

Documenting the African City

SCA-UA 9124 or ANTH-UA 9087

Instruction Mode: In-person

Fall 2022

Syllabus last updated on: 05-08-2022

Lecturer Contact Information

- Yahaya Alpha Suberu
- Lecture Venue: Class Room 2, NYU Accra Centre, Labone.
- Editing Workshop/Teaching Assistant: Mohammed Abdul Majeed

Units earned

4 CREDITS

Course Details

- Meeting days and time: Tuesdays, 15:10 to 18:10 GMT
- All times are GMT
- COVID-related details: In the interest of protecting the NYU Accra community, we are closely following CDC guidance around COVID-19 and adjusting our recommendations and policies accordingly. Your health and well being is our top priority.
 - If you are attending in person, you will be assigned a seat on the first day and are expected to use that seat for the entire semester due to NYU COVID-19 safety protocol. Please note that you are expected to attend every class meeting in-person; however, this may change during the drop/add period if in-person student registration increases significantly or at any point during the semester if local COVID-19 regulations require additional physical distancing.
 - Additionally, in-person students will be split into cohorts who will attend sessions.

SAMPLE

Course Overview and Goals

Collaboration

The class will be divided into crews of two to three. Each crew will be assigned a camera and tripod that they will share (and be responsible for).

Desired outcome

Students will produce a few very short photography, video and audio projects and a five (5) minutes documentary by mid semester and a final Ten (10) minute documentary at the end of the semester. All researched, written, shot and edited by individuals and groups of 2 to 3.

Assessment components

There will be one (1) week time allotted to complete the five (5) minutes mid semester group project and three (3) weeks for the ten (10) minutes group project, shooting should take place during the lab session and other times convenient to the students, editing may be completed any time before the project is due. The director must email a production book the day before the due date and hand in a labeled copy of their finished project on an external hard drive, on their assigned screening date. To label the FILE properly, please write your name, crew #, project # and title, on the folder.

Assessment Expectation

PRODUCTION BOOKS

For each project, directors must submit a production book that includes the following: The Statement of Objective; which is the main idea of the topic in a concise statement; the Script and/or Treatment, with a list of Subjects and Locations and a Shooting Schedule, including any Permits or Permissions; and finally, the Evaluation. Everything minus the Evaluation must be presented to the instructor one week before shooting. The Evaluation is to be written after editing is completed. This should be written as a one-page journal entry. Analyze intention, realization, mistakes, and crew work, and give a self-evaluation. Comment on how you did as a director, what you might do differently next time, and what really worked for you. Completed Production Books, with the Evaluation included, are to be e-mailed to the professor prior to the screening day and should include director's name, title of film, project number, and crew list. All Production Books must be e-mailed before the screening or they will be considered late. If there are any original photos, drawings or sketches, they can be shown to the professor in class the day of the screening

Upon Completion of this Course, students will be able to:●

- Find story ideas, research them, write a treatment/proposal
- Shoot, direct, record sound on location, using digital still cameras, digital video cameras and professional sound recording equipment
- Edit using Adobe Premiere Pro

SAMPLE

Course Requirements

Hardware

External Hard Drive

SD Cards

Smartphones

DSLR Camera

Class Participation

Every student is invited to participate in class discussion. The topic of each class is chosen to illustrate motivation and techniques of the assignments. Class participation adds knowledge and point of view on the subject. During project critiques it is important to your peers that you express your honest, positive and constructive opinion. The goal of the critique sessions is to help each other become better documentary filmmakers and visual storytellers.

Assignments (Out of class)

First Assignment

Photo Roman

Each student comes up with a simple story and shoots the story with a smartphone or DSLR. The story should be told using six (6) still images (with additional two (2) images as alternative beginning and end to the story). **(Optional)**, file photos to instagram with hashtags #DTAC photoroman #accra city.

Second Assignment

Photography

Use your DSLR or smartphones and tell a “Humans of Accra” story with a portrait and caption. **(Optional)**, file to instagram with hashtags #HOA #DTAC hoa

Third Assignment: 5 minutes group project

Interior/Exterior Interview

Choose a person and interview them on a topic. Both the person and the topic should first be researched. Subjects should be shot to ensure sufficient editing opportunities. Consider action/reaction shots, coverage and cut-away. Gather B-roll footage that is relevant to the interview. What can you find out about the person and the topic in advance? What questions will you ask in the interview? What is your opinion on the topic? What do you hope to learn or discover?

Fourth Assignment: Final ten (10) minutes group project.

Document an Activity

Visually document a topic that includes at least one person doing an activity. Research the topic, location and person. Use what you have learned from both the Exterior Location and the Interior/exterior Interview. Pay attention to the continuity of action in front of the camera. Gather enough footage to accommodate the change of angle, the overlap of action, the continuity of screen direction, and the flow of

SAMPLE

strengthen the information you will present? What kind of interview will enhance the meaning and interest of your topic? What information will clarify and illuminate your topic, not confuse or distract your audience? What kind of point of view will you have on the topic?

