EDITING THE DOCUMENTARY
Instructor: Peter Thompson
Spring 2006

Course Information

Document Date/Semester	Spring, 2006, 01/10/06
Course Number and Title	24-4403-01
Class Time and Day	Tuesday, 6:00PM
Classroom Building and Room Number	1104 South Wabash, room 611
Additional facilities, if applicable	
Film Department Website	www.filmatcolumbia.com
College Name and Address	Columbia College Chicago 600 S. Michigan Ave. Chicago IL 60605
Course Coordinator	Chris Peppy

Instructor Information

Name	Peter Thompson
Department Phone	312 344-7593
Studio Phone	773 404-2002
Fax Number	773 975-6662
Email Address	peterchicagomediaworks@hotmail.com
Office Hours	Main Campus building, room 1106, Tuesdays from 2-6 pm. Telephone my studio (773 404-2002) to make an appointment for the time you would like (from 5 minutes to 1 hour).
Office Location	600 S. Michigan Ave., room 1106
Mailbox Location	600 S. Michigan Ave., room 1200

Required Texts and Materials

Text	GRAMMAR OF THE EDIT by Roy Thompson (no relation, unfortunately). This book is available in the CC Bookstore.
Supplies/Materials	(None needed—everything supplied).
Bibliography, supplemental and suggested readings	All essential handouts for this course are on my website: http://www.chicagomediaworks.com. Once on the site, navigate to "Instructional Works", then to "Editing the Documentary" and then to the desired document. All documents are downloadable.
Course Fee	$180

Course description
This course provides documentary editing experience in three areas: 1) developing information-handling systems to deal with large amounts of film material, 2) acquiring the means to apply ideas about that material in order to develop a comprehensive authorial approach, and 3) using digital video editing equipment for each student to edit their own interpretations of three typical types of documentary footage: ethnographic, political and sociological.

Course rationale
This course is required for editing majors for two reasons: they are often the hardest to edit, and they are often the first type of film that an editor is hired to edit.

Prerequisites
You will need modest expertise in montage theory and in video editing. A working knowledge of the computer productivity software taught in the Foundations of Computer Applications class (required for graduation) is helpful, but not required.

Goals and Objectives
PRACTICAL
• Know the post-production documentary process, including how to work with a director, decisions in setting up an editing studio, and major financial categories.
• Know how to edit a single camera documentary scene as if it were shot with two cameras, (including how to edit motivated cutaways).
• Know how to deal with enormous quantites of documentary material and to view and log rushes. In terms of logging: the differences between simple, complex and developing shots and how to log them (XCU, BCU, CU, MCU, MS, MLS, LS, VLS, XLS, pan, tilt, zoom in/out).
• Know how to use a computer to make transcriptions, two-column documentary scripts, and paper edits.
• Know how to make a documentary proposal and treatment.
• Know main issues of voice-over narration, subtitles and intertitles.

HISTORY & THEORY
• Know the names of the four documentary styles, their characteristics and canons of belief, and the names of at least two documentaries embodying each style.
• Know how the evolution in the methodology of ethnographic films influenced the history of documentary, and the names of at least five ethnographic films embodying that evolution.
• Know the contents of four essays by Sergei Eisenstein ("The Unexpected", "A Statement", "The Cinematic Principle and the Ideogram", "Methods of Montage") and their relevancy in editing.
• Know the differences between the two major types of content metaphors (Pudovkin's "associational montage" and Eisenstein's "collision montage") and the major types of editing metaphors (duration and placement, rhythm, framing, kinetic, aural, optical) and their relevancy in editing.

Whew! And this is just the beginning…. So:

Taking good notes is essential—without them you might have difficulty passing this course.

You must work and participate actively in all discussions. Graduate students should lead the way. You should be organized, able to work for long periods alone, and enjoy the process of creating scenes experimentally with time devoted to building and rebuilding them. You will need to devote 6-10 hours per week to work outside class.

