emphasizes the impact of positive representations of trans identities on cis audiences.*

1. (20 min) Whole class discussion.
2. What are the most important ideas in the excerpts you read from Nichols’ book? What evidence was most important for supporting those claims?
3. On p. 104, how does Nichols define documentary?
4. Consider Nichols’ comments about voice and perspective on p. 104-105. How does this help us understand documentaries as arguments? (How would this comment help you respond to someone who said documentaries are “biased?”)
5. On p. 105-108, Nichols outlines the modes and models he will discuss. What’s the difference between a model and a mode? What’s important to keep in mind about this framework as we explore it in more depth?
6. Review p. 138. How does Nichols define the participatory mode?
7. Review p. 143 and 146. What role do interviews play in the participatory mode? What do directors use alongside interviews in the participatory mode?
8. Review p. 146. What does Nichols argue about the “interview and the archive?”
9. What elements of *Disclosure—*in the scenes we’ve reviewed this week or other scenes you recall—illustrate how it exemplifies the participatory mode? What other choices could Feder have made in terms of models or modes? What does the participatory mode provide for Feder?
10. Consider Nichols’ comments on p. 138 which speak of the participatory mode’s focus on the relationship between “the viewer and the assembled material.” How does *Disclosure* fit that description?
11. Review p. 143 and 146. How does Nichols’ description of perspective on these pages relate to the voice *Disclosure* adopts?
12. Consider Nichols’ comments about the relationship between the personal and the political in the participatory mode on p. 144. How does *Disclosure* unite the personal and the political?
13. Consider Nichols’ claim about the “interview and the archive” on p. 146. How does *Disclosure* fit this description? What’s unique about the “archive” this film makes use of, in comparison to other films that make arguments about history using previously shot footage?
14. What argument is made in the scene we just watched? How does Feder use formal elements to support that argument?
15. How do the interviews with Jen Richards and Ser Anzoategui at the start of this scene work together with the clips edited together? What’s the impact of seeing this montage in tandem with their comments?
16. Consider the clips of Caroline Cossey alongside the comments of Ser Anzoategui and Laverne Cox. What was your response to this section of the scene? How do the interviews with Anzoategui and Cox affect your understanding of Cossey?
17. How do the interviews with Zackary Drucker and Jen Richards towards the end of the scene, and the clips of Kate Bornstein and Leslie Feinberg, who are famous trans activists, complicate our understanding of trans people on talk shows during this time period? What were these activists able to accomplish? According to Drucker, what was the impact of that?
18. Throughout this scene, trans people in the film industry speak about their experience being in the audience and seeing trans people on screen. Why is this an important part of the film’s message? How does it help build Feder’s argument?
19. **Extension question:** Have you ever seen talk shows like the ones spoken about in this clip? If so, how does this affect your opinion of them? If not, what surprises you about this set of clips from the 1980s and 1990s?