**Module 11: Documentary**

**Objectives:** After completing this module, you should be able to

- understand the differences between “traditional” and cinema verite documentary.

- understand the development of cinema verite documentary form.

- understand characteristics and examples of docu-drama, mock documentary, music documentary, sport documentary, and televised documentary.

- understand and apply rhetorical, genre, semiotic, and audience analysis approaches to issues of reality television.

- understand how documentary can portray cultural worlds.

- understand and consider ways of using documentaries to study social issues.

- understand strategies for having students produce their own documentaries.

 In studying documentary, it is useful to examine the role and function of documentary within the larger context of its relationship to “reality.” Documentary does more than simply present or mirror lived world events. It constructs its own versions of “reality.” Audiences must then judge the validity, verisimilitude, or success in presenting that version as a social commentary about experience, as well as its motives in doing so.

 It also useful to study documentary as a form of ethnographic understanding of cultural worlds. Ethnographers have recently turned to use of video and photography as tools for conducting studies of cultural worlds, as well as using older documentaries such as *Nanook of the North*—an early documentary of the Eskimo culture—as documents for studying cultures.

 And, documentaries can also be studied in relationship to the current media/postmodern culture. In a culture in which media versions of “reality” are themselves now considered a “reality,” reality television programs purport to present a dramatized, often sensationalized “reality.” However, that “reality” may be more a version of a “television drama reality” in which participants’ practices are geared to playing to the television camera in ways that are consistent with what these participants believe is part of playing a role on a reality-television program.

 By studying documentary in relationship to these issues of “reality,” students begin to examine the larger function of the media in a mediated culture. And, by producing their own documentaries, they recognize that their own versions of “reality” are themselves only constructions of lived experience.

 And, documentaries themselves play an important role in history. The PBS series, *Eyes on the Prize, Part I* (1986) and *Part II* (1989) documented the civil rights movement from 1954 to the mid 1980s.

<http://www2.blackside.com/blackside/BlacksideFilms/EYES1film.html>

What was important about this award-winning series was that it itself influenced attitudes

towards race in the1980s by demonstrating the historical sacrifices Martin Luther King and many civil rights workers, while at the same time, portraying the fact that the struggle for civil rights was far from over in the 1980s.

 Similarly, Spike Lee’s 1997 documentary, *Four Little Girls*, <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0118540> portrayed the bombing of a Birmingham church that resulted in the deaths of four young Black girls, and the aftermath attempts to bring those responsible for the bombing to justice.

For a useful introduction to documentary:

<http://www.filmeducation.org/secondary/Documentary.html>

Center for Independent Documentaries

<http://www.documentaries.org/>

Center for Documentary Studies, Duke University

<http://www-cds.aas.duke.edu/>

The Documentary Institute, University of Florida

<http://www.jou.ufl.edu/documentary/default.asp>

*Bright Lights Film Journal*: reviews of documentaries

<http://www.brightlightsfilm.com/documentaries.html>

*Documentary Box*: journal on current trends in documentary production

<http://www.city.yamagata.yamagata.jp/yidff/docbox/docbox-e.html>

Docuseek: database of documentaries

<http://www.docuseek.com/wc.dll?docprocess~startsearch>

For a curriculum unit based on the series by Peter Herndon of the Yale/New Haven Teacher’s Institute

<http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1992/1/92.01.03.x.html>

Reviews of documentaries

<http://www.documentaryfilms.net/>

Jenny Joynt, Documentary Viewing

<http://english.unitecnology.ac.nz/resources/units/documentary/home.html>

IMBD: Top Rated "Documentary" Titles (voting as of May, 2004)

<http://www.imdb.com/chart/documentary>

Rank Rating Title Votes

1. 8.5 Chagrin et la pitié, Le (1969) 273

2. 8.5 Bowling for Columbine (2002) 25,741

3. 8.3 Corporation, The (2003) 363

4. 8.3 The Fog of War (2003) 1,173

5. 8.2 Waco: The Rules of Engagement (1997) 400

6. 8.2 Capturing the Friedmans (2003) 1,721

7. 8.2 Promises (2001) 337

8. 8.1 Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse (1991) 2,206

9. 8.1 Nema-ye Nazdik (1990) 262

10. 8.1 Spellbound (2002/II) 2,066

11. 8.1 Times of Harvey Milk, The (1984) 272

12. 8.1 Hearts and Minds (1974) 250

13. 8.1 Touching the Void (2003) 1,128

14. 8.1 Olympia 1. Teil - Fest der Völker (1938) 373

15. 8.0 Un coupable idéal (2001) 277

16. 8.0 Rivers and Tides (2001) 282

17. 8.0 Mio viaggio in Italia, Il (1999) 215

18. 7.9 Salesman (1969) 265

19. 7.9 Peuple migrateur, Le (2001) 2,184

20. 7.9 Être et avoir (2002) 1,015

21. 7.9 Ônibus 174 (2002) 251

22. 7.9 Nuit et brouillard (1955) 888

23. 7.8 Paragraph 175 (1999) 217

24. 7.8 Stevie (2002) 286

25. 7.8 Thin Blue Line, The (1988) 1,718

26. 7.8 Sans soleil (1983) 327

27. 7.8 Super Size Me (2004) 499

28. 7.8 Endurance: Shackleton's Legendary Antarctic Expedition, The (2000) 353

29. 7.8 Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport (2000) 299

30. 7.8 Harlan County, U.S.A. (1976) 234

31. 7.8 Hoop Dreams (1994) 4,024

32. 7.7 Olympia 2. Teil - Fest der Schönheit (1938) 234

33. 7.7 Macht der Bilder: Leni Riefenstahl, Die (1993) 286

34. 7.7 Roger & Me (1989) 5,596

35. 7.7 The Compleat Beatles (1984) 294

36. 7.7 Chelovek s kinoapparatom (1929) 859

37. 7.6 Koyaanisqatsi (1983) 3,995

38. 7.6 Last Waltz, The (1978) 1,725

39. 7.6 Grey Gardens (1975) 304

40. 7.6 Stop Making Sense (1984) 1,777

41. 7.6 When We Were Kings (1996) 2,784

42. 7.6 Backyard, The (2002) 276

43. 7.6 Crumb (1994) 2,966

44. 7.6 Stanley Kubrick: A Life in Pictures (2001) 1,180

45. 7.6 Woodstock (1970) 2,095

46. 7.5 Scratch (2001/II) 365

47. 7.5 Visions of Light (1992) 424

48. 7.5 That's Entertainment! (1974) 1,125

49. 7.5 Trembling Before G-d (2001) 215

50. 7.5 Microcosmos: Le peuple de l'herbe (1996) 1,660

For further reading on documentary:

Aitken,I. (Ed.). (1998). *The documentary film movement*. Edinburg: Edinburg University

Press.

Bruzzi, S. (2000). *New documentary: A critical introduction.* New York: Routledge.

Girgus, S. B. (2003). *America on film: Modernism, documentary, and a changing America*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Nichols, B. (2001). *Introduction to documentary*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Press.

Stubbs, L. (2002). *Documentary filmmakers speak*. New York: Allworth Press.

Waldman, D., & Walker, J. (Eds.) (1999). *Feminism and documentary*. Minneapolis, MN:

University of Minnesota

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

**Traditional versus Cinema Verite Documentary**

 Differences in versions of reality are also a function of film technique. Traditional documentary employs techniques in which the filmmaker adopts a clearly defined perspective or agenda as reflected in deliberate selection an editing of material to communicate that perspective or agenda. Michael Moore, in his documentaries,

<http://us.imdb.com/Name?Moore%2C%20Michael%20%28II%29>

*Roger and Me*,

<http://www.dogeatdogfilms.com/rogerme.html>

<http://us.imdb.com/Trailers?0098213>

the Academy-Award winning, *Bowling for Columbine*,

<http://www.bowlingforcolumbine.com/>

<http://us.imdb.com/Trailers?0310793>

and the Palme d'Or for *Fahrenheit 9/11* at the Cannes Film Festival

selects the material that will best convey his perspective on General Motors’s disregard for the automobile workers of Flint, Michigan, as well as the National Rifle Association. Events may also be staged simply for the sake of the documentary, as, for example, when Moore attempts to interview Roger Smith, the CEO of General Motors, or Charlton Heston, the President of the NRA.

 Traditional documentary also makes extensive use of interviews or quoted material, selecting and editing those interview clips that will most clearly convey the intended message. It also employs voice-over commentary to convey it’s primary points consistent with its desired message. And, it frequently employs interviews with participants regarding their experiences or perspectives on the issues portrayed. The Ken Burns PBS documentaries:

*Mark Twain* (2001), *Jazz* (2001), *Not for Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton & Susan B. Anthony* (1999), *Frank Lloyd Wright* (1998), *Thomas Jefferson* (1997), *Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery* (1997), *Basebal*l (1994), *Empire of the Air: The Men Who Made Radio* (1991), *The Civil War* (1990 <http://www.pbs.org> <http://us.imdb.com/Name?Burns%2C%20Ken%20%28I%29>make use of historical photos, quotes from documents, and interview clips in a carefully-edited montage of information to re-create past historical worlds.

 In discussing the making of his award-winning *The Civil War* <http://www.pbs.org/civilwar/film/>

Burns notes how he attempted to recapture the history:

In making this documentary, co-produced with my brother Ric, we wanted to tell the story of the bloodiest war in American history through the voices of the men and women who actually lived through it. And, to the greatest extent possible, we wanted to show the war and the people who experienced it through a medium that was still in its infancy in the 1860s – photography.