You should keep this document as well as your returned assignments, quizzes and examinations because it is your responsibility to know these written policies and your performance to date. The grade sheet will always be open and by my lecture notes; you may freely consult your grades to date at any time.

Grading policy and evaluation procedures

Credit hours:	3
Grading scale:	**GRADES:** Grades are based on the quality of your work, your ability as a professional-in-training to meet each deadline, and your ability to work responsibly and creatively with editing problems and issues. Grades are awarded as follows: **Assignments**: You will be graded at each deadline: F if you miss it; D, C, B, or A for quality of work if you meet it. (50% of grade).

	Final Edits: F for each project if you are absent for your final presentation in each of the final projects or have no completed work; D, C, B, or A for quality and originality of work completed within the semester. (50% of grade).
Requirements and assignments:	Assignments and quizzes are listed in the syllabus.
Standards and proportions used:	**Grading Scale:** **I** ABSOLUTELY no incompletes. **F** If you are absent from your final presentation(s); **D** Sub-standard work**.** **C** Work of average quality and with average participation. **B** Assignments presented on time, regular attendance, good participation, and steady significant efforts throughout. Many students receive this grade. **A** "B" requirements, along with outstanding participation and work. A small number of students normally receive this grade. You should keep this document as well as all quizzes and examinations because it is your responsibility to know these written policies and your performance to date.
Return student work	(Not relevant)

Classroom policies

Academic Integrity:	All students are responsible for insuring that original work is correctly attributed. Students must give clear and complete attributions for the work of others in their films. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in the failure of the course. Courtesy must be observed at all times in my classroom. Please read the academic policies of this college. I will follow those policies in any instance of academic dishonesty.
Attendance policy:	Columbia standard is that more than 3 absences in a course that meets once per week will result in an automatic failing grade.
Absences:	We will move quickly in this course. It is my experience that if a student misses a single class within the first nine weeks, it is difficult to catch up. Two missed classes are very difficult to overcome. Because of this, there are no excused absences (with the exceptions of jury duty, jail or military duty). At the fourth absence a student will earn an "F" for the course. I advise you to obtain the email and telephone number of a fellow student and to contact them for notes and work due if you are forced to be absent—especially given the fact that this syllabus will be changing from week to week in response to your needs and learning pace (see Syllabus, below).
Tardiness:	Tardiness is unexceptable because it disrupts learning.

	Arriving 15 minutes after the scheduled starting time for the class will be considered a late arrival. Two late arrivals will result in one absence. Leaving fifteen minutes before the end of class will be considered an early exit. Two early exits will result in one absence.
Late work and makeup assignments:	You will be graded at each deadline--and, like any professional deadline, if you miss it you MAY NOT make it up unless you have previously arranged it with me. Late assignments without previous arrangement will not be graded. You may always, however, hand in a late assignment for feedback, only. F for the assignment if you miss it; D, C, B, or A for quality of work if you meet it.
Incomplete Policy	ABSOLUTELY no incompletes.

Conaway Center Statement

"Students with disabilities are requested to present their Columbia accommodation letters to their instructor at the beginning of the semester so that accommodations can be arranged in a timely manner by the College, the department or the faculty member, as appropriate. Students with disabilities who do not have accommodation letters should visit the office of Services for Students with Disabilities in room 520 of the Congress building (312.344.8134/V or 312.360.0767/TTY). It is incumbent upon the student to know their responsibilities in this regard."

Course calendar

Please note that individual class sessions are subject to change. I will make every effort to keep you informed of changes in the schedule. Some items may change at my discretion, but the overall workload will not change.

Additional note: projects may be edited on the Avid systems at Columbia and presented on that system. However, if you find it more convenient to edit in your own studio, you may digitize the rushes and present your edits on VHS or DVD.

WEEK ONE—January 24
Syllabus
> Discussion: Questionaire, Genesis of class, Texts, Documentary editing issues and organization, Post-production overview, Dealing with directors, Editor's notebook, Assigning students' documentaries, first ethnographic project (Maya Project #1).

