

Paper Assignment #1

PHIL 130

Due March 23 by 11:59 via WebCampus

1. Watch the following films.

- a) Fricke, Ron (Director). (2011). Samsara [Film]. Oscilloscope, United States
<https://www.kanopy.com/en/unlv/video/12658501>
- b) von Trier, Lars (Director). (2004). The Five Obstructions [Film]. Kino, Lorber.
<https://www.kanopy.com/en/unlv/video/114027>
- c) Rouch, J. Morin, E. (Director). (1961). Chronicle of a Summer [Film]. The Criterion Collection. <https://www.kanopy.com/en/unlv/video/113373>
- d) Landreth, Chris (Director). (2004). Ryan [Film] CFB, Canada.
<https://youtu.be/nbkBjZKBLHQ?si=hWutmhWSrRZxxngt>
- e) Marker, C. (Director). (1983). Sans Soleil [Film]. The Criterion Collection.
<https://www.kanopy.com/en/unlv/video/113013/186035>

2. Consider all of the films we watched before (up through February 17), but especially:

- a) Morris, E. (Director). (1988). The Thin Blue Line [Film]. IFC Films.
<https://www.kanopy.com/en/unlv/video/13784896>
- b) Flaherty, R. (Director). (1922). Nanook of the North [Film]. Flicker Alley.
<https://www.kanopy.com/en/unlv/video/100078>
- c) Grimonprez, J. (Director). (2024). Soundtrack to a Coup d'Etat [Film]. Kino Lorber.
<https://www.kanopy.com/en/unlv/video/14940555>
- d) Axelman, E. and Eilertsen, S. (Directors). (2023). Israelism [Film]. Watermelon Pictures, USA. <https://youtu.be/lq6J7Q6L0yw?si=244KTOPem1OqSubu>
- e) [Note: you can also discuss any of the films posted as Optional Viewings.]

3. Write an essay of between 1000-1500 words answering the questions:

- a) What is a documentary and what is the best way of distinguishing a documentary film from a non-documentary or fiction film? This is the main question you should answer in your essay. [Make sure your answer uses only readings assigned for the class!]
- b) Which of the films listed above (if any) is NOT a documentary? Be sure to EXPLAIN your answer, again by appealing to readings from class.
- c) How does the inclusion of animation, reenactment, music, and/or fictional elements affect whether a film ought to be considered a documentary? Explain your answer.
- d) Does the fact that some film is propaganda affect whether it should be judged to be a documentary or not? Make sure you appeal to some definition of propaganda in your answer.

Make sure your essay is a coherent whole (i.e., don't treat these four questions as separate).

Grading:

An **A** paper is excellent. It contains few, if any grammatical mistakes, spelling errors, or stylistic infelicities. It has a clear and well-defined thesis. It supports its claims with argumentation, which includes considering replies and counter-positions. It explains technical terminology. It stays on topic. It is clear, concise, and complete.

A **B** paper is very good. It may contain a few grammatical mistakes, spelling errors, or stylistic infelicities. It has a clear and well-defined thesis. It supports its claims with argumentation, which includes considering replies and counter-positions. It explains technical terminology. It mostly stays on topic. It is mostly clear, concise, and complete.

A **C** paper is average. It probably contains some grammatical mistakes, spelling errors, and/or stylistic infelicities. Its thesis isn't as clear and well-defined as it should be. It supports its claims with argumentation, though the argumentation isn't quite as strong as it should be. It may not explain its technical terminology. It mostly stays on topic. It would be improved if it were more clear, concise, and complete.

A **D** paper has failed in some aspect of the assignment. Perhaps it contains too many errors to be readable (grammatical, spelling, or stylistic). Or its thesis is too unclear or undefined to be defensible. Or it fails to support its claims with adequate argumentation. Or it fails to define its technical terminology adequately. Or it fails to stay on topic enough to generate a sustained essay. In general, it is not clear enough or concise enough or complete enough.

An **F** paper has failed in multiple aspects of the assignment. It may be unreadable. Or it may lack a defensible thesis. Or it may lack argumentation. Or it may lack adequate explanations. Or it may not stay on topic. It needs multiple revisions and edits to make it acceptably clear, concise, and complete.

Plagiarism (or academic dishonesty of any kind, which includes using AI) will result in an F for the whole course and a report to the Office of Student Conduct.

We will use plagiarism and AI detectors. Consult the course syllabus for the course policy prohibiting the use of generative AI or AI-based "rewriting" programs.