A photograph of citizens scanning the casualty lists to learn which of their sons, fathers, and husbands would be coming home – and which would not – speaks volumes about the grief and horror that washed over our country, becoming part of domestic routine without ever quite being domesticated.

And yet, what better way to "see" a soldier's life than through the simple, unvarnished sentences of Private Elisha Hunt Rhodes's diary; what better way to "feel" the combination of anxiety and determination before a battle than through the moving words of Sullivan Ballou's letter home to his wife, Sarah?

These "verbal and visual documents" of the past convey meaning and emotions and stories on their own, if they're allowed to speak for themselves. They can make the past, present. They can breathe life into history. They can illuminate the dramatic sweep and the minute details of important American moments – make them more memorable, more understandable than a recitation of dry facts, dates, and names.

We visited more than 80 museums and libraries, where we filmed some 16,000 photographs, paintings, and newspapers of the period. With the help of an extraordinary group of scholars and consultants, we also examined countless written accounts -- diaries, letters, reminiscences -- to glean a stockpile of quotations to accompany our stockpile of images.

 The primary characteristic of traditional documentary is that it is highly edited. A documentary filmmaker may have many hours of footage, which is they edited down to a two-hour film. The filmmaker is then selecting the material that is most consistent with the intended positions or attitudes of the film. This selectivity can result in excluding or masking over alternative perspectives or complex treatment of an issue or topic. Students therefore need to focus on the question as to what material is included and what material is excluded in a documentary. They also need to discern the particular biases evident in the documentary as shaping the selection of material.

*Cinema verite documentary*. In contrast to traditional documentary, cinema verite documentary attempts to capture experience is an unobtrusive, unedited manner as possible. These documentaries consist of long takes with little editing or commentary. There are also far fewer interviews in favor of having participations converse with each other. Events are portrayed as they unfold, without having the presence of a camera influence those events or any staging or playing for the camera to shape those events. The less-obtrusive, light-weight 16-mm camera, zoom lens, fast film stocks, and superior recording equipment in the 1960s led to the rise of cinema verite documentary during that time (Giannetti, 2002).

Cinema verite documentary reflects the ethnographic/anthropological belief in the need to capture social and cultural practices as they occur without imposing one’s own interpretive frame. The primary assumption is that the filmmaker should simply portray events or people as they behave in everyday contexts without attempting to manipulate or impose their own perspectives onto such portrayals.

The most famous and productive cinema verite documentary filmmaker is Frederick Wiseman. Wiseman’s documentaries focus on peoples’ experiences in various institutions or sites—schools, hospitals, towns, government /welfare agency sites, prisons, stores, parks, etc. He shows long segments of people interacting with each other or with the site with minimal editing and no interviews or voice-overs. His films are often quite lengthy, in some cases, lasting four or five hours.

One of his recent films, aired on PBS, was *Domestic Violence*,

<http://www.pbs.org/previews/DomesticViolence/> filmed in Tampa, Florida, which portrayed police responses to domestic violence calls and attempts by the police to mediate domestic disputes and violence towards women and children. It also portrayed various activities in a shelter for women and children in Tampa, that included interviews, counseling sessions, anger management training, group therapy, and conversations between and among clients and staff. The audience witnesses the women’s and children’s fear of being abused, as well as attempt to cope with their abuse in a protective site.

In an interview with Nick Poppy (“Frederick Wiseman”) in *Salon* (3/28/02) about *Domestic Violence* <http://www.salon.com/people/conv/2002/01/30/wiseman/>

Wiseman notes that he filmed the documentary over 8 weeks and spent a year editing it before it was shown on PBS. Wiseman noted that:

The shooting was eight weeks, and in eight weeks I accumulated about 110 hours. The movie took about a year to edit. And the second one will also take about a year to edit. You make or break a movie like this in the editing. You can have good material and screw it up, and you can have mediocre material and improve it by the way you put it together.

I have no idea what the themes or the point of view are going to be until I get well into the editing. I don't have a story in mind in advance and I don't set out in these movies to prove a thesis. I discover what the themes are as I put the film together, as I edit the sequences and study the material.

I think I have an obligation, to the people who have consented to be in the film, to make a film that is fair to their experience. The editing of my films is a long and selective process. I do feel that when I cut a sequence, I have an obligation to the people who are in it, to cut it so that it fairly represents what I felt was going on at the time, in the original event. I don't try and cut it to meet the standards of a producer or a network or a television show.

When I'm making a movie, I have no idea how to think about an audience. I think the kinds of surveys they do in Hollywood are basically high comedy. I hope you don't think that what I'm about to say is arrogant. I have no idea how anybody else is going to respond to the movie, what their experience or their interests are, what books they've read or movies they've seen, what their general interests are, etc. So the only audience I have in mind when I make the movie is myself. And I try to make it to my own standards, and I hope that somebody else who sees it will connect to it. The only things I know a little bit about -- and I don't say I know a lot about them either -- are my own standards.

Some other Wiseman documentaries include:

Public Housing: portrays life in the Ida B. Wells public housing development in Chicago, coping with crime, drugs, family conflicts, pregnancy, and government officials in a world of poverty.

*Belfast, Maine*: portrays life in a small coastal town in terms of people’s daily work and dance, music, and theater productions.

*Zoo*: portrays the world of maintaining and caring for animals in the Miami, Florida Zoo.

### *High School II*: portrays teachers and students in an alternative Manhatten high school, Central Park East Secondary School. It portrays various classroom interactions and discussions of issues, faculty/student council meetings, disciplinary problems, conflict resolution by students, and other events in the high school.

*The Store*: portrays the operation of and customers purchasing expensive goods in the main Neiman-Marcus store and corporate headquarters in Dallas.

*Central Park*: portrays people’s uses of New York’s Central Park as well as difficulties in maintaining the park.

For information about all of Wiseman’s films:

Zipporah Films: distributor of Wiseman’s films

<http://www.zipporah.com/>

For further reading:

Benson, T. W. & Anderson, C. (2002). *Reality fictions: The films of Frederick Wiseman*.

Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Benson, T. W., & Anderson, C. (1991). *Documentary dilemmas: Frederick Wiseman's Titicut Follies*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press

*The Maysles Brothers*. Albert and David Maysle were also important figures in the rise of cinema verite. Their 1969 documentary, *Salesman*, considered seminal in the development of cinema verite portrayed the experiences of four door-to-door salesmen of expensive bibles in working class neighborhoods. The film was a landmark in that it captured the realities of frustrated workers and of customers who could not afford to buy their bibles.

 In the previous year, 1968, they made an up-beat rock documentary, Monterey Pop. This contrasted with their 1970 rock documentary, *Gimme Shelter*, about a 1969 Rolling Stones concert tour, including a concert in A harrowing Altamont, California, in which members of the Hells Angels contracted as security guards murder an audience member. They also made a number of films about the artist, Chisto, who constructed monumental works of environmental art. David Maysle died of a stroke in 1987. Albert then made one of the key sports documentaries, When We Were Kinds (1996) about the Ali-Forman fight in Africa.

*Barbara Koppel*. Another important documentary filmmaker to arise in the 1970s was Barbara Koppel, whose 1773 documentary, *Harlan County, U.S.A*. (released on video in 1976) portrayed a bitter coal-miners strike against an intransigent mining company in a small West Virginia community. This film, which won an Academy Award, portrays the poverty of the workers and their lack of power relative to the powerful mining company. She then made another film, *American Dream*, about a strike at the Hormel meat packing plant in Austin, Minnesota. The film portrays the workers ‘attempt to strike for higher wages after their wages and benefits were cut despite the fact that the company was profitable. It shows how the strike created conflicts between friends and family members in the town of Austin. It also captures the rise of a new negative attitude towards unions that began during the Reagan administration.

Her 2000 film, *Woodstock*, portrays the attempt by the producer of the original 1969 Woodstock concert to put on a repeat concert in 1999. The film demonstrates the cultural shift from the late 60s to the late 90s towards a much more commercialized music industry and American culture.

*An American Family*. Another ground-breaking cinema verite documentary is the 12 hour PBS series, An American Family, broadcast in 1973 made by Alan and Susan Raymond. This documentary portrayed the daily lives of an upper-middle-class California family with five children as it coped with martial conflict—leading to divorce, the oldest boy’s gay lifestyle, and attempts to deal with shifting values toward the family that challenged the idealized *Father Knows Best* drama versions on prime-time television. Before beginning the actual filming of the family, the Raymonds turned had the cameras running without any film in them so that the family would become accustomed to the presence of the cameras to that point that they began to ignore them, lessening the likelihood that the presence of the cameras would alter their behavior. However, the question remains as to whether the presence of the camera had any influence on how the family portrayed themselves, as well as whether it is possible to capture the reality of everyday family life.

 The Raymonds made another follow-up documentary about the Loud family, *An American Family Revisited*, the was aired in 1983 on PBS. Then, in 2003, they aired another documentary on PBS, *Lance Loud! A Death In An American Family*, that portrayed, at his request, the final months of Lance Loud’s life, who died in 2001 at age 50 of Hepetitis C and HIV infection. <http://www.pbs.org/lanceloud/>

Because Lance was one of the first people to have been shown on television as an openly-gay person, he became a celebrity figure and writer. However, in the documentary, after years of coping with substance abuse and dying of AID’s, he perceived his celebrity status, the result of television exposure, as shallow.

 Another important documentary that dealt wit the issue of gay rights is the 1984, *The Times of Harvey Milk*, which portrays the political experiences of Harvey Milk, a representative of San Francisco’s gay community on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. In 1978, Milk and Mayor George Moscone were both assassinated by another supervisor. The film documents the ways in which Milk’s election and death galvanized the gay community.

