UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, SYDNEY
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Course Name: Bachelor of Arts in Communication
Subject No and Name: [*****] Online Documentary
Level: 300
Number of Credit points: 8
Prerequisites (one of the following):

    50199 (200) Documentary Production
    50155 (200) Film and Video Production
    50157 (200) New Media Fundamentals
    50169 (200) Writing and New Media
    50194 (300) Radio Journalism 2
    50195 (300) Television Journalism 2
    50304 (300) Online Journalism 2
    50490 (200) Information Design for Communicating
    50653 (300) New Media & Social Change

Semester offered: Spring
Grading: Graded

HANDBOOK DESCRIPTION

Online Documentary is a cross-disciplinary subject for students wishing to work collaboratively to create documentary for the World Wide Web, a form which marries advanced content development with creative digital media production. Appropriate skills in prerequisite subjects include media production and/or Web publishing; skills required include research and writing, video and/or sound, Flash animation, screen design, HTML authoring and project management. *Working in creative teams, students use their strengths to develop an online documentary project from concept through to realisation.* The subject consolidates students' professional skills and encourages a critical and creative inquiry into the role and future of interactive online documentary at the threshold of mainstream broadband uptake.

CONTRIBUTION TO GRADUATE PROFILE OBJECTIVES

Online Documentary aims to:

a) explore models to apply non-linear narrative within the open architecture of the internet;

b) understand the range of roles within online documentary production and to develop teamwork skills within that framework;

c) acquire professional skills in developing an idea for an online documentary from concept through to realisation and taking it through the stages of production proposal, research and writing, technical and creative production through to upload to the server;

d) have developed a critical understanding of the different techniques and forms of the online documentary;

e) apply advanced content development with digital media and Web technologies;

f) apply mechanisms for interactivity in the production of online documentary.

OBJECTIVES OF SUBJECT

Students who complete this subject will:

1. have the ability to examine and critique different models of online documentary;

2. have the ability to communicate ideas in a written form to a client or funding body;

3. have the ability to develop to produce a non-linear interactive documentary work for the World Wide Web from concept through to realisation;

4. have team work skills within a recognised new media production structure;

5. understand the opportunities and challenges for interactivity on the internet;

6. understand the imperatives of production deadlines;

7. have developed an approach to reflective practice within a collaborative production environment.

TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Online Documentary is a computer lab-based subject, which uses the internet and digital media production tools. There will be lectures, discussions and viewings. Students participate in class workshops and exercises, out of class team production work; research; project development and in-class work-in-progress discussions. Guest lecturers will be invited to classes.

Students are expected to maintain an awareness of the uptake and integration of new media works within the screen industry; of broadband developments and the convergence of digital technologies and associated disciplines.

The subject places a strong emphasis on teamwork and the requirement for individuals to be responsible to the team, its processes and outcomes.

Self-directed learning is strongly encouraged as an integral part of learning digital media applications.

All students will have access to an online forum for discussion, team communication, posting production meeting notes and announcements.

CONTENT ASSESSMENT

Task 1:
i) Online documentary critique and proposal; ii) Peer review.
Objectives:
        i) To develop ability to critique online documentary;
        ii) To examine different models for online documentary;
        iii) To communicate ideas in a written form to a client or funding body.
Value: 25%
Due: i) Week 3
        ii) Post 2 peer reviews on UTS Online within 7 days.
Task:
Select an online documentary from a list to be provided; write a 500 word critique of the work with reference to: its content; as a model for online documentary; its narrative; interactivity and target audience. What works best? What doesn't work? Discuss the evidence and the maker's interpretation of the evidence. Is it a catalyst for public opinion or social change? Is its interest local or global?

Write a short 1-page proposal for the same online documentary. Post both documents to the online forum before class in Week 3.

Write 2 peer reviews of 300 words each of works submitted by other students in week 3 (submit using reply thread).

Critique and proposal posted to online forum: 15%
Peer review postings to online forum: 10%

Assessment criteria:

i) a demonstrated ability to analyse online documentary as demonstrated by the relevance and interpretation of the key features of the work;

ii) the quality and structure of your written proposal;

iii) punctuality in submitting written work;

iv) the precision of the targeting of your ideas in written form;

v) the relevance and thoughtfulness of your peer review submissions.

Task 2:

Production of a team-devised and created online documentary (equivalent to a 3-5 minute linear documentary): Group

Objectives:

     i) to develop the skills necessary to produce a non-linear interactive documentary work for the World Wide Web from concept through to realisation;

     ii) to develop team work skills within a recognised new media production structure;

     iv) to explore opportunities and challenges for interactivity on the internet;

     v) to meet production deadlines.