Handouts:
- Questionnaire
- Syllabus http://www.chicagomediaworks.com/
- Chronology of Documentary and Ethnographic Styles http://www.chicagomediaworks.com/2instructworks/3editing_doc/3editing_docfilmstyles.html
- Setting up a Documentary Office (http://www.chicagomediaworks.com/2instructworks/3editing_doc/3editing_docetcetera.html
- Editor's Log http://www.chicagomediaworks.com/2instructworks/3editing_doc/3editing_docetcetera.html
- Maya footage background information (transcripts of 5 scenes, drawings, etc): http://www.chicagomediaworks.com/2mediawks/3media_shaman/shamanpage.html
- Download Maya Project Instructions and Maya Project Log http://www.chicagomediaworks.com/2instructworks/3editing_doc/3editing_doctranscripts.html

View: Documentary sampler: four main styles of documentary film.

To do:
- Read Syllabus. Sign contract at the end of the syllabus and bring to Week Two.
- Download and modify the "Editor's Log" for your own use.
- Purchase and complete the reading of GRAMMAR OF THE EDIT by Week Four. Quiz on Week Four.
- Set up your documentary office.
- Print out "Chronology of Documentary and Ethnographic Styles" and bring to all classes.
- View VHS dupe tapes of ethnographic footage Project #1 (healing at altar). Director's instructions: It was a single camera shoot. Edit it so that the scene seems shot by two cameras; make all cutaways motivated; be faithful to the spirit of the entire event and the relative lengths of each part. Cut for total length of 5-6 minutes. Rough cut due Week Three.

WEEK TWO—January 31
Due: Statement of Understanding
Lecture:
      Bryan McHenry: intro to facilities, groundrules, passwords
      Questionaire results
      Screening student documentaries
      Fundamental issues of the Documentary Genre
            (Grierson tradition up to Cinema Verité)
      Ethnographic project background and instructions
Discussion:
      Footage impressions, working around poor documentary footage, review and check logs, establish footage chronology and list of characters, working with Director.
View: The Chronology of Documentary Films, part 1

WEEK THREE—February 7
DUE: Rough cut of Ethnograhic Project #1
Fundamental issues of the Documentary Genre
      (Direct Address with Interview up to Cinematic Essay)
Editing single camera footage as if it were shot by two cameras, Director's instructions.
View: Screening students' documentaries
    The Chronology of Documentary Films, part 2
To do:
- Continue editing Ethnographic Project #1

WEEK FOUR—February 14
DUE: Rough cut of Ethnographic Project #1
Quiz on GRAMMAR OF THE EDIT
Lecture: History of Ethnographic Films, part 1
View: Screening students' documentaries
    Chronology of Ethnographic Films, part 1
Handouts:
- Peter Thompson, "Ethnographic Cinematography"
  http://www.chicagomediaworks.com/2instructworks/3editing_doc/3editingdoccinematography.html
- Peter Thompson, "Quick! Before They're Gone: Notes on Subtitles and Intertitles
  http://www.chicagomediaworks.com/2instructworks/3editing_doc/3editing_docsubtitles.html
To do:

- Read Peter Thompson, "Quick! Read Before They're Gone: Notes on Subtitles and Intertitles"
- Continue editing Ethnographic Project #1. Finecut due Week Five.

WEEK FIVE – February 21
DUE: FINE CUT of Ethnographic Project #1
Critiques of fine cut
Lecture: History of Ethnographic Films, part 2
Discussion: ethnographic issues, subtitling and intertitling documentary films
View: Bad ethnographic films and what they teach us
        Screening students' documentaries
        Ethnographic films
To do:
- View rushes of Ethnograhic Project #2 (rough cut due Week Six)
- Read Ethnographic footage log and Director's instructions for second project
  http://www.chicagomediaworks.com/2instructworks/3editing_doc/3editing_doctranscripts.html

WEEK SIX -- February 28
DUE: Rough cut of Ethnographic Project #2
Discussion: writing voice-over narration.
View: Screening students' documentaries
    The Chronology of Documentary Films, part 3
To do:
- Continue to edit Ethnographic Project #2.
- Read Edward Dymtryk's "Rules of Editing".