 All of this raises questions as to whether it is ever possible to portray “reality” in an unmediated, unfiltered manner, “as it really is” even through cinema verite documentary. Frederick Wiseman describes his films as “fictions,” noting that they are still *his* interpretations of reality, as opposed to a totally unmediated version of reality. This is most evident in documentaries about the film medium itself. The 1991 documentary, *Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse* , about Francis Ford Coppola's making of the film, *Apocalypse Now*, demonstrates how the attempt to recapture the Vietnam War itself was a difficult, almost impossible attempt to capture the cultural and psychological realities of that war. And, the 2002 documentary, *The Kid Stays In the Picture,* portrays the story of a Hollywood producer, Robert Evans, who produced films such as The Godfather and Chinatown, but then, in the 1980s, with the decline of the studio, he experiences his own loss of fame to become an obscure person.

<http://us.imdb.com/Trailers?0303353>

 And, the documentary, *Lost in La Mancha*, <http://www.lostinlamancha.com/>

portrays the challenges of director Terry Gilliam’s attempt to make a film version of *Don Quixote*, that demonstrates the challenges of attempting to portray past historical period.

 Studying documentaries therefore involves applying a rhetorical analysis to examine the filmmaker’s intended message and stance towards the subject. In some cases, a filmmaker adopt s a more neutral, objective stance, but in most cases, documentary filmmakers have a defined attitude towards their subject that they want to convey to their audiences. Students may also study the filmmaker’s attempts to gain their audience’s sympathy or identification with their portrayal of a certain topic, issue, institution, person, or group.

 To examine the question of whether a documentary simply captures or actually shapes or constructs “reality,” you could bring a camcorder into the classroom and begin filming the classroom engaged in some activity. You could then ask students to discuss whether the presence of the camera influenced their behavior in any way. If it did, you could then discuss how they were influenced and what assumptions they had about how they should behave in front of a camera. This could also lead to discussions about a culture mediated by media productions in which people acquire assumptions about appropriate social practices “on camera.” For example, professional athletes, when interviewed about post-game reflections, typically talk and behave in a highly predictable manner, practices shaped by the familiar television post-game interview practice. All of this leads to the larger issue of whether documentaries mirror or construct realities and for what purposes.

Documentary Filmmakers

<http://directory.google.com/Top/Arts/Movies/Filmmaking/Documentary/Filmmakers/>

**Propaganda Documentary: Blatant Selectivity**

 Propaganda represents an extreme example of biased selectivity in which a filmmaker uses documentary to promote a distorted or one-sided perspective to achieve certain goals. During wartime, documentaries are constructed in a way that transform “the enemy” into the object of hatred and anger and the sponsoring country into a heroic, virtuous agent of good. For example, the documentary, *Triumph of the Will*, directed by Leni Riefenstahl (for a description and clip):<http://www.cultsock.ndirect.co.uk/MUHome/cshtml/index.html>

was made to glorify the Nazi regime and Hitler as the admired leader who will unify the German people as a master race.

For example, Hitler is shown as a god-like figure descending out of the clouds in an airplane that lands and then Hitler attends a hugh stadium rally in which he is portrayed giving a speech, using camera angles to show him as above the admiring crowd.

 Similarly, Riefenstahl's *Olympia* documentary of the 1936 Olympic games attempted to portray the German athletes as superior representatives of Aryan manhood, despite the fact that Jesse Owen, the American black athlete, was very successful.

 Students could study various examples of documentaries and news footage that functioned as propaganda. For example, they could examine clips of propaganda films

<http://carmen.artsci.washington.edu/propaganda/video/index.html>

in terms of the analysis techniques on the following sites:

Propaganda: Introduction and examples:

<http://216.247.70.125/vclass/propaganda/>

Propaganda in the Classroom (Bill Chapman Classroom Tools): lots of articles/examples:

<http://www.classroomtools.com/prop.htm>

Institute for Propaganda Analysis

<http://www.propagandacritic.com/>

Center for the Study of Propaganda, University of Kent (lots of links to examples)

<http://www.kent.ac.uk/history/centres/proplinks.htm>

Webquest: Propaganda TECHNIQUES in Advertising, Media, Politics & Warfare, Don and Lin Donn

<http://members.aol.com/MrDonnUnits/Propaganda.html>

Webquest: Propaganda and War

<http://csis.pace.edu/clarkstown/kglotzer/propaganda_and_war.htm>

Webquest: create a documentary about World War I

<http://www.edu.pe.ca/vrcs/webquests/>

Propaganda related to the Iraq War

<http://www.classroomtools.com/iraq_war.htm>

**Documentary and “the Truth”**

 A key consideration in responding to any documentary is the question as to whether it portrays what could be determined as “the truth.” This presupposes that it is possible to define “truth,” certainly a debatable issue. Categories such as “fiction” versus “reality”—frequently employed in discussing documentaries, may be equally difficult to define. Fiction often portrays certainly “realities” or is described as “realistic.”

 The concept of “truth” requires an analysis of the degree to which a documentary captures the complexities of or alternative perspectives on a particular event, institution, experience, or phenomenon. Propaganda presents only one, biased version on an event, institution, experience, or phenomenon. Effective documentaries attempt to portray different, competing perspectives through, for example, interviewing people who provide alternative versions of the same event or person.

 “Truth” is often defined in terms of verisimilitude—the extent to which the images or signs in the documentary are accurate to the actual site, persons, or events—as opposed to portraying a site, person, or event in an inaccurate, distorted, or false manner, or if it is deceptive—through omitting or leaving out important information. For example, a documentary about a high school would be considered as untruthful if it left out primary information about the nature of the student body or deterioration in the school building. However, simply judging “truth” on the basis of verisimilitude ignores the role of the experience of the audience and the audience’s ways of constructing the meaning what is portrayed through responding to the documentary.

 For example, some critics have argued that Michael Moore’s *Bowling for Columbine* contains some distorted information about the relationships between murder rates and gun use/ownership, as well as the version of American history as portrayed in the animation clip.

David Hardy: *Bowling for Columbine:* Documentary or Fiction?

<http://www.hardylaw.net/Truth_About_Bowling.html>

 However, rather than assume that the “truth” is inherent in the documentary text itself, it is useful to consider the ways in which audiences extract certain “truths” about gun violence and culture through their experience with the documentary.

 Randolf Jordan argues that determining the “truth” in viewing documentaries depends on audiences’ meaning-making processes of organizing and judging perceptions of what it portrayed, as opposed to the actuality of the images.

Truth, as has been suggested here, might best be found through the concept of bridging the gaps between that with which we are presented in order to construct meaning from it. Be they the gaps between the digitization of film material and the original film, the digital manipulation of images and indexical images, contradictions in documentary modes of representation, or the tensions between documentary and fictional space as exemplified by the use of animals on screen, our minds search for truth by reconciling these tensions through a process of meaning construction. At the heart of such reconciliation is the concept of the middle ground, that stable centrifuge around which all perception is built, the space that lies between the disjointed elements of filmic representation that we must piece together to find truth.

Randolf Jordan The Gap: Documentary Truth between Reality and Perception, *OffScreen*

<http://www.horschamp.qc.ca/new_offscreen/documentary_truth.html>

 Students could discuss issues of “truth” in documentaries by first selecting a site, person(s), or event about which they would make a documentary, for example, their school or their sports team. Working in small groups, they could then discuss the “truths” they know about this site, person(s), or event that they would attempt to capture, for example, that there are considerable tension between the school administration and the students in their school over issues of dress and free speech. They could then discuss the techniques they would employ to portray these truths—which people they would interview, what questions they would ask, what events or images they would employ, and how they would engage their audiences. They could the present their ideas to each other to discern how potential audiences would respond to or understand the truths they were attempting to encourage audiences to explore.

 Students could also debate their alternative responses to the truths they infer from viewing documentaries. In their Webquest, *Bowling for Columbine:* The Quest for Truth, Magan Gaffey and Meghan Scott ask students to explore alternative explanations for the high rate of gun deaths in America. Students examine information provided on different sites about the alternative explanations for this high gun death rate and debate the validity of these explanations.

<http://www.kn.sbc.com/wired/fil/pages/webbowlingfdw.html>

###### The Docudrama

Docudramas consist of films or television programs that are fictional reenactments of actual events or people’s lives, in some cases, based on a book or historical novel about those events or lives. The rhetorical effectiveness of docudrama requires an audience to momentarily believe that the events being portrayed actually occurred, requiring the filmmaker to attempt to achieve some historical verisimilitude by recapturing the appearance , language, and behaviors consistent with a particular historical period of culture. For example, Steven Speilberg’s *Catch Me If You Can*, recaptures the rise of Frank Abagnale in the 1960s, a con artist and expert money forger who alluded the FBI. <http://www.imdb.com/Trailers?0264464>

Speilberg also made *Amistad*, portrayal a slave revolt on a slave ship in 1939 and their trial in America.

<http://www.imdb.com/Trailers?0118607>

 Another director who has made a number of docudramas is Oliver Stone, best known for his controversial film, *JFK* (1991) <http://www.imdb.com/Trailers?0102138> based on the attempts by James Garrison, the District Attorney of New Orleans, to challenge the official government version of the Kennedy assassination. While some of Stone’s analyses have been discredited, he uses the film to build an argument to promote his version of the assassination. Similarly, in *Nixon* (1995), Stone portrays the rise and fall of Richard Nixon in terms of the ways in which Nixon violated the law.

