Description of Paper or Documentary
Worth 30% of your course grade

A proposal for your paper or documentary is due in class on Feb. 25, and the paper or documentary itself is due in its final form (earlier drafts/versions are encouraged) in class on May 5.

PAPER OPTION: The paper should be typed, double-spaced, easily legible, free of spelling and grammatical errors, and should use APA (American Psychological Association) referencing. The paper should be about 5-8 pages in length. Please hand in a hard copy of the paper, but do not hand in the only copy; keep a copy in case the one you hand in is accidentally lost or destroyed. And don’t forget, I encourage “pre-writes”–i.e., handing in an early version of the paper ahead of time, so that I can give you feedback before the paper is due.

The paper should be an analysis of some aspect of documentary form in film, television, and/or interactive media. I’m leaving the precise topic largely up to you, although bear in mind that I must approve your proposal (i.e., we’ll negotiate). For the paper, you are expected to watch some documentary content outside of class (also to be referenced in the paper with a separate “Filmography” page).

I expect that you will also consult some sources--it’s likely that you will consult books, journals, online sources, etc., for your paper. Please plan on providing full references for these sources on a References page, using APA style. Remember that direct quoting without attribution is to be interpreted as plagiarism. Either cite direct quotes properly (e.g., (Smith, 2008, p. 13)) or rework into your own wording (still giving credit for the source, e.g., (Smith, 2008)).

DOCUMENTARY OPTION: You may choose to produce a short (3-5 minute, approx.) documentary on video or film rather than write a paper. Again, I’m open to various options as to exactly what this might be. The documentary will be evaluated on (a) how closely it achieves the goals as laid out in your proposal, and (b) how it utilizes one or more of the documentary filmic styles presented in the Barnouw textbook, and how other course content has been utilized. With this in mind, please hand in a short abstract along with your documentary, indicating how you used the Barnouw notions and other class material.

Further, those who choose this option should be prepared to hand in a final version to Dr. N for review on May 5, with a public screening during the final exam period on May 12.

Those of you who have completed COM 204 will be able to use School of Communication equipment for your production (although purely “production” courses will have priority, so plan ahead). In your proposal, due on Feb. 25, please make specific requests for any equipment you might need—you must indicate exactly what equipment you need and for what length of time (also, approximately when in the term…requests for equipment earlier in the term are more easily accommodated).