Value: 60%

Due: Various: final completion Week 14

Task:

Students will work in a team to produce a non-linear interactive documentary work for the World Wide Web to be uploaded, tested and published from a Faculty server. The work will focus on a topic researched and developed from concept through to completion by the team and may include text, stills, sound, video and Flash animation. Key compulsory steps are:

i) The proposal – present and discuss in class: **due Week: 5**

     the big picture: what are the issues and angles?

     who are the stakeholders in the story?

     what are the narrative concerns?

     how will the key characters be represented?

     any ethical concerns?

     what are the major production components?

NOTE: Students are required to include a statement acknowledging understanding of intellectual property issues in the documentary work.

ii) <u>Production report</u>: the draft of the site architecture embracing all components including interactivity and team task allocations: **due Week 7**: (discuss in class and post report to online forum)

iii) <u>Review and discussion of works in progress</u>: **due Weeks 10-11**

Include production reports: outline of individual components (1-2 page summary of each, posted to UTSOnline or group weblog), including as appropriate:

> structural diagram of each component
>
> research strategy
>
> interview schedule: who, when, where and why
>
> storyboards for video and audio components
>
> design drafts including interactive features

iv) **Week 14:** Uploading, testing and completion of work; present completed work to class; evaluation and feedback session; results of usability study.

Assessment criteria:

- Successful completion of the project which conforms to the deadline;
- Demonstrated advanced level professional skills in presentation and production of all aspects of the work;
- Demonstrated ability to work and communicate successfully within a team environment;
- The quality of research and writing: accuracy and fairness;
- Evidence of skills in analysis and adaptation of information for online documentary;
- The effectiveness of the design and visual communication;
- Evidence of skills in Web site construction, architecture and online usability;
- Satisfactory implementation of all aspects of the work;
- Innovative engagement with users;
- Correct attribution of quotes, accuracy of information, photo credits, location agreements, copyright clearances, crew and production credits.

Teams will be formed early in the semester according to student preferences and pre-existing skills. Roles and sub-tasks within the teams will be clearly defined and allocated according to digital media industry models. Students will be expected to work independently within their specialist areas as well as maintain a commitment and responsibility to the team and overall production.

The same mark will be allocated to all members of the production team unless convincing reasons for individual assessment can be made to the subject coordinator. The work must be well balanced in all aspects of the assessment criteria: those who perform well in all will do well and those who excel in one aspect but poorly in others will get a pass.

In this assignment students will be expected to communicate both face-to-face and online. All production documentation including interviews, transcripts, rushes, tapes and research materials should be maintained and submitted to the lecturer at the end of the semester.

Task 3: Reflective web diary and production report
Objectives:
To develop a reflective practice and assess one's learning and engagement in a collaborative production environment.

Value: 15%

Due: Throughout semester

Task: Create and maintain a personal web diary (weblog) throughout the semester with a minimum of 6 postings throughout the semester. The weblog can be public or private: the URL is to be submitted to the lecturer in Week 3.

The weblog can include URLs to other works, reflections which evaluate your own learning, your changing perceptions of online documentary forms, users and usability, content etc. You may also use it to provide thoughtful feedback on the course as well as any additional points, responses or ideas.

The weblog should also include a 'critical incident report' in which you describe and discuss 2 aspects of the documentary production which could have been done better.

Assessment criteria:
- Maintaining the weblog/diary as prescribed;
- Evidence of consideration of your own progress, creative responses and reflections on collaborative production;
- Evidence of reflective thought.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Since class discussion and team based collaboration in activities form an integral part of this subject, you are expected to attend, arrive punctually and actively participate in classes. Should you experience difficulties in meeting this requirement, please contact your lecturer. Students who have a reason for extended absence from class (e.g. illness) may be required to complete additional work to ensure they achieve the subject objectives.

Students must complete all required assignments within given timeframes to receive a grade.

Students are required to participate in all activities and set exercises set in or out of class.

TEXTS AND REFERENCES

There will be a book of readings for this course.

Azarmsa, R. (1996*): Multimedia: interactive video production*, Belmont, Integrated Media Group.

Billups, Scott (2001); *Digital Moviemaking: the Filmmaker's Guide to the 21ˢᵗ Century*, Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions.

Blattner, Meera M. & Roger B. Dannenberg. ed (1992) *Multimedia Interface Design*, Reading: Addison-Wesley; Reading, Mass.

Brennan, G. (1995) *Screen Culture in the Digital Age: Multimedia filmmakers, artists and the community*; Open Channel, Melbourne.

Bruzzi, Stella (2000); *New Documentary: A critical introduction*, Routledge, London.

Crawford, Kilian; (2000) *Writing for the Web*: *Writers' Edition*; Self Counsel Press, USA

Dancyger, Ken (2002); *The Techniques of Film and Video Editing*: *history, theory and practice*, Focal Press, Boston.

England, E. **& Finney, Andy**; (1999) *Managing Multimedia: Project Management For Interactive Media*, Harlow: Addison-Wesley.

Flew, Terry (2002); *New Media Technologies*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

Forrester, **W. & Rowland, J**. (2000); *The Online Searcher's Companion*, Library Association Publishing, London.

Garrand, T (2001); *Writing for Multimedia and the Web*, 2ⁿᵈ ed. Woburn Mass., Focal Press.

Grant, Tony (2003); *Audio for Single Camera Operation*, Focal Press, Burlington, MA.

Kochberg, Searle (ed.) (2002) *Introduction to Documentary Production: A Guide for Media Students*. London and New York, Wallflower Press.

Kristof, R. (1995); *Interactivity by Design: creating and communicating with new media*, Adobe Press, Mountain View, Calif.

Manovich, L. (2001); *The Language of New Media*. Cambridge Press. MIT, Mass.

Meikle, Graham (2002); *Future Active: Media Activism on the Internet*; Pluto Press, Sydney.

McGuire, M., Stilborne, L., McAdams, M., Hyatt, L. (2000*) The Internet Handbook for Writers, Researchers & Journalists*; Guilford, NY, NY.

McMillan, S. (2002); A four-part model of cyber-interactivity', New Media & Society, 4 (2), 271-291.

McGuire, **M., Stilborne, L., McAdams, M., Hyatt, L**. (2001*) The Internet Handbook for Writers, Researchers & Journalists*; Guilford , NY, NY.

Middlemiss, Jenny (1992); *Guide to Film and Television Research*, AFTRS, Sydney, 1992.

Murray, J. (1997) *Hamlet on the Holodeck: the future of narrative in cyberspace*, Free press, NY.

Nichols, Bill (2001); *Introduction to Documentary*; Indiana University Press, Bloomington.

Nielsen, Jakob (2000); *Designing Web Usability*; New Riders, Indiana, USA.

Norman, Donald A. (1990); *The Design of Everyday Things*; Currency/Doubleday.

Poole, Curtis & Bradley, Janette; (2003) Developers *Digital Media: Reference*, Focal Press, Burlington, MA.

Rabiger, Michael (1998); *Directing the Documentary;* (3rd ed.) Focal Press, USA.

Rabinowitz, Paula (1994*); They Must be Represented: the Politics of Documentary*, Verso, London.

Renov, Michael (ed) (1993) *Theorizing Documentary*, New York: Routledge.

Rheingold, Howard (1994) *The Virtual Community*; Secker & Warburg, London. Also available in digital form (along with other writings) at: http://www.rheingold.com/

Rosenthal, Alan (ed) (1996) *Writing, Directing and Producing Documentary Films*. Revised edition. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

Servon, L. with Nelson, M. (2002); "The role of CTCs within the Community Technology Movement" in L. Servon (ed) *Bridging the Digital Divide*, Oxford, Blackwell, 45-76.

Stansberry, D. (1998); *Labyrinths: the art of interactive writing and design*, Belmont, CA.

Tarrant, Jon, (2003) *Digital Camera Techniques*, Focal Press, Burlington MA.

Wark, McKenzie (1994), *Virtual Geography; Living with Global Media Events*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press.

Wilber, Rick & Miller, Randy (2003); *Modern Media Writing*; Nelson Thompson Learning, Melbourne.

Winston, Brian (2000); *Lies, damn lies and documentaries,* British Film Institute, London.

UTS Library Collection: Documentaries for Viewing and Research
General Criteria for Commissioned Documentaries at the ABC.

Australian documentary information, funding and guidelines

Ozdocs: http://www.ozdox.com.au

Australian Film Commission: http://www.afc.gov.au

Australian Film Finance Corporation http://www.ffc.gov.au/

Australian Screen Directors Association

http://www.asda.film.org.au/

Australian Interactive Media Industry Association (AIMIA)

http://www.aimia.com.au/

Film Australia http://www.filmaust.com.au/

Screen Producers Association of Australia (SPAA)

http://www.spaa.org.au/ - do they have new media section?

SBS Independent (SBSI) http://www.sbs.com.au/sbsi/

Australian Copyright Council http://www.acc.org.au

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Hardware:

        Networked PC computer lab – PIN access

        High end graphic computers with sound and video cards

        Server configured for internet, file streaming and file storage

        Data projector in lab

        Digital still cameras; ancillary software and cables

        Digital image scanner

        Digital video cameras, batteries, battery packs, mikes, tripods etc

        Digital video edit suites

        ProTools suite

        Minidisc recorders

        Several DV decks: one for demonstration – others for student use

        Dedicated workstations for digital video editing and compression

Access to ePress (UTS Library) film and/or video digitisation (awaiting confirmation of availability)

Software:

All standards such as MS Word, browsers PLUS Photoshop, DreamWeaver, Final Cut Pro (or equivalent), Flash, Professional Codex - compression (or equivalent), ProTools (or equivalent)

Online production support requirement:

Assist students with the realisation of their projects and offer advice on technical and network issues.

Guest lectures

3 x 1 hour guest lectures

In-class workshops

Workshops will be offered to students where necessary to update existing software skills, which they bring with them from prior production prerequisites. The workshops will provide a focus on teamwork and integration of skills:

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