For an analysis of *Quiz Show*, a 1994 docudrama about the scandals of the 1960s quiz shows by Steve Lipkin:

<http://www.imagesjournal.com/issue01/features/quiz.htm>

Other docudramas:

*Rush* (2002)

*A Civil Action* (2002)

*The Missiles of October* (2001)

*Ali* (2001)

*The Amy Fisher Story* (2001)

*Hoosiers* (2001)

*The Endurance: Shackleton's Legendary Antarctic Expedition*(2000)

*Erin Brockovich*(2000)

*Harlan County War*(2000)

*Steal This Movie!*(2000)

*Thirteen Days*(2000)

*Truman* (2000)

*The Battle Over Citizen Kane* (2000)

*Boys Don't Cry*(1999)

*Dangerous Evidence*(1999)

*The Hurricane*(1999)

*Summer of Sam*(1999)

*Tuesdays With Morrie*(1999)

*Elizabeth* (1998)

*Stand and Deliver* (1998)

*Lean on Me* (1998)

*Four Days in September*(1997)

*Into Thin Air: Death on Everest*(1997)

*Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*(1997)

*Miss Evers' Boys*(1997)

*Rosewood*  (1997)

*Welcome to Sarajevo*(1997)

*Ghosts of Mississippi*(1996)

*I Shot Andy Warhol*(1996)

*In Cold Blood*(1996)

*Apollo 13*(1995)

*Malcolm X* (1993)

*The Doors* (1991)

*Amadeus* (1984)

*Gandhi* (1982)

*Lenny* (1974)

 There are a number of limitations to docudramas, again related to the key theme of the portrayal of reality. Janet Staiger notes three problems with this form

<http://www.museum.tv/archives/etv/D/htmlD/docudrama/docudrama.htm>

One reservation is related to "dramatic license." In order to create a drama that adheres to the conventions of mainstream story-telling (particularly a sensible chain of events, a clear motivation for character behavior, and a moral resolution), writers may claim they need to exercise what they call dramatic license--the creation of materials not established as historical fact or even the violation of known facts. Such distortions include created dialogues among characters, expressions of internal thoughts, meetings of people that never happened, events reduced to two or three days that actually occurred over weeks, and so forth. Critics point out that it is the conventions of mainstream drama that compel such violations of history while writers of docudramas counter that they never truly distort the historical record. Critics reply that the dramatic mode chosen already distorts history which cannot always be conveniently pushed into a linear chain of events or explained by individual human agency.

Another reservation connected to the first is the concern that spectators may be unable to distinguish between known facts and speculation. This argument does not propose that viewers are not sufficiently critical but that the docudrama may not adequately mark out distinctions between established facts and hypotheses, and, even if the docudrama does mark the differences, studies of human memory suggest that viewers may be unable to perceive the distinctions while viewing the program or remember the distinctions later.

A third reservation focuses on the tendency towards simplification. Critics point out that docudramas tend toward hagiography or demonization in order to compress the historical material into a brief drama. Additionally, complex social problems may be personalized so that complicated problems are "domesticated." Adding phone numbers to call to find help for a social problem may be good but may also suggest sufficient solutions to the social problem are already in place.

A course based on the construction of a docudrama of the novel

*The Bonfire of the Vanities* developed by David Knights and Hugh Willmott for use with the textbook *Management Lives* (Sage, 1999)

<http://dspace.dial.pipex.com/town/close/hr22/wiswebsite/docudram.htm>

For further reading:

Rosenthal, A. (1999). *Why docudrama? Fact-fiction on film and TV*. Carbondale, IL: Southern

Illinois University Press.

###### Mock Documentary

 Another type of documentary, mock documentary, or mocudrama, parodies certain documentary conventions by calling attention to and exaggerating the use of these genre conventions. In their book, *Faking It: Mock Documentary and the Subversion of Factuality* (2001, Manchester University Press), Jane Roscoe and Craig Hight

<http://www.waikato.ac.nz/film/mock-doc/teaching.shtml>

describe the characteristics of the mock documentary:

- They use the same codes and conventions as documentary, such as an authoritative narrator, 'real' footage of events, archival photographs, interviews with apparent 'experts' and 'eyewitnesses', and so on.

- Mock-documentaries 'work' because of the assumptions and expectations that we have of documentary. When we see a text that looks and sounds real, we tend to naturally believe it.

- Because they demonstrate how easily all of these codes and conventions can be faked, mock-documentary can often cause us as viewers to consider why we place so much faith in documentary itself.

- Mock-documentary, then, is a fictional form which can encourage us to reflect on the nature of the documentary genre, and on the 'privileged' position that we give such factual texts.

One of the recent popular directors of mock-documentaries is Christopher Guest. His

first mock-documentary was *Waiting For Guffman*, in which he stars as a Broadway actor who is in charge of producing a play the commemorates the 150th year of the small town of Blaine, Missouri. He finds some local townspeople to play various parts in the play resulting in a spoof of an amateurish small-town theater company’s production.

 His next mock-documentary was *Best in Show* <http://bestinshowonline.warnerbros.com/> a parody of a dog show at the upscale Mayflower Kennel Club Dog in Philadephia.

 His most recent 2003 production was *A Mighty Wind* <http://amightywindonline.warnerbros.com/index.php>

that spoofed the musical documentary about series folk singers engaged in the production of a large reunion concert.

*Examples of other mock-documentaries:*

*Under Cover-Brother*, <http://www.undercover-brother.com/> a parody of Blaxploitation crime films

*Galaxy Quest*, <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/subst/video/misc/dreamworks/galaxy-quest/gq-home.html/104-3285265-6891111>, a spoof on *Star Trek*

*This Is Spinal Tap*, <http://spinaltapfan.com/index.html> a mock documentary about a rock band

*Forgotten Silver*, a mock documentary about a filmmaker’s production of silent films

*Man Bites Dog,*  (original title: C'est Arrivé Près de Chez Vous): a mock documentary about a serial killer that parodies the cinema verite style

*Return of the King*, spoofing of Elvis sightings

*The Blair Witch Project*, plays on documentary interviews with townspeople about their experience with witchcraft

*Zileg*, Woody Allen’s parody of a celebrity figure, Leonard Zelig, during the 1920s, who could behave like other famous people (shown in actual newsreel clips)

*The Rutles*, a spoof on Beatles films

*Bob Roberts*, a political satire on a campaign documentary about a conservative senatorial candidate that include s songs by director Tim Robbins

*History of the World: Part I* <http://us.imdb.com/Trailers?0082517> Mel Brooks’s parody of history documentary films that explains the actual events of history

For further reading:

Barnouw, E. (1993). *Documentary: A history of the non-fiction film*. New York: Oxford

University Press

Stam, R. (1989). *Subversive pleasures*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

###### Music Documentaries

 One of the more important sub-genres of documentaries is the music documentary, which portrays a particular group, musician, or concert. These documentaries can often effectively capture the visual and aural impact of a successful performance, as well as explore the behind-the-scenes perspectives of musicians about their work. For example, one of the most successful of these documentaries is *The Last Waltz* <http://www.mgm.com/lastwaltz/>

<http://us.imdb.com/Trailers?0077838> filmed by Martin Scorsese in 1978 and reissued in 2001 on DVD. It portrays the last concert of The Band which included performances by Muddy Waters, Neil Young, and Eric Clapton.

 Another success music documentary is *Standing in the Shadows of Motown* (2002)

<http://us.imdb.com/Trailers?0314725> which documents the unnoticed back-up band to many of the Motown stars, The Funk Brothers, who perform in a concert with younger singers performing familiar Motown songs.

Webquest: *Standing in the Shadows of Motown*

<http://www.edu-cyberpg.com/culdesac/Stars/funkbrothers2.html>

 One of the most interesting music documentaries is *Stop Making Sense* (1984)

<http://us.imdb.com/Trailers?0088178> by Jonathan Demme which captures a engaging concert by The Talking Heads.

 Another important documentary is *Scratch*, <http://www.scratchmovie.com/>

which portrays the development of hip-hop DJ practices from the early turn-table street concerts to more current DJ contests.

In 2003, PBS aired the series, *The Blues,* <http://www.pbs.org/theblues/thefilmseries.html>

a series of seven documentaries by famous movie directors who focus on a particular aspect of the history of the blues that most interested them:

*- Feel Like Going Home*: Martin Scorsese (*The Last Waltz*): the Delta blues with Willie King, Taj Mahal, Otha Turner, Ali Farka Touré, Son House, Muddy Waters and John Lee Hooker.

*- The Soul of a Man* - Wim Wenders (*Buena Vista Social Club)*: songs by Skip James, Blind Willie Johnson, and J. B. Lenoir as performed by Bonnie Raitt, Lucinda Williams, Lou Reed, Eagle Eye Cherry, Nick Cave and The Bad Seeds and others. *The Road to Memphis*: Richard Pearce (*The Long Walk Home*): B.B. King, Bobby Rush, Rosco Gordon, Ike Turner, Howlin' Wolf and Fats Domino.

*- Warming by the Devil's Fire*: Charles Burnett (*Killer of Sheep*): the intergenerational tensions between gospel and the blues.

*- Godfathers and Sons*: Marc Levin (*Slam*): Chuck D (of Public Enemy) and Marshall Chess unite to produce an album that seeks to bring veteran blues players together with contemporary hip-hop musicians.

*- Red, White and Blues*: Mike Figgis (*Leaving Las Vegas*): Van Morrison, Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck and Tom Jones talk about how the early 60s British music reintroduced the blues sound to America.

*- Piano Blues*: Clint Eastwood (*Unforgiven*): piano blues of Pinetop Perkins, Jay McShann, Dave Brubeck, and Marcia Ball.