WEEK SEVEN -- March 7
DUE: Rough cut of Ethnographic Project #2
Lecture: Edward Dymtryk's "Rules of Editing", Working with transcripts and logs
        Innovations in Documentary Film: Dziga Vertov, Jean Rouch and the Methodology of
        Ethnographic Film
View: Screening students' documentaries
    The Chronology of Documentary Films, part 4 (Vertov, Rouch, Asch)
To do: Fine cut of Maya Project #2 due Week Eight.

WEEK EIGHT -- March 14
DUE: FINE CUT of Ethnographic Project #2
Lecture: Background of Interview Project.
        Computer as documentary production tool, paper edits.
        Paper edit examples: "Apocalypse Now ".
Discussion:
        Footage impressions, working around poor documentary footage, review and check
        logs, establish footage chronology and list of characters, discuss use of transcripts and
        transcript format, use of computer for transcripts, purpose of Premise and POV, logging.
View: Screening students' documentaries
    The Chronology of Documentary Films, part 5
To do:
- View rushes of "Interview Project"
- Download Transcript Instructions
  http://www.chicagomediaworks.com/2instructworks/3editing_doc/3editing_doctranscripts.html

- Download footage log and transcript
  http://www.chicagomediaworks.com/2instructworks/3editing_doc/3editing_doctranscripts.html
- Download Logging template
  http://www.chicagomediaworks.com/2instructworks/3editing_doc/3editing_docetcetera.html

WEEK NINE – March 28
DUE: Rough cut of Interview Project
Demo: Logs, exporting databases to text, using Outline function to make paper edit
In class:
  Writing voice-over narration, practical survival issues for the editor.
View: Screening students' documentaries
  The Chronology of Documentary Films, part 6 (Cinema Verite and Direct Cinema, "Chronicle of a Summer")
To do:
- Read Eisenstein's montage theories
  http://www.chicagomediaworks.com/2instructworks/3editing_doc/3editingeisenstein.html
- Make rough cut of film according to paper edit (due week 10).

WEEK TEN -- April 4
DUE: Rough cut of Interview Project
In class:
  Eisenstein's montage theories, workarounds.
  Writing narration, Parallel cutting, practical survival issues for the editor.
View: Screening students' documentaries
  The Chronology of Documentary Films, part 7 (Cinema Verité and Direct Cinema, "Titticut Follies")

To do: Fine cut of Interview Project (due Week Eleven).
- Download "Editing diagnosis template"
  (http://www.chicagomediaworks.com/2instructworks/3editing_doc/3editing_docetcetera.html
- Read Documentary Proposal Guide and Documentary Development Process:
  http://www.chicagomediaworks.com/2instructworks/3editing_doc/3editing_docetcetera.html

WEEK ELEVEN -- April 11
DUE: FINE CUT of Interview Project
Lecture: Transcripts and transcript template, practical survival issues for the editor.
View: Screening students' documentaries
  The Chronology of Documentary Films, part 8 (Direct Address with Interview)
To do:
- View Socio-cultural project footage. Assembly due Week Twelve.
- Study transcripts, Identify action sequences.
- Read the sample Premise and POV
  http://www.chicagomediaworks.com/2instructworks/3editing_doc/3editing_doctranscripts.html
- Type your own Premise and Treatment, print out and bring to class on Week Twelve.
- Make paper edit of film based upon premise and treatment. Bring paper edit cards to Week Twelve.