Assignments (In class)

First Assignment

Exterior Location Exercise

Group 1, Group 2 and Group 3, each shoot a film in the same general location.

Conduct extensive research on the location. Look for various camera angles and meaningful details. Pay attention to the foreground, middle ground, and background, use long shots, medium shots, close ups and extreme close ups. What “story arc” can you find in the location? Think about how and why the location will add meaning and significance to that story. It’s all about the location! The final edit should not be more than three (3) minutes.

Second Assignment

Location sound recording

Students record an action unfolding in distinct sounds not less than one (1) minute. For example, a coconut seller cracking a nut and serving a customer; Opening a new bottle of mineral water and drinking; Pressing the bell or knocking on the gate for NYU Accra security to allow you in.

Third Assignment

Editing

Edit the exterior location exercise that was shot during the second week’s workshop.

Assigned Readings

- Not Hollywood by Brendan Shehu
- African Cinema by Manthia Diawara
- Documentary Film: A Very Short Introduction by Patricia Aufderheide
- Theorizing Documentary by Michael Renov
- In search of Africa by Manthia Diawara

NB: .pdf of all assigned readings are available via NYU Brightspace

Assigned Screenings

- Nanook of the north by Robert Flaherty
- Triumph of the will by Leni Riefenstahl
- Les maîtres fous by Jean Rouch
- The thin blue line by Errol Morris
- Don’t f**k with cats: Hunting an internet killer by Mark Lewis
- Borom sarret by Sembene Ousman (In-class screening)
- The manuscripts of Timbuktu by Zola Maseko (In-class screening)



NB: Links to all assigned screenings are available via NYU Brightspace

Grading of Assignments

The grade for this course will be determined according to the following formula:

Assignments/Activities	% of Final Grade
Readings	5%
Photo Roman	5%
Exterior Location	10%
Interior/Exterior location interview	15%
Class participation	10%
Production book	10%
Lateness	5%
Collaboration (Team work)	10%
Final 10 minutes production	20%
Location sound recording	5%
Photography	5%

Course Schedule

Topics and Assignments



Week/Date	Topic	Screenings/Readings	Assignment
------------------	--------------	----------------------------	-------------------

SAMPLE

<p>Week 1, September 6</p>	<p>Introduction to course & syllabus.</p> <p>Introduction to the Short Documentary subject and African Cinema</p> <p>Story ideas and Point of View (POV)</p> <p>Basic film language</p>	<p>“Borom Sarret” by Ousman Sembene</p> <p>Not Hollywood by Brendan Shehu Pgs 10-34</p> <p>African Cinema by Manthia Diawara Pgs 1-11</p> <p>Documentary Film: A Very Short Introduction Pgs 1-55</p>	<p>Photo Roman (due week 2)</p>
--------------------------------	---	---	---------------------------------

SAMPLE

<p>Week 2, September 13</p>	<p>Photo Roman Exhibition</p> <p>CAMERA TECH</p> <p>Image sizes, framing and composition</p> <p>Camera and its parts</p> <p>Camera movements</p> <p>Exterior location exercise</p>		
---------------------------------	--	--	--

SAMPLE

<p>Week 3, September 20</p>	<p>Documentaries or Non-fiction, Types of Documentaries</p> <p>The Interview: The Setting and The Questions</p> <p>Writing the Research</p> <p>Share journals from past weeks</p>	<p>Theorizing Documentary by Michael Renov pgs 1-11</p> <p>In search of Africa by Manthia Diawara pgs 12-58</p> <p>“The story of Nanook”</p> <p>“Interview with Leni Riefenstahl”</p> <p>“Interview with Jean Rouch”</p> <p>“Interview with Mark Lewis”</p> <p>“Capturing reality: The Art of documentary” by Pepita Ferrari</p>	
---------------------------------	---	--	--

SAMPLE

<p>Week 4, September 27</p>	<p>EDITING: The art and technique</p> <p>Exterior location exercise</p> <p>Form groups for 5 minutes Interior/Exterior Interview</p>		
---------------------------------	--	--	--

SAMPLE

<p>Week 5, October 4</p>	<p>Finding a Topic that Matters</p> <p>(Guest Lecturer: TBD)</p> <p>PRESENTATION Groups 1, 2 and 3 for 5 mins Interior/Exterior Interview</p>	<p>TBD</p>	
------------------------------	---	------------	--