Other music documentaries:

Buena Vista Social Club

<http://www.pbs.org/buenavista/>

Jazz

<http://www.pbs.org/jazz/>

Woodstock

*Gimme Shelter*, Rolling Stones

*Don't Look Back* , Bob Dylan

*Bound For Glory*, Woody Guthrie

*I Just Wasn't Made For These Times*, Brian Wilson

Thirty-Two Short Films about Glenn Gould, Glen Gould (fiction and actual footage)

The Complete Monterey Pop Festival

*Hellhounds On My Trail*: Robert Johnson

*I Am Trying To Break Your Heart*, Wilco

*Kurt & Courtney*, Kurt Cobain and Courtney Love

*Sid & Nancy*, Sid Vicious of The Sex Pistols

*Tommy: The Movie*, The Who

*Yellow Submarine*, The Beatles

*Help!,* The Beatles

*The Magical Mystery Tour*, The Beatles

*The Compleat Beatles*, The Beatles

Sports Documentaries

 Another subgenre of documentaries is the sports documentary, which captures a particular game, match, bout, or portrays an individual sports star. One of the most notable of these documentaries is *When We Were Kings* (1996)

<http://us.imdb.com/Trailers?0118147>

which portrayed the 1974 heavyweight championship bout in Zaire between the then champion George Foreman and the challenger Muhammad Ali. After arriving in Zaire, the bout is delayed because of a training injury to Foreman, so the two boxers spend months in training and in verbally taunting each other.

Unit on heroes focusing on *When We Were Kings*

<http://english.unitecnology.ac.nz/resources/units/heroes/home.html>

*Go Tigers*, <http://www.gotigersfilm.com/> portrays a season of a high school football team in a small Ohio town

*Baseball*  <http://www.pbs.org/kenburns/baseball/> (for teacher resources/curriculum):

<http://www.pbs.org/kenburns/baseball/teachers/>

is the PBS 18-hour series by Ken Burns that portrays the relationships between changes in American culture and attitudes as mirrored in the sport, for example, the integration of the sport with the hiring of Jackie Robinson.

*Stealing Home: The Case of Contemporary Cuban Baseball* <http://www.pbs.org/stealinghome/>

*When It Was a Game*, an HBO documentary on baseball from the 1930s to the 1950s with home-movie footage shot by fans.

*Do You Believe in Miracles? The Story of the 1980 U.S. Hockey Team*,an HBO documentary about the win of the underdog U. S. Olympic hockey team against the Russian team.

Other HBO sports documentaries

<http://www.hboarchives.com/documentaries/>

*Apple Pie*, <http://www.applepiemovie.com/html/home.html> Portrays the relationships between professional athletes and their mothers

The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg <http://www.hankgreenbergfilm.org/> portrays the experience of one of the first Jewish baseball stars

*A Hero For Daisy* <http://www.aherofordaisy.com/>portrays the 1976 Yale female rowing team protest of the inferior conditions of their locker rooms, creating a lot of publicity about Title IX implementation

*.03 From Gold*: *The 1972 Munich Games Basketball Controversy* <http://www.hbo.com/sportsdocs/>

The 1972 American Olympic basketball team lost in the final three seconds to the Russian team in a controversial, and protested ending.

E-journal: An online portrayal of the 2000 Olympics

<http://www.musarium.com/kodak/olympics/theathlete/index.shtml>

Webquest: Extreme Sports documentary

<http://www.longwood.k12.ny.us/wmi/wq/werner2/index.htm>

###### Televised Documentaries

Unfortunately, documentaries are rarely shown on commercial television, largely because they are too controversial or might challenge some of the corporate interests of commercial television advertisers. This is why many of the best documentaries are found on PBS or non-commercial cable challenges such as HBO.

The premier television documentary series is Frontline

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/> that examines current political and social issues, often including an historical perspective. For example, in a product on the Iraq War, it pulled together material from its previous programs about Iraq since the 1970s to demonstrate the difficulties of U.S. attempts to influence the country’s policies.

Other primary documentary programs on PBS are:

*NOVA:* topics related to science/health

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/>

*NOVA:* teacher resources organized by topic

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/teachers/resources/subject.html>

P. O. V.—Point of View

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/>

Independent Lens

<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/>

Media Matters

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/mediamatters/>

*Secrets of the Dead*: crime lab forensics investigations

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/secrets/>

 One of the more relevant of the P.O.V. documentaries for teachers is the program on “Borders.” <http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov2002/borders/index_flash.html> (a highly interactive site).

This programs deals with the concept of how people are continually coping with borders—both real and symbolic, in their everyday lives. Included in the program are video diaries of adolescents dealing with their own personal conflicts and attempts to cope with “borders “ in their own lives. This site can be readily integrated into instruction about cultural differences and alternative perspectives, as suggested by teacher materials on the site:

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov2002/borders/lessonplans/povs_borders_lesson_one.html>

*HBO documentaries*. HBO also produces documentaries <http://www.hbo.com/docs/>

Many of which have won Academy and Emmy Awards for best documentaries: *Thoth*, (Best Documentary Short, 2002), *Big Mama*, (Best Documentary Short, 2001), *One Day in September*, (Best Documentary Feature, 2000), King Gimp (Best Documentary Short, 2000), *The Carpet Slaves: Stolen Children of India* (Emmy® Award, 2002), *Children in War* (Emmy® Award, 2000), *Thug Life in D.C*. (Emmy® Award, 1999).

*Unchained Memories: Reading from Slave Narratives*

<http://www.hbo.com/docs/programs/unchained_memories/>

Pandemic: Facing AIDS

<http://www.hbo.com/docs/programs/pandemic/>

*Persona Non Grata*: by Oliver Stone: <http://www.hbo.com/docs/programs/persona/index.html>

examines the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with revealing interviews with Israeli and Palestinian leaders

*Murder on a Sunday*: <http://www.hbo.com/docs/programs/murder_sunday/> about an African-American adolescent male who is falsely accused of a murder (Academy Award Winner for Best Documentary Feature, 2002)

The Independent Television Service <http://www.itvs.org/> produces a lot of documentaries about social issues for television, particularly for (for a list of the ITS documentaries on P.O.V.:<http://www.itvs.org/pov/>

Webquests: television documentary

<http://www.teachnet.ie/stpats/e_species_99451981/introduction.html>

<http://teacherweb.com/NY/BuffaloStateCollege/GAOczek/h2.stm>

<http://www.sad61.k12.me.us/~maine_studies/fortwwq.html>

For further reading:

Kilborn, R. (1997).  *Confronting reality: An introduction to television documentary*. Manchester,

UK: Manchester University Press

Reality Television

 One of the recent developments related to documentary and portrayal of “reality” is the rise of “reality television” programs, beginning with programs such as

*Survivor* <http://survivornews.net/>

The Osbournes <http://www.mtv.com/onair/osbournes/>

Big Brother <http://www.cbs.com/primetime/bigbrother4/>

The Amazing Race <http://www.cbs.com/primetime/amazing_race4/>

The Mole <http://abc.abcnews.go.com/primetime/themole/mole_home.html>

The Real World <http://www.mtv.com/onair/realworld>

*Extreme Survival* <http://tlc.discovery.com/convergence/extremesurvival/extremesurvival.html>

*American Idol* <http://www.idolonfox.com/home.htm>

*The Bachelor* <http://abc.abcnews.go.com/primetime/specials/bachelor/index.html>

PBS: *In the Mix: Reality TV for Teens* <http://www.pbs.org/inthemix/>

PBS: *American High* <http://www.pbs.org/americanhigh/>

PBS historical reenactment programs

The 1900 House

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/1900house/>

*Frontier House*: living in Montana in 1883

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/frontierhouse/>

Warrior Challenge

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/warriorchallenge/>

Manor House

<http://www.pbs.org/manorhouse/>

One explanation for the increasing popularity of reality TV is that it is relatively

inexpensive to produce compared to prime-time drama programs . The networks can therefore reap large profits, something that, given their corporate ownership business orientation, is a high priority in terms of program selection.

 Reality TV, given its popularity with adolescents, can serve as the basis for analysis of the basic issues of “reality” and documentary discussed in this module, as well as some of approaches in the other modules.

*Editing and selectivity*. One of the basic aspects of traditional documentary is the use of editing to selectively portray one’s particular version of reality. Reality TV producers can select those aspects of participant’s behavior that are the most dramatic or sensational to include in an episode, while at the same time, give the impression that what they are showing is an authentic representation of the “actual” events. Audiences may then assume that what they are viewing constitutes an authentic or actual portrayal of “reality,” when in fact, it is only a highly selective, edited version of “reality.” Audiences may also perceive their own everyday lives as lacking the highly dramatic content of these shows, enhancing their appeal an entertaining escape.

 Students could analyze the editing employed in an episode relative to their guesses as to the original, real-time experience to discern the degree to which they are viewing a selected version of “reality.” They may also speculate about why certain material was included and why certain material may have been excluded.

*Rhetorical analysis*. Reality TV appeals to large numbers of viewers because it positions them to adopt a voyeuristic stance of the surveillance audience witnessing behavior and conflicts that would previously be assumed to be “private” or too sensational to be shown on prime-time commercial television. In a security-conscious society in which people are continually under surveillance, the tables are turned, and the audience is now the ones who are watching from behind the camera, creating a sense of status superiority. The earlier version of the current reality TV involved hidden camera programs such as *Candid Camera* or blooper/home video shots of bizarre, unusual behavior, still evident in programs such as *America’s Funniest Videos*.