WEEK TWELVE -- April 18
DUE: Paper edit, Premise and Treatment of Socio-cultural Project
Discussion:
     Socio-Cultural Project: Footage impressions, working around poor documentary footage, review and check logs, establish footage chronology and list of characters, discuss use of transcripts and transcript format, use of computer for transcripts, purpose of Premise and POV, logging.
View: Screening students' documentaries
        The Chronology of Documentary Films, part 9 (Direct Address with Interview)
To do: continue editing toward a fine cut.
   • Type your own Premise and Treatment for this film, print out and bring to class on Week Thirteen.
   • Make paper edit of film based upon premise and treatment. Bring paper edit cards to Week Thirteen.
   • Assembly edit of Socio-cultural project

WEEK THIRTEEN -- April 25
DUE: Assembly edit of Socio-cultural Project, Typed Premise and Treatment, paper edit cards.
View: Screening students' documentaries
        The Chronology of Documentary Films, part 9 (Cinematic Essay)
Post production audio issues, Music in Doc films; response to issues;
To do: Continue editing towards fine cut of Socio-cultural project.

WEEK FOURTEEN -- May 2
DUE: Rough cut of Socio-cultural Project
View: Screening students' documentaries
        The Chronology of Documentary Films, part 10 (Cinematic Essay)
To do: Fine Cut of Socio-cultural Project due Week Fifteen

WEEK FIFTEEN   -- May 9
DUE: FINE CUT of Socio-cultural Project

PETER'S RECOMMENDED BOOKS ON EDITING:

David Bell, GETTING THE BEST SCORE FOR YOUR FILM: A FILMMAKER'S GUIDE TO MUSIC SCORING, Silman-James Press, 1994.

Noel Burch, THEORY OF FILM PRACTICE, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1981. paperback

Ken Dancyger, THE TECHNIQUE OF FILM AND VIDEO EDITING: THEORY AND PRACTICE, Focal Press, Boston, 1997.

Edward Dmytryk, ON FILM EDITING: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ART OF FILM CONSTRUCTION, Focal Press, 1984.

Norman Hollyn, THE FILM EDITING ROOM HANDBOOK: HOW TO MANAGE THE NEAR CHAOS OF THE CUTTING ROOM, Lone Eagle Publishing, Los Angeles, 1999.

Vincent LoBrutto, SELECTED TAKES: FILM EDITORS ON EDITING, Praeger, NY, 1991.

Walter Murch, IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE: A PERSPECTIVE ON FILM EDITING, Silman-James Press, Los Angeles, 1995. pb.

Gabriella Oldham, FIRST CUT: CONVERSATIONS WITH FILM EDITORS, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 1992.

Karel Reisz and Gavin Millar, THE TECHNIQUE OF FILM EDITING, New York, Hastings House, 1968. (out of print: find in used bookstores).

Ralph Rosenblum and Robert Karen, WHEN THE SHOOTING STOPS...THE CUTTING BEGINS, Pengiun Books, 1980.

Roy Thompson, GRAMMAR OF THE EDIT, Focal Press, 1997.

PETER'S RECOMMENDED BOOKS ON DOCUMENTARY ISSUES:

Ilisa Barbash and Lucien Taylor, CROSS-CULTURAL FILMMAKING:
A HANDBOOK FOR MAKING DOCUMENTARY AND ETHNOGRAPHIC FILMS AND VIDEOS, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 1997.

Robert Coles, DOING DOCUMENTARY WORK, Oxford University Press, 1997.

Peter Loizos, INNOVATION IN ETHNOGRAPHIC FILM: FROM INNOCENCE TO SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS 1955-1985, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1993.

David MacDougall, TRANSCULTURAL CINEMA, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1998.

Sharon R. Sherman, DOCUMENTING OURSELVES: FILM, VIDEO AND CULTURE, University Press of Kentucky, 1998.

Alan Rosenthal, editor. NEW CHALLENGES FOR DOCUMENTARY, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 1988.

Charles Warren, editor. BEYOND DOCUMENT: ESSAYS ON NONFICTION FILM, Wesleyan University Press, 1996.

Student's Understanding
I have carefully read through the Syllabus and Attendance & Grading Policy for this class, and understand what will be expected of me in this course.

(Please sign, date, remove from the syllabus, and return to Peter at the Week Two class session).

Your name printed: _____

Your signature _____ Date: