

Welcome to English 10 Honors: Get Reel!
San Rafael High School 2018-2019

Throughout the year we will be using the craft of documentary filmmaking as the lens (pun is totally intended) through which we will be working with the Honors Sophomore English curriculum. So let's get to it, shall we? Please complete the following work in the order listed below.

What is a documentary film?

Before you begin Part I, you should read in its entirety the selections from Making Documentary Films and Videos. Afterward, have a discussion with someone about what is and what is not a documentary. You should use the guidelines in the book as your guide to complete Part I.

Assignment:

Part I:

Your first task is to watch six to eight hours of documentaries. Yes, part of your summer assignment is to sit in front of a screen for a total of six to eight hours. Why hours and not numbers of films, you may ask? Good question and the answer is that documentaries come in all lengths. Short of the Week (shortoftheweek.com), Vimeo and Youtube all have documentary channels which feature documentaries as short as five minutes and as long as two-plus hours. For each documentary keep an online journal (Google doc) that covers the following:

- Running time
- 1-2 sentences stating the filmmaker's thesis (main idea or central argument of the film).
- A brief (200-300) word movie review of the film. Was it engaging? Why? How? Is it technically well done? What could be improved? What impact did it have upon you? If the answer is "none", then why not?
- Finally, analyze and explain how your documentary choice meets the criteria laid out in the reading for what is and what is not a documentary.

Journal Guidelines:

- Well-written and engaging (Worry more that your work is fun to read than if it's academic enough. Look to do a combination of both entertaining and academic.)
- Please bring a hard copy of your complete journal to the first day of class
- Use MLA format in your document

Part II: You are a filmmaker!

Please create a 1-2 minute film that explores your identity. In other words, who are you? Think of your thesis as, "What makes me, me, is _____." We encourage you to get creative, think metaphorically and experiment with different forms of expression.

Guidelines:

- 1-2 minutes - no shorter, no longer

- Three different forms of expression (interview, first person POV, text, whatever else you can imagine)
- By the end of the film, your audience should have been engaged, entertained and educated.
- Note: audio is not a requirement.
- Keep in mind that other Get Reel students may see your film.
- We will review examples at our lunch meeting.

Part III: Reflect on what you have made.

Write a 500 word response in which you answer the following prompt: In what ways have the documentaries I watched this summer influenced the film I made? Perhaps it was subject choice, style, editing choices, camera angles- there are many ways in which the work of others can influence what you make.

- Reference specific aspects of the films you watched. Make direct correlations to your film.
- Format your writing in MLA format.

Equipment:

We encourage you to use a smartphone or any other film equipment to which you have access. If you do not have access to any camera equipment, let us know and we will find other resources for you to use.

POSSESSING CAMERA EQUIPMENT OR A SMARTPHONE OR ANY FORM OF TECHNOLOGY IS NOT A REQUIREMENT FOR THIS CLASS.

Sharing your film:

We recommend uploading your film to Google Drive and sharing or emailing it.

1. On your iPhone or iPad, open the Google Drive app.
2. Tap Add .
3. Tap Upload.
4. Find and tap the files you want to upload. To upload photos or videos, tap the photos and videos you want and tap Upload.
5. You'll see a status bar at the bottom of your screen. To view your file, tap Locate.

Other options:

- Upload your film to Vimeo or Youtube. You must keep your film in the private/unlisted setting and share the link with us via email.
- Save your film to a hard drive.

Deadlines:

- First Day of Class: Your film, your complete journal, and your reflection are due on the first day of class. Please bring a hard copy.

Resources:

Suggestions for resources to view documentaries:

- Netflix
- HBO
- Vimeo
- Youtube
- Short of the Week (shortoftheweek.com)
- Marin County libraries have over 350 documentary films on DVD. This is a link to the documentary DVD collection available at various libraries within Marin County.
https://marinet.bibliocommons.com/search?display_quantity=25&formats=DVD&page=1&q=documentary&search_category=keyword&t=keyword&utf8=%E2%9C%93

Filmmaking Tutorials:

This tutorial is a bit cheesy but informative of simple ways to make a documentary.

<https://www.videomaker.com/video/watch/tips-and-techniques/515-how-3-types-of-the-documentary-genre-are-made>

This tutorial is similar to the first one but a bit more professional and academic.

<http://www.desktop-documentaries.com/mini-documentary.html>

As you have questions or face challenges, use Google to search for solutions. There is a phenomenal amount of tutorials on filmmaking.

Special Note:

You should select documentaries that interest or excite you. Be aware that we expect you to inform your guardians and/or parents of what you are watching. Also, be aware that there is mature subject matter within all of the viewing resources. We expect you to behave responsibly and inform your parents prior to watching any material which may be inappropriate or is listed as “for mature audiences only”.

Finally, I will be limitedly available via email for questions or concerns. Feel free to contact me but it may take awhile before I am able to respond. My best advice is to not leave this assignment until the last minute.

We are looking forward to a fantastic and exciting year.