In the past, the people on *Candid Camera* were not aware of the fact that they were being filmed and were surprised to discover that they were caught in embarrassing moments. Reality TV participants are very much aware of the fact that they are being filmed. This raises the basic question of documentary asked about the behavior of The Loud family on *An American Family*, as to whether participants are “playing to the camera”—behaving in a manner that they assume if consistent with the drama, roles, language, and norms of a television show, assumptions based on their knowledge of the drama. Students could examine the degree to which participants are simply participating in a “fictional” drama based on predetermined scripts/roles and whether this drama can be equated with “reality.”

Students could also discuss the extent to which these programs are “fiction,” when, they are portraying people engaged in “actual” situations. In a comparison of *The Truman Show* with reality TV shows, Maria-Laure Ryan (2002) notes that *The Truman Show* deliberately examines the relationship between fiction and reality in terms of differences in the characters’ perspectives:

From Truman’s point of view, the show is as clearly “life,” as it is “fiction” from the point of view of the actors who play roles. The reason for this discrepancy is that fictionality requires a duplicity of actor/character in dramatic media, and of author/narrator in strictly narrative works. The actors are duplicitous, since they are playing roles, but Truman has only one identity. The fact that Truman life’s is staged is not sufficient to make it fiction, because in real life also, we find many scripted events that count as genuine performance.

Truman has no off-camera life, and except for his inner thoughts, he cannot hide anything from the audience. This sense of authenticity is strengthened by the already mentioned impossibility to edit live broadcasting and to tamper with its narrative sequence. Christof, the producer of the show, woos the audience with the promise: “Live and unedited, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.” If the show is unedited, this means that it must go on even in the narratively barren moments of Truman’s life, for instance when he is asleep. The scriptwriters of the show make up for these barren moments by filling the daytime with the kind of events that one might expect from a soap. These events introduce a “tellability” into Truman’s life that rescues it from the tediousness of normal life. In his broadcast about the show, Christof titillates the audience with a preview of the excitement to come: “Meryl will soon leave Truman. A new romantic interest will develop. And watch for the first live conception on TV.”

Ryan notes that, in contrast to the highly controlled 24-hours –a-day world of Truman’s

life, the world of the reality TV show only includes relatively small segments of selected time base don selective editing to build narrative conflict and suspense—often around who will be “voted off.” And, in contrasts to the producer’s minute control and staging of every detail of Truman’s life, many of the reality TV shows deliberately do not attempt to manipulate participants in they hopes that they will actually violate expectations and norms, much to the entertainment of the audience, who are watching voyeuristically how the participants may resist the strictures imposed on them by the show’s presuppositions. (This is particularly the case with the PBS historical programs in which the participants often simply break down under the challenges of daily drudgery of life in 1883 or 1900, creating the suspense as to whether they will simply abandon the program itself.):

To the idea of a gullible audience thrown into mental arrest by the mystifying power of the media, I prefer the thesis advanced by Cynthia Freeland with regard to other types of Reality TV, such as *Rescue 911* or *When Animals Attack*: these programs are so badly acted and so amateurishly produced that they have “gotten to the point of parodying themselves.” *Survivor* achieves the same effect through the opposite route of overproduced, technically perfect images. According to Freeland, audiences watch these caricatures “in a subversive, ironic spirit,” deriving their pleasure from the thought that this is not reality but rather its made-for-TV version.

 At the same time, Ryan argues for the need to recognize that he participants , producers, and audiences are aware of the fact that a reality TV show such as Survivor is an artificial world, but, at the same time, through their interaction with that world, the are engaged in some genuine behaviors:

The claim that what happened in the fishbowl does not capture reality because participants were selected by the producers, were aware of the presence of the camera, and were placed in an artificial situation presupposes an essentialist interpretation of human reality. In this view, the real equals the normal, the everyday, the private and the intimate. We are only truly ourselves in the familiar circumstances of our daily life, and preferably behind closed doors, when we no longer play the game of social behavior. The “false,” controlled self of public life is thus opposed to the “true,” impulsive self of privacy, which the Reality show can only hope to capture when the participants forget the camera and let raw feelings speak out…human reality is something continuously produced and presented to others, something that arises from the interaction between a subject and an environment. Human reality, if it could be mapped, would be the sum of all the possible selves that we create in all possible situations. This reality can emerge no less from the confrontation of individuals with a made-up environment than from their insertion in a naturally occurring one…These shows make no secret of being artificially designed environments, but they are designed in such a way as to encourage emergent behaviors. In *Truman*, life becomes a spectacle that oppresses life. In *Survivor*, by contrast, as in Artificial Life programs, the spectacle breeds life. Without putting the two on the same pedestal, couldn’t we say that in its best moments, the maligned, low-brow genre of Reality TV shares at least this one feature with art?

 Ryan’s defense of reality TV shows as actually portraying the “reality” of people engaged with an artificial world suggests the need to focus on the ways in which the participants respond to the contrived nature of their situation with different degrees of genuine or authentic behavior.

*Genre analysis*. Given the conventions of a drama program, reality TV draws on a number of different genres. Because many programs such as *Survivor* are set in exotic or challenging contexts, they draw on the action/adventure film in which participants are engaged in dramatic narrative attempts to achieve a quest or escape danger. In emphasizing the conflicts between people based on having to “vote off” participants and share reasons for one’s votes, the programs also draw on soap opera programs in which emotional, interpersonal conflict is dramatized . And, reality TV draws on quiz shows and sports broadcasting by having certain participants emerge as “winners” after having successfully opposed various opponents (Howley, 2000). Students could examine the particular types of roles, language, storylines, and value assumptions operating in a particular episode that reflect intertextual links to these various genres.

*Discourse analysis*. Reality TV portrays participants engaged in highly competitive events in which they must employ whatever means it takes to “win” or “survive” in order to achieve individual popularity and prizes. Rather than working together to address a social issue, the participants adopt a highly competitive stance reflecting a discourse of competition consistent with traditional patriarchy (Howley, 2000). All of this may reflect a larger American cultural context in which a discourse of individualism is valued over a discourse of community social action. At the same time, the slight decline in the popularity and number of these programs in 2003 compared with 2000, may reflect a post 9/11 value orientation towards the need for shared community stances. Students could examine the underlying discourses operating in a particular episode, noting how decisions and attitudes expressed reflect participants’ adherence to the larger ideological values operating in the episode.

*Media ethnography*. Students could examine audience responses to specific episodes of Reality TV, determining reason for their appeal. Audiences may become engaged with particular participants or situations because they can readily identify with the seemingly “everyday,” down-to-earth nature of the participants. They can also actively participate, as is the case with many television series, on chat discussion sites, enhancing their sense of being a member of a fan community.

Unit: The Reality of Reality TV

<http://ltag.education.tas.gov.au/effectteach/units7_10/English/Realitytv/default.htm>

For further reading:

Andrejevic, M. (2003). *Reality TV: The work of being watched.* Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield.

Balkin, K. (Ed.). (2004). Reality TV. New York: Greenhaven Press.

Brenton, S., & Cohen, R. (2003). *Shooting people: Adventures in reality TV.* London: Verso Books.

Burnett, M. (2004). *Live your dream on reality TV.*New York: Plume.

Calvert, C. (2000). *Voyeur nation: Media, privacy, and peering in modern culture.*New York: Westview Press.

Friedman, J. (Ed.). (2002). *Reality squared: Televisual discourse on the real.*  New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Murray, S., & Ouellette, L. (Eds.). (2004). *Reality TV: Remaking television culture.* New York: New York University Press.

Smith, M., & Wood, A. (Eds.). (2003). *Survivor lessons: Essays on communication and reality television.* New York: McFarland & Co.

###### Documentary and Cultures

 Documentaries have been increasingly used as means for understanding and study ing cultures. Anthropologists and ethnography researchers employ documentaries to portray certain cultural practices. One reason for having students create their own documentaries is that, in doing so, they may begin to consider the ways in which that documentary can capture the social practices and norms operating in the particular cultural world of their school, community, family, organization, club, or an event. Or, in conducting their own ethnographic studies, they may use video-production as a tool to portray their version of a cultural world.

In conducting these ethnographic studies, students need to understand the various components that make up a cultural world or a set of competing cultural worlds.

For methods of conducting ethnographies:

Fieldworking (for use with the composition textbook, *FieldWorking: Reading and writing research*)

<http://www.fieldworking.com/home.html>

For further reading on ethnography methods:

Bishop, W. (1999). *Ethnographic writing research: Writing it up, Writing it down, and reading*

*it.* Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook.

Chiseri-Strater, E. & Sunstein, B. (2002). *FieldWorking: Reading and writing research*.

Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R.I.,& Shaw, L. L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago:  University of Chicago Press.

Goodall, H.L. (2000). *Writing the new ethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.

Moffatt, M. (1989). *Coming of age in New Jersey:  College and American culture*. New Brunswick:  Rutgers University Press.

Peacock, J. (1986). *The anthropological lens:  Harsh light, Soft focus*. Cambridge:  Cambridge University Press

Rosaldo, R, (1989). *Culture and truth:  The remaking of social analysis*. Boston: Beacon Press

Sacks, O. (1995). *An anthropologist on Mars:  Seven paradoxical tales*. New York:  Knopf.

Sanjek, R. (1990). *Fieldnotes:  the makings of anthropology*. Ithaca:  Cornell University Press

Stoller, P. (1989). *The taste of ethnographic things:  The senses in anthropology*. Philadelphia:  University of Pennsylvania Press

Woolcott, H. (1995). *The art of fieldwork*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.

