

5 day Shooting Documentaries training programme

Tutor: Peter Gordon

5 day set of documentary seminars

What do we mean by documentary? It is a word used to cover almost every kind of factual programme-making, and in a sense that's exactly what it is: a catch-all name for many genres ranging from reportage, to investigative, to the personal, to the arts documentary. But all good documentaries have one thing in common: the illumination and exploration of the lives of real people, and the purpose of this set of seminars would be to explore this world and discuss different documentary forms.

Sample Case Studies

De-constructing, dissecting and discussing the making of a documentary, ranging from conception through to editing and completion. This could be part of the timetable as suggested below.

Each day would consist of the screening of films that are good examples of a particular genre through the decades so that we could see clearly how different periods made films in very different ways. There would be plenty of opportunity for discussion.

The five days would broadly be divided into these areas, without at this stage, being specific about film titles:

Day 1

An introduction: Start at the beginning: examples of early documentaries and how the limitations of technology shaped their form and content. Briefly, examples from WW2 of documentary as propaganda to illustrate the power of film.

Day 2

Social documentaries: films like HOUSING PROBLEMS made in the 1930's through to contemporary films about conservation or ecology.

Day 3

The personal film: documentaries that closely reflect the attitude of the maker. It could be political, social or arts based.

Day 4

The rise of verite & observational documentaries: the influence of American film-makers in the 60's

Day 5

The present: the rise of feature documentaries with cinema releases

Peter Gordon: Biography

Twice winner of the prestigious Grierson Documentary Award, a Royal Television Society Award and an Amnesty International Award, Peter Gordon has a prolific and distinguished filming career. All his documentaries are notable for their humanity; for allowing the subjects time to express themselves as individuals. Committed, non-judgemental, often poetic and always moving, these films open up ways of living.

Selected Filmography

- 2008** **KURDISH MEMORY PROJECT** RWF World
Films for proposed Anfal Museum in Kurdish N Iraq. Ongoing
- 2008** **THE KILLING OF CARLOS CARDOSO** Shoot Films
In development
- 2008** **3 MINUTE WONDERS: Motorway Stories** Shoot Films for C4
To be transmitted in 2009
- 2007** **LOOKING FOR ENGLAND** Century Films for More4 60mins
Produced, Directed & Filmed
How, in 2006, do people define being English, or British. What's the difference & what are the qualities most important to them?
"Thoughtful and thought-provoking....What makes the film exceptional isn't just the story...."
- 2005/06** **WHEN OUR BOYS CAME HOME.** BBC2 60 mins.
Produced, Directed & Filmed.
The powerful stories, told in their own words, of three British Servicemen seriously injured during the Iraq war 2003.
"...seethes with a quiet determined anger....raw, unflinching but essential viewing"
- 2003/05** **ASYLUM** BBC4/BBC2 90 min documentary.
Directed & Filmed.
Three families seeking asylum in the UK are filmed over two-and-a-half years, as they struggle to begin a new life here.
**SHEFFIELD INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL 2006
WINNER BEST DOCUMENTARY, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
MEDIA AWARDS 2006. WINNER BEST DOCUMENTARY ON A
CONTEMPORARY ISSUE in GRIERSON 2006**
- 2004** **DUNKIRK: THE SOLDIERS' STORY** BBC2 50 mins.
Produced & Directed
The personal and moving testimonies of some of those veterans who went to war for the first time – and lived through one of the worst defeats in British military history.
**WINNER OF THE 2004 GRIERSON BEST HISTORY
DOCUMENTARY**



HYFFORDDIANT CYFRYNGAU CREADIGOL RHYNGWLADOL
INTERNATIONAL TRAINING IN CREATIVE MEDIA

- 2000/01** **WAR GRAVE** BBC2 60 mins.
Directed & Filmed.
Personal stories of love and loss in war, from WW1 to the Falklands
SHORTLISTED FOR THE 2002 GRIERSON BEST HISTORY DOCUMENTARY
- 1998/99** **MATERNITY** BBC2 5x40 mins
Directed & Filmed
Filmed in UCH Obstetric Hospital, these are the stories of the women who have their babies there and the staff who serve them.
- 1996/97** **BREAKING POINT** BBC2 5x40 mins.
Directed & Filmed.
These five films follow couples with relationship difficulties, as they go through counselling together.
WINNER OF THE ROYAL TELEVISION SOCIETY BEST DOCUMENTARY SERIES AWARD 1998
SHORTLISTED FOR BAFTA BEST DOCUMENTARY SERIES AWARD 1998
- 1995** **FAMILY THERAPY** BBC2 6X40 mins.
Directed & Filmed.
A series of films following one family as they experience the effect of therapy on their personal, domestic and social lives.
“...gives a brilliant insight, layer upon layer, into the inner dynamics of a family”
- 1994/95** **AFTER THE BOMB** BBC2 60 mins.
Produced, Directed & Filmed.
A special in the Forty Minutes documentary strand.
Bronwen Vickers was seriously injured in the IRA's bomb attack in Warrington. Filmed over nearly a year, this is a closely observed story that ends in unexpected tragedy.
“...rigorous ferocity...a fiercely articulate plea for the sanctity of life”
- 1989** **PRESENT IMPERFECT – THORNY & CO**, a classic tale of Margaret Thatcher's Britain. **“...a remarkable film that challenges the limitations of documentary”**
Lindsay Anderson

As Tutor / Mentor:

BBC World Service Trust

Documentary seminars & mentoring for Russian broadcasters

National Film & Television School

Visiting Documentary Direction Tutor

Mentor on Documentary Direction graduation pr

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