



## **The Alliance for Global Education, Pune Program**

### **DOCU 380: Documentary Film**

This component offers students the possibility of conducting and presenting research through a visual rather than written medium. Using the techniques and perspectives of visual anthropology, as well as an understanding of the aesthetics and politics of the film image, students will pursue their own academic areas of interest through the production of a short documentary film under close academic supervision by a faculty member who is both a film professor and director.

#### **Overview**

During the coursework period of the program, students will participate in introductory classes and field-based film exercises.

Students will also work individually with the professor throughout the 2-month coursework period in formulating an academic question that they wish to approach through the medium of documentary film.

The last six weeks of the program will be dedicated to the shooting and editing of 10-minute documentary film, which will be screened in the closing seminar.

#### **Classes and Field-Based Film Exercises**

Introductory classes will focus on:

- 1) The history of world documentary cinema
- 2) The aesthetics and politics of non-fiction
- 3) The relationship between fiction and non-fiction
- 4) Introductory inputs on camera and editing
- 5) Indian documentary and non-fiction filmmaking

Sample exercises are described by the professor below:

##### Exercise #1

Students walk the city with a notebook, not bogged down by equipment. They write their first impressions of all things that catch their attention. They will have to be specific to details: colours, sounds, smells, and the lighting at that time. They must frame images in the mind, even if they are not looking through a camera. Also they will have to, in their mind, think about the temporal aspect of the image.

A particular tree, a *paan* shop or men and women selling flowers and making garlands on the street could be interesting. But why is that image interesting—which part in particular is interesting?

This is the first week's exercise. They observe the first two days; report their observation on the third day and then take six or eight shots of their 'spot' on the fourth day. These shots are seen and discussed on the fifth day: unedited shots taken from various angle of the same topic.

#### Exercise #2

Students take the camera and get lost. They document the process of getting lost...and then of finding something. So the students learn how to take images of something that is not yet made any sense to them; and take images of something that has caught their attention.

When they report the shoot, they have to be able to connect their emotions at that point when they shot the 'unexpected' and tell what they see in the image they have taken. And then again, they have to be able to analyse what they thought while taking the second set of images and if that matches what they have taken.

#### Exercise #3

This is an interview based exercise. The student will have to be specific about what they hope to get through the interview and write a script based on a prior study. They will then film their subject(s) and edit over three days; the final rough version of five or seven minutes will then be discussed in the class.

#### Exercise #4

This will be a workshop with a filmmaker. Students will go out with him or her on location; observe him or her shooting something and then observe the editing process.

### **Evaluation**

- 20% Performance in introductory classes and related assignments
- 40% Field-Based Film Exercises (10% each)
- 40% Final Documentary Film

The student will be required to bring a camera. Any camcorder, DSRL, or DV camera will do. But it must have a tape or a fire-wire output facility or a memory card (for editing purposes). In addition, the student must bring a compatible cord to transfer information from the camera to the laptop while in India.

The student can come with editing software on their lap-top with which they can complete their assignments. For the final project, they will be supplied with more advanced technology like Avid or FCP (if they do not have the same).