SAMPLE

<p>Week 6, October 11</p>	<p>SOUND TECH</p> <p>Students record an action unfolding in distinct sounds not less than one (1) minute. For example, a coconut seller cracking a nut and serving a customer; opening a new bottle of mineral water and drinking etc etc.</p> <p>Edit Location sound recording</p> <p>PRESENTATION Groups 1, 2 and 3 for 5 mins Interior/Exterior Interview</p>		<p>'Human of Accra' story with portrait and caption; file to instagram with hashtags #HOA #DTAC hoa (due week 8)</p> <p>SHOOTING Interior/Exterior Interview by Groups</p>
<p>Week 7, October 18</p>	<p>EDITING Interior/Exterior Interview by Groups</p>		

SAMPLE

<p>Week 8, October 25</p>	<p>PRESENTATION Photography assignment</p> <p>Structure; Before and After Shooting</p> <p>Form groups for final 10mins project</p>	<p>5 mins Interior/Exterior Interview Exercise</p> <p>“The Manuscripts of Timbuktu” by Zola Maseko</p>	
-------------------------------	--	--	--

SAMPLE

<p>Week 9, November 1</p>	<p>Re-telling your story</p> <p>Ethical Responsibility</p> <p>(Guest Lecturer: TBD)</p> <p>PRESENTATION by Groups 1, 2 and 3 for Final 10mins project</p>	<p>TBD</p>	
-------------------------------	---	------------	--

13



<p>Week10, November 8 (Lecture)</p>	<p>FINAL PRESENTATION by groups for 10mins</p> <p>Mix media format</p> <p>-The use of audio, video, photographs, graphics, archival materials, etc, to tell a simple story.</p> <p>Behind the scenes (Being professional on set)</p>	<p>“Inspiring food & feed entrepreneur pivots for protein progress” by Yahaya Alpha Suberu</p>	
---	--	--	--

SAMPLE

Week 11, November 15	FINAL PRODUCTION		FINAL PRODUCTION
Week 12, November 22	EDITING		FINAL POST PRODUCTION

14



Week 13, November 29 (Lecture)	Rushes/rough cuts of 10mins project Finessing the Final cut Colour correction		
--------------------------------------	--	--	--

SAMPLE

Week 14, December 6	Discussing and critiquing of Final project		
December 9 Screening	PUBLIC	SCREENING	

Classroom Etiquette

To optimize the experience in a blended learning environment, please consider the following:

- Please be mindful of your microphone and video display during synchronous class meetings. Ambient noise and some visual images may disrupt class time for you and your peers.
- Please do not eat during class and minimize any other distracting noises (e.g. rustling of papers and leaving the classroom before the break, unless absolutely necessary).
- If you are not using your cell phone to follow the lesson, cell phones should be turned off or in silent mode during class time.
- Make sure to let your classmates finish speaking before you do.
- If deemed necessary by the study away site (i.e, COVID related need), synchronous class sessions may be recorded and archived for other students to view. This will be announced at the beginning of class time.
- Students should be respectful and courteous at all times to all participants in class.

15

Grade Conversion

Letter Grade	Points	Percent
A	4.00	94%-100%
A-	3.67	90% – 93%
B+	3.33	87% - 89%

SAMPLE

B	3.00	84% - 86%
B-	2.67	80% - 83%
C+	2.33	77% - 79%
C	2.00	74% - 76%
C-	1.67	70% - 73%
D	1.00	65% - 69%
F	.00	65 or lower

Lecturer Profile

Yahaya Alpha Suberu, is a filmmaker and founder of Film For Development, an NGO established in Ghana. He was born in Accra, Ghana. He graduated from the National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI), Ghana, with a BFA in Motion Picture Photography. After several years of shooting documentaries, he went to the New York University to pursue further studies where he obtain his MFA in Film and Television, in 2012. He's shot a lot of commercials, some narrative fiction, reality shows and continues to shoot documentaries. He is an adjunct faculty member at the New York University in Accra.

Academic Policies

Grade Conversion

Your lecturer may use one of the following scales of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

16

Attendance Policy

Studying at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers, or online through NYU Brightspaces if the course is remote synchronous/blended, is expected promptly when class begins. Attendance will be checked at each class meeting. If you have scheduled a remote course immediately preceding/following an in-person class, you may want to write to nno211@nyu.edu to see if you can take your remote class at the Academic Center.

As soon as it becomes clear that you cannot attend a class, you must inform your professor and/or the Academics team by e-mail immediately (i.e. before the start of

SAMPLE

your class). Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, Moses Center accommodations, religious observance or emergencies. Your professor or site staff may ask you to present a doctor's note or an exceptional permission from an NYU Staff member as proof. Emergencies or other exceptional circumstances that you wish to be treated confidentially must be presented to staff. Doctor's notes must be submitted in person or by e-mail to the Academics team, who will inform your professors.

