



SUBJECT DATASHEET

Documenting the Self - Reflective Documentary Film Directing

BMEGT43X003

I. SUBJECT DESCRIPTION

1. SUBJECT DATA

Subject name

Documenting the Self - Reflective Documentary Film Directing

ID (subject code)

BMEGT43X003

Type of subject

class

Course types and lessons

<i>Type</i>	<i>Lessons</i>
Lecture	0
Practice	8
Laboratory	0

Type of assessment

term mark

Number of credits

8

Subject Coordinator

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Contact details</i>
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Dr. Gács Anna	associate professor	gacs.anna@gtk.bme.hu
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Educational organisational unit for the subject

Department of Sociology and Communication

Subject website

<https://edu.gtk.bme.hu>

Language of the subject

English - EN

Curricular role of the subject, recommended number of terms

Programme: **Communication and media studies Bachelor's Programme from 2021/22/Term 1**

Subject Role: **Elective**

Recommended semester: **0**

Programme: **MA in Communication and Media Studies**

Subject Role: **Elective**

Recommended semester: **0**

Direct prerequisites

Strong None

Weak None

Parallel None

Exclusion None

Validity of the Subject Description

Approved by the Faculty Board of Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences, Decree No: 580466/11/2025registration number. Valid from: 2025.06.25.

2. OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Objectives

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to: • Express artistic vision with an ethical and humanistic perspective • Develop an introspective approach to filmmaking, turning the camera on themselves • Apply an intentional structure, theme, point of view, and visual style to shoot a short documentary • Conduct archival research using various methods • Work collaboratively and independently in a professional manner • Communicate their creative vision clearly and effectively to their team • Contribute meaningfully to others' projects • Justify their directorial choices with well-reasoned arguments • Confidently operate key technical tools, including camera, tripod, audio equipment, and editing software • Anticipate potential production challenges and develop practical solutions • Transform personal experiences into compelling cinematic narratives • Inspire critical thinking through their work • Accept and implement constructive feedback while maintaining artistic integrity • Develop a documentary concept into an engaging short film

Academic results

Knowledge

1. Basic knowledge of social institutions (law, language, religion, etc.)
2. Basic knowledge of social science methodologies
3. Solid knowledge of conceptualization for studying communication and media phenomena

Skills

1. Analytical skills
2. Research skills
3. Openness to acquire new sectors of knowledge and ability to effectively acquire them

Attitude

1. Self-reflection of one's own abilities
2. Professional and moral stand
3. Social sensitivity, solidarity

Independence and responsibility

1. Responsible, professionally based social presence
2. Adoption and enforcement of professional standards
3. Independence

Teaching methodology

Class sessions combine lectures on relevant concepts, essential filmmaking techniques, including interviewing, research, narrative structure, viewing and analysis of documentary examples and technical instruction on equipment paired with hands-on exercises, as well as critique of class projects and films at each stage of completion.

Materials supporting learning

- Bill Nichols: Introduction to Documentary, Indiana University Press, 4th Edition, 2024.
- Stella Bruzzi: New Documentary: A Critical Introduction, Second Edition, Psychology Press, 2006.
- Carl Plantiga: Rhetoric and Representation in Nonfiction Film, First Edition, Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Michael Renov: Theorizing Documentary, Routledge, 1993.
- Michael Rabiger: Directing the Documentary, 7th Edition, Routledge, 2020.
- Alan Rosenthal, John Corner: New Challenges for documentary, Second Edition, Manchester University Press, 2005.

II. SUBJECT REQUIREMENTS

TESTING AND ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING PERFORMANCE

General Rules

Participation is mandatory, no more than 3 missed classes are allowed

Performance assessment methods

Assessment of Class Activity - participation in Discussions : 30% Creative Assignments (Homework) during the semester: 25% Final Film: 45%

Percentage of performance assessments, conducted during the study period, within the rating

- classwork: 30
- homework: 25
- film: 45
- sum: 100

Percentage of exam elements within the rating

Conditions for obtaining a signature, validity of the signature

Participation

Issuing grades

Excellent	97
Very good	90-96
Good	80-89
Satisfactory	70-79
Pass	60-69
Fail	0-59

Retake and late completion

Retake and make-up test options are defined by the valid regulations of the University's Code on Education and Examination.

Coursework required for the completion of the subject

coursework	84
homework	156
sum	240

Approval and validity of subject requirements

Consulted with the Faculty Student Representative Committee, approved by the Vice Dean for Education, valid from: 02.06.2024.

III. COURSE CURRICULUM

THEMATIC UNITS AND FURTHER DETAILS

Topics covered during the term

Reflective documentary filmmaking is a powerful tool for self-exploration, enriching the storytelling experience with deeper personal insight. This course focuses on understanding and creating reflexive documentaries, a subgenre of personal documentaries, where directors play an active role—either appearing in the film as an outsider to the subject, or as a family member, or the film can be about themselves. Participants are encouraged to approach their stories from their own unique perspective, drawing on personal experience.

Alternatively, they may reflect on the filmmaking process itself, using it as a tool for self-exploration and personal growth; it also might have a therapeutic effect on them.

- 1 1. The concept of documentary film - Documentary History & Theory
- 2 2. Documentary genres (The Bill Nichols typology)
- 3 3. Documentary Storytelling
- 4 4. Documentary directing practice and theory
- 5 5. Camera Techniques, Visual Language and Composition
- 6 6. Production Workshop: cinematography exercise
- 7 7. Sound Recording Techniques
- 8 8. Interviewing
- 9 9. Editing 1.
- 10 10. Production Workshop 2.: Camera & Sound
- 11 11. Editing 2.
- 12 12. PRESENTATION 1. Final Film Idea & Check Out Gear
- 13 13. Production Protocol
- 14 14. Case-Study & Watch “Her mothers” by Sára Haragonics
- 15 15. The usage of archive materials
- 16 16. The personal film
- 17 17. Psychology & Documentary Ethics
- 18 18. Modern Day Documentary: Creative Docs
- 19 19. PRESENTATION 2. Final Film Idea
- 20 20. FIELD TRIP in a Sound Mixing Studio & Masterclass on post-production sound
- 21 21. International Documentary Industry with a GUEST LECTURER
- 22 22. FIELD TRIP in a Color Correction Studio & Masterclass on color correction
- 23 23. Editing Consultation
- 24 24. Fine Cut Screening

Additional lecturers

Approval and validity of subject requirements