Methods of oral history

<http://www.oralhistorian.org/>

 One example of a documentary that portrays a number of different worlds is the 1994 PBS documentary, *Hoop Dreams*, <http://www.finelinefeatures.com/hoop/>

This documentary focuses on the lives of two inner-city Chicago high-school basketball players, Arthur Agee and William Gates, during their four years of high school and then first year of college. They both live in the same inner-city Chicago neighborhood, and are both recruited as ninth graders to play for a private, suburban, Catholic high school, St. Joseph’s. After Authur struggles at St. Joseph’s, he loses his scholarship and returns to play for his neighborhood public school, Marshall High School, which eventually beats the St. Joseph team in the state play-offs. William struggles with an injury in his later high school years, and , even though he receives a scholarship to play at Marquette University, eventually loses interest in college basketball in favor of concentrating on academic work. In contrast, Authur attends a community college in Arkansas, and eventually achieves his dream of playing professional basketball, all be it, in the Canadian basketball league.

 Students could apply the various crucial approaches to analyzing the differences between the worlds of urban/suburban, public/private schools, professional/amateur sports, family/religious life, and the world of work/play.

*Discourse analysis*. The basketball program at St. Joseph’s High School portrayed in *Hoop Dreams* rests on an ideology of “winning is everything.” When the coach believes that players are not motivated at a practice, he asks them to “give me a good reason why I should keep you on the team,” imputing that being on a winning team is a privilege that he controls. He continually berates and criticizes his players, openly chastising them for not conforming to his dictates and threatening to throw them off of the team. During a crucial game at the end of a season, he plays William when he was recovering from knee surgery, only to have him reinjure his knee. He controlling style also reflects a traditional masculinity; he rarely attempts to build a caring relationship with his players.

*Genre analysis of social practices*. Worlds are constituted by specific learned social genres and practices. In *Hoop Dreams*, a central activity involves making the playoffs in order to go to the state championship. Within these activities are specific actions--shooting, passing, dribbling, guarding, etc. that serve to fulfill specific goals--scoring points in order to win games. However, they also involve acquiring the social practices of working with others, providing motivation, and defining one’s goals. Novices learn how to employ these social practices through guided participation as modeled by experts or coaches. Over time, through they active participation, they gain proficiency in their ability to employ these actions within a larger activity. Arthur and William are continually watching the Chicago Bulls on television or videos of stars such as St. Joseph’s graduate, Isaiah Thomas. Authur’s father and William’s brother, both former players, model certain moves and strategies.

*Semiotic analysis*. Cultural worlds also contain codes that reflect a world’s norms and values. The codes define the meaning of images and actions in a world. In *Hoop Dreams*, there are various codes reflecting the discourses of race and class. People in the documentary also represent or characterize other worlds according to their own ideological perspectives. At one point, the coach notes that Authur’s immaturity and lack of seriousness stems from his upbringing in an inner-city environment. He is drawing on his own code of race and class for evaluating behavior according to his racist beliefs that inner-city people lack the maturity of white, middle-class suburban world. The irony of his perceptions is made evident in his own often immature tirades as a coach as contrasted with the calm demeanor of Authur’s coach at Marshall High School.

*Media representations of sports*. Through participating in a cultural world, adolescents assume the identities of lover, scientist, athlete, school politician, employee, artist, historian, female, or male. Adopting each of these identities entail adopting the beliefs and attitudes valued within a particular cultural world. Arthur and William’s identities as basketball stars is associated with the discourse of merchandising/promotion related to the multi-billion-dollar world of college and NBA basketball and the sportswear industry. This discourse creates consumer needs and desires by glamorizing, sensationalizing, or idealizing a product, event, experience, or person through eye-catching, glossy visuals or hyperbolic language. It also equates consuming certain products with being a member of an exclusive group. Arthur is shown buying expensive sportswear and sneakers which he equates with his dream of being a future NBA player.

 In analyzing a documentary, students could examine these various components of a cultural world to then determine the ways in which that documentary constructs a version of that social world.

###### Studying Social Issues or Topics through Documentary

Documentaries can also be used in the classroom to study various social issues or topics. Viewing a provocative documentary about a particular issue or topic can often stimulate discussion on that issue or topic. Given fair-use copyright rules, you can use copies of many of the PBS documentaries for one showing (see Module 12 for information on copyright rules from PBS), although please check on variations between different program’s policies. And, as we have argued throughout these modules, students could also view various on-line clips, although they don’t substitute for the original.

In using these documentaries, as is discussed in Module 12, it is important that you embed their viewing within some larger purpose for viewing. You need to provide some background frameworks or perspectives about the issue or topic portrayed in thedocumentary . It is also helpful to having students reading related essays and fiction that provide a range of different perspectives and historical background on an issue or topic. For example, if you are studying the issue of family conflict as portrayed in some of the previously mentioned documentaries, you may have students reading some short stories about family conflict.

For teaching units based on various teen issues related to PBS Frontline documentaries:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/teach/>

*Finding relevant documentaries*. You can use any of the general movie search engines to search by topic or issue:

Internet Movie Data Base <http://www.imdb.com>

Rottentomatoes <http://www.rottentomatoes.com/>

Amazon: documentaries <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/browse/-/508532/104-3285265-6891111>

For history documentaries:

<http://www.dropbears.com/b/broughsbooks/movies/history_documentaries.htm>

National Society of Social Studies Teachers: programs/videos worth watching

<http://databank.ncss.org/index.php?topic=worthwatching>

Education Media Foundation, a site employed throughout these modules

<http://www.mediaed.org/>

that includes video clips/videos on topics related to media representations , gender, advertising, and media corporate control

Viewing Race Project, National Video Resources

<http://viewingrace.org/>

PBS: *In the Mix*; issues of concern to adolescents

<http://www.pbs.org/inthemix/>

PBS *Flashpoints* issues of civil liberties, First Amendment rights, and security after 9/11

<http://www.pbs.org/flashpointsusa/>

For more specified documentary distributors:

Center for Independent Documentary

<http://www.documentaries.org/>

MediaRights.org <http://www.mediarights.org/>

Cambridge Documentary Films: deals with social issues (includes video clips)

<http://www.cambridgedocumentaryfilms.org/home.html>

Documentary Education Review: a major site with lots of documentaries organized by themes/topics

<http://www.der.org/>

Museum of Broadcast Communications: DocuFest (an interactive on-line site for classroom use)

<http://www.museum.tv/education/docufest.shtml>

The Example of Social Class

One example of an issue that could be studied is social class and how difference s in class shape people’s self image, attitudes, and practices. As discussed in Module 4, the PBS program, *People Like Us*, <http://www.pbs.org/peoplelikeus/> provides a useful introduction to the issues of social class. It includes clips of people discussing their own experiences with social class, as well as background material on ways of defining class differences.

 One useful documentary series for studying social class is the BBC-produced “UP” series directed by Michael Apted.

<http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/42Up-1093903/>

<http://www.metacritic.com/film/titles/42up/>

Apted, M. (2000). *42-Up*. New York: The New Press. (book about the series).

Beginning in 1964, Apted filmed a group of 7-year-old British boys and girls representing different class backgrounds, creating the first documentary, *7-Up*. Then, every 7 years, until they were 42 years old, he made another documentary about the same group, with the *42-Up* version appearing in 1998. The series documents the influence of social class on these participants’ lives, particularly in terms of their education and careers, suggesting the high degree of predictability associated with the British system. Most of the upper-middle-class participants attend private school, elite universities (Cambridge or Oxford), and achieve lucrative careers. One of the interesting exemptions is a Cambridge graduate who ends up teaching math in a poor London school. Most of the working-class participants struggle in their careers, although they define their satisfaction with life particularly terms of their family roles and connections.

One of the effective techniques employed in the series is that in each new 7-year version, Apted include clips from the previous versions to show changes in the people’s development over the span of 42 years. It also shows how those changes are very much defined in terms of cultural attitudes linked to the larger British class system.

 Another documentary related to class is *American Movie* (1999), by Chris Smith,

<http://www.americanmovie.com/>

<http://us.imdb.com/Trailers?0181288>

which portrays a young amateur filmmaker, Mark Borchardt, from a working-class Wisconsin background who is attempting to make a horror film. It portrays the ways in which, despite his economic struggles to survive on an early-morning paper delivery job, he finds the time and support to make his film. It also represents an example of a production in that the director lets the action unfold as Mark encounters repeated set-backs in making his film.

 A *FilmEducation* unit contrasts this film with *Roger & Me*:

<http://www.filmeducation.org/filmlib/r.html> (scroll down to find title)

Unlike Michael Moore’s feature length documentary, *Roger & Me* (1989) about General Motors shutting a car plant in Flint, Michigan, *American Movie* does not have a crusading, investigative edge or agenda. Smith has an interest in his characters, finds them empathetic and tries to convey this to the audience. There is no axe to grind, there are no unpleasant truths to be unmasked. *Roger & Me* is an example of cinema verité – Moore is very present in the film and seeks to ask direct questions of his subjects. *American Movie* conforms more to the traditions of Direct Cinema with its apparent non-interference by the director. *“*We felt by just working as a team with me doing camera and Sarah doing sound, we could get much more intimate footage than if we went in with a full film crew.” (Chris Smith, Director). Working as a two-person crew for camera and sound, Smith and his producer, Sarah Price, were not seen as an intrusion by any of their subjects. As Smith points out, Mark had been making films with tiny crews for most of his life and so everyone involved was used to the idea of being filmed. To that extent, behavior is spontaneous and authentic. “I’m responsible for any behavior you see up on the screen and Chris did not manipulate it in any way.” (Interview with Mark Borchardt*, IndieWire* online magazine).

 In using documentaries to examine some of the social or cultural issues you currently address in your curriculum, you can have students consider the different perspectives portrayed in the documentaries that suggest the complexity of these issues.