Unexcused absences may be penalized with percent deduction from the student's final course grade for every week's worth of classes missed, and may negatively affect your class participation grade. Four unexcused absences in one course may lead to a Fail in that course. Being more than 15 minutes late counts as an unexcused absence. Furthermore, your professor is entitled to deduct points for frequently joining the class late.

Exams, tests and quizzes, deadlines, and oral presentations that are missed due to illness always require a doctor's note as documentation. It is the student's responsibility to produce this doctor's note and submit it to site staff; until this doctor's note is produced the missed assessment is graded with an F and no make-up assessment is scheduled. In content classes, an F in one assignment may lead to failure of the entire class.

Regardless of whether an absence is excused or not, it is the student's responsibility to catch up with the work that was missed.

Final exams

Final exams must be taken at their designated times. Should there be a conflict between your final exams, please bring this to the attention of the Academics team. Final exams may not be taken early, and students should not plan to leave the site before the end of the finals period.

Late Submission of Work

17

- (1) Work submitted late receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100 point scale for each day it is late (including weekends and public holidays), unless an extension has been approved (with a doctor's note or by approval of NYU SITE Staff), in which case the 2 points per day deductions start counting from the day the extended deadline has passed.
- (2) Without an approved extension, written work submitted more than 5 days (including weekends and public holidays) following the submission date receives an F.
- (3) Assignments due during finals week that are submitted more than 3 days late (including weekends and public holidays) without previously arranged extensions will not be accepted and will receive a zero. Any exceptions or extensions for work during finals week must be discussed with the Site Director.

SAMPLE

- (4) Students who are late for a written exam have no automatic right to take extra time or to write the exam on another day.
- (5) Please remember that university computers do not keep your essays - you must save them elsewhere. Having lost parts of your essay on the university computer is no excuse for a late submission.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism

As the University's policy on "[Academic Integrity for Students at NYU](#)" states: "At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community. By accepting membership in this community, students take responsibility for demonstrating these values in their own conduct and for recognizing and supporting these values in others." Students at Global Academic Centers must follow the University and school policies.

NYU takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. Your lecturer may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form, and may check your assignments by using TurnItIn or another software designed to detect offences against academic integrity.

The presentation of another person's words, ideas, judgment, images, or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism. It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), **you MUST inform your professor.**

For guidelines on academic honesty, clarification of the definition of plagiarism, examples of procedures and sanctions, and resources to support proper citation, please see:

18

[NYU Academic Integrity Policies and Guidelines](#)

[NYU Library Guides](#)

Inclusivity Policies and Priorities

NYU's Office of Global Programs and NYU's global sites are committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion. In order to nurture a more inclusive global university, NYU affirms the value of sharing differing perspectives and encourages open dialogue through a variety of pedagogical approaches. Our goal is to make all students feel included and welcome in all aspects of academic life, including our syllabi, classrooms, and educational activities/spaces.

Attendance Rules on Religious Holidays

SAMPLE

Members of any religious group may, without penalty, excuse themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students who anticipate being absent due to religious observance should notify their lecturer AND NYU SITE's Academics Office in writing via e-mail one week in advance. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the Academics Office will schedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments. Please note that an absence is only excused for the holiday but not for any days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. See also [University Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#)

Pronouns and Name Pronunciation (Albert and Zoom)

Students, staff, and faculty have the opportunity to add their pronouns, as well as the pronunciation of their names, into Albert. Students can have this information displayed to faculty, advisors, and administrators in Albert, the NYU Home internal directory, as well as other NYU systems. Students can also opt out of having their pronouns viewed by their instructors, in case they feel more comfortable sharing their pronouns outside of the classroom. For more information on how to change this information for your Albert account, please see the [Pronouns and Name Pronunciation website](#).

Students, staff, and faculty are also encouraged, though not required, to list their pronouns, and update their names in the name display for Zoom. For more information on how to make this change, please see the [Personalizing Zoom Display Names website](#).

Moses Accommodations Statement

Academic accommodations are available for students with documented and registered disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Student Accessibility (+1 212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center

19

as early as possible in the semester for assistance. Accommodations for this course are managed through NYU [SITE].

Bias Response

The New York University Bias Response Line provides a mechanism through which members of our community can share or report experiences and concerns of bias, discrimination, or harassing behavior that may occur within our community.

Experienced administrators in the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) receive and assess reports, and then help facilitate responses, which may include referral to another University school or unit, or investigation if warranted according to the University's existing Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.

The Bias Response Line is designed to enable the University to provide an open forum that helps to ensure that our community is equitable and inclusive.

SAMPLE

To report an incident, you may do so in one of three ways:

- Online using the [Web Form \(link\)](#)
- Email: bias.response@nyu.edu
- Phone: 212-998-2277
- 030 276 1528

Note: Aspects of this course syllabus might change during the semester