###### Student-produced Documentaries

 One of the most effective ways to study documentaries is to have students produce their own documentaries about an issue, topics, or concern, as well as a study of an institution, group, or event. (For your final task in this module, you are asked to develop an idea for creating such a documentary).

 These documentaries can take on a range of different forms or formats. In some cases, they may simply be short portraits of a site or event in which the student interviews participants and capture some aspects of the site of event. In other cases, students, working in teams, may select an issue and create a documentary about different aspects or that issue. For example, they may want to do a study on the issue of equity in athletic funding in their school between male versus female sports. In doing so, they need to do some prior investigation about the competing perspectives associated with that issue so that they know how they will frame the issue and which individuals they need to interview.

 As noted on the Education Video Center site <http://www.evc.org/> engaging in these documentary productions will:

\* actively engage students in authentic, real-world tasks about issues that are of interest to them;

\* facilitate small group, collaborative work so that each student can serve as a resource and amplifier for their peers' learning;

\* organically link the processes of student creative media work and critical analysis;

\* teach students abstract concepts through the habitual joining of observation, experience and discussion;

\* routinely use visual, print and aural literacies for learning and expression;

\* share student-produced media work with school and community audiences for learning and discussion;

\* incorporate student reflection and self assessment throughout all work.

In making their productions, students need to use their discretion in making

decisions about what material to show and how they should show that material. They should be aware of the risks of showing people in a negative light, and should obtain the written permissions of any persons whom they are filming. As the producers of the PBS high school documentary, *American High*<http://www.pbs.org/americanhigh/> noted:

We invited 25 kids to be part of the video diary project and from that pool...we filmed with about 14 of them. In lesser hands, American High could've been a logistical nightmare. R.J., who also produced the political documentaries *The War Room* and *A Perfect Candidate*, had a simple system. Two crews covered up to eight students each. From August to June they shot three weeks out of every month, wherever the "cast" led them. That includes at home, on dates and at parties.

It gets kind of tricky covering very social, underage kids virtually 24 hours a day. Sometimes the crew may have wanted to jump in and stop someone from fighting or drinking. But, as R.J. explains, they tried to maintain distance to protect the series' authenticity.

"There were plenty of situations where it was necessary to exercise our discretion as grown-ups and human beings, but our principal objective was to observe and tell the truth as much as possible. I think we did that...but you always develop a personal relationship with your subjects. You do try to keep on a certain side of the line."

When the cameras finally stopped rolling, R.J. and the production team had logged literally thousands of hours of tape. Then came the task of sorting the footage and cutting it all together. Witness the enticing, fascinating, funny and poignant results of American High.

 It is important that students carefully plan out their productions, beginning with a script and storyboard, along with some estimation as to length of the various shots. They should also have a clear sense of the key ideas or points of view they want to convey through each of their shots. And, they need to consider whether they want to employ a voice-over narrative or music as part of their editing of the final product.

 One key aspect of creating documentaries is to find a potential audience. One audience can be the local Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) access television channels on cable television. You could contact one of the channels for information about including student-produced documentaries. Strategies for doing do are described on The Alliance for Community Media site:

<http://www.alliancecm.org/>

For other student documentary-production sites:

Children’s Media Project

<http://www.childrensmediaproject.org/>

Global Action Project

<http://www.global-action.org/>

Teaching Intermedia Literacy Tools

<http://www.tiltmedia.org/frameset.htm>

Media Alliance

<http://www.mediaalliance.org/>

Bay Area Video Coalition

<http://www.bavc.org/>

Media Arts Center, Seattle

<http://www.911media.org/>

Asian Media Access, Metropolitan State University, St. Paul, Minnesota

<http://www.amamedia.org/>

Multimedia Library: hundreds of QuickTime productions that illustrate documentary techniques

<http://www.multimedialibrary.com/diana/qtvr_sites.html>

Intime teacher Video: students create an iMovie documentary on environmental health

<http://www.intime.uni.edu/video/063iahs/8/>

Intime teacher Video: students create a CD-ROM documentary about Manson, Iowa based on photos, interviews,

<http://www.intime.uni.edu/video/011iahs/8/>

Street Level Youth Video

<http://streetlevel.iit.edu/>

PBS: Listen-Up Youth Media Network

<http://www.pbs.org/merrow/listenup/>

Document Durham: Neighborhoods Projects

<http://cds.aas.duke.edu/docprojects/durham/ek_powe.html>

Students could also incorporate documentary materials, including still digital photos, into their own writing of particular sites or events.

Photography used in ethnographies:

<http://www.people.virginia.edu/~ds8s/>

Voices of the Land: Minneapolis Star Tribune

<http://www.startribune.com/voices/>

The Voices for the Land project encouraged Minnesotans to write about the land they love, defend its existence and fight for its preservation. Every week for a year, we featured an essay with photographs by Star Tribune staff photographer Brian Peterson.

The Library of Congress: The American Memory digital collection

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/>

American Memory is a gateway to rich primary source materials relating to the history and culture of the United States. The site offers more than 7 million digital items from more than 100 historical collections

Pics for Learning: lots of digital images

<http://pics.tech4learning.com/>

Hanover 2000 Worlds Fair: examples of 360 degree QT shots of exhibition buildings

<http://www.expo2000tour.com/tour/index.html>

Digital Photography

<http://www.techtalk.umn.edu/episodes/03.shtml>

Video: students using digital photos to create a montage of their school

<http://www.intime.uni.edu/video/045vahs/8/>

Literacy through Photography

<http://cds.aas.duke.edu/ltp/index.html>

For further reading on documentary production:

Escobar, D. (2001). *Creating History Documentaries: A Step-By-Step Guide to Video Projects*

*in the Classroom*. New York: Prufrock Press.

Goldsmith, D. (2003). *Documentary Makers*. New York: Rotovision.

Kochberg, S. (Ed.) (2002). *Introduction to Documentary Production*. New York: Wallflower Press

Rosenthal, A. (2003). *Writing, Directing, and Producing Documentary Films and Videos*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Other recommended documentaries for high school viewing; descriptions from the FACETs

catalogue

<http://www.facets.org/asticat?function=search&catname=facets&searchmode=4&searchstring=category1=54&web=features&sub=filmlists&mnu=filmlistss&itm=category54>

*American Dream*

Winner of the 1990 Academy award for best documentary, forceful account of the labor strike, Barbara Kopple, 1990

*An American Love Story*

Jennifer Fox's amazing 10-part mini-series has been hailed as one of the most ambitious documentaries about American family life, 1998

*Anne Frank Remembered*

Family members, childhood friends and the people who hid the Franks bring to life the girl behind the diary, Jon Blair, 1995

*The Atomic Cafe*

This chilling documentary culls newsreel footage and government archives to recreate the hysteria of the Cold War. Kevin Rafferty, 1982

*Baraka*

Amazing 70mm cinematography tells this global story of human and environmental interdependence. Ron Fricke, 1992

*Be Good, Smile Pretty*

Filmmaker Tracy Droz Trago chronicled her quest to understand and cope with the loss of her father, who was killed in Vietnam 30 years ago,

Tracy Droz Tragos, 2003

*Blind Spot: Hitler's Secretary*

Traudle Junge, a soft-spoken, gray-haired, 81-year-old woman, breaks her 60-year silence to recount the years that she spent as Adolph Hitler,

Andre Heller/ Othmar Schmiderer, 2002

*Christo in Paris*

Since the days of King Henry IV, Paris' Pont Neuf has inspired artists. Here it is the focus of environmental sculptor Christo Javacheff, Albert Maysles/

David Maysles, 1991

*Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt*

Academy Award winner Robert Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman's moving, powerful documentary about five people who died of AIDS, Rob Epstein/

Jeffrey Friedman, 1989

*Crumb*

Robert Crumb, the multi-talented underground comic book artist, is profiled in this unique, in-depth documentary portrait, Terry Zwigoff, 1995

*The Farmer's Wife*

In the spirit of An American Love Story, this exceptional six-and-a-half hour television documentary series follows Nebraska farming couple,

David Sutherland, 1998

*A Great Day in Harlem*

Nominated for an Academy Award, this documentary offers a cross-section of jazz greats, Jean Bach, 1995

*Harlan County U.S.A.*

The Academy Award-winning documentary about the efforts of 180 coal-mining families to win a United Mine Workers contract, Barbara Kopple, 1976

*Looking for Richard*

Al Pacino's critically acclaimed tribute to Shakespeare features Winona Ryder, Kevin Spacey, Alec Baldwin, and Estelle Parsons, Al Pacino

*Lost in La Mancha*

Director Terry Gilliam's uphill battle to film an adaptation of Cervantes' epic novel, "Don Quixote," Keith Fulton/Louis Pepe, 2002

*Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media*

This remarkable Canadian documentary is a riveting look at the political life and times of the controversial author, linguist and radical, Noam Chomsky, Mark Achbar/Peter Wintonick, 1992

*Road Scholar*

The whimsical and offbeat Transylvanian humorist Andrei Codrescu takes off across America in a red convertible, Roger Weisberg, 1992

*SlamNation*

A high-energy documentary feature about poetry "slam" contests and the talented poet-performers who compete in them, Paul Devlin, 1998

###### References

Giannetti, L. (2002). *Understanding movies*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Howley, K. (2000) Reading *Survivor*: A primer on media studies. *M/C Reviews* 04 May 01.

<http://reviews.media-culture.org.au/sections.php?op=viewarticle&artid=102>

Ryan, M. (2002). From *The Truman Show* to *Survivor*: Narrative *versus* reality in fake and real

reality TV, *Intensities: A Journal of Cult Media*

<http://www.cult-media.com/issue2/Aryan.htm>