

## COURSE CONTENT

<b>Course Code</b>	DF2006
<b>Course Title</b>	Ethnographic Film
<b>Pre-requisites</b>	NIL (prior knowledge in Film studies is preferred)
<b>No of AUs</b>	3
<b>Contact Hours</b>	39 hours studio contact

### **Course Aims**

This foundation level course aims to introduce you to the historic developments and discussions in relation to ethnographic film and visual anthropology. It will give you a solid understanding of a continuously evolving debates that have significantly changed our understanding of this specific field of filmmaking. The seminar will introduce you to key texts and films that have influenced the discussion. In this way, this module offers to you a solid foundation for further studies in diverse fields like for example film, visual media, ethnography, social studies or anthropology.

### **Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)**

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Describe and show gained knowledge of structural developments in the production and discussion of ethnographic films and visual anthropology.
2. Interpret and differentiate works from the field in a wider historical context and in relation to other documentaries.
3. Apply the gained knowledge to the field of contemporary works and discussions in different institutional frames (galleries, museums, festivals etc).
4. Present, evaluate and reflect the knowledge you gained on ethnographic film and visual anthropology from different fields and sources.
5. Constructively discuss and critique diverse theories as well as the concepts, formats, and techniques employed by filmmakers.

### **Course Content**

In this course you will receive an overview of the key developments in the field of ethnographic film and visual anthropology.

Ethnographic Film is one of the many ways we look at culture. This course surveys its historical development and showcases those filmmakers regarded as its masters. Furthermore, it concentrates on close and careful analysis of ethnographic films.

The topics and questions we will encounter include: narrative constructions based on research and fieldwork; access and control of materials; the authors' and participants' voices; the role of interviews; the conflict between narrative and observational styles; and the basic analysis of shooting, sound and editing.

In our accompanying readings you will be introduced to the principles of Visual Anthropology through the associated critical literature. Therefore, we will give special attention to its central problematics: the notions of "truth" (objectivity) and the filmmakers' subjectivities; the representation of culture, collaboration with the films' peoples; films made for television and personal experimental works; ethical and moral dilemmas; and the issue of ethnocentrism and national hegemony (imperialism).

By analyzing a variety of films and theory texts, you will explore major shifting points in the discussions that changed the understanding of the field. We will gain an understanding of how the field changed from an approach that centred in its beginning around a western-colonial position

and developed into a critical, transcultural, and post-colonial discourse that has defined the films in recent years.

### **What's in an ethnographic film and what is visual anthropology?**

We will start with an investigation of the simple question: what do we define as ethnographic film and visual anthropology? From there we will dig deeper into various theories and approach questions concerning specific narratives (who is the narrator?), the forms (use of camera, editing, sound) and the wider perception (who is the audience & how are works distributed?). These questions then will be discussed against the developments of a global and transcultural discussion in film theory.

### **Between the creation of the "other" and a representation of "self"**

One key aspect throughout the whole semester will be how continuity of the charged distinction between SELF and OTHER has influenced the debate over the decades. You will learn how to critically reflect these patterns that usually create problematic narratives about an unknown culture, and that continuously have created dynamics of alienation and/or closeness.

### **From "traditional" to "new" narratives and formats**

You will receive a basic introduction to newly emerging and evolving story-formats that deviate from traditional forms. This may include installations, exhibitions, interactive storytelling, immersive environments such as dome and VR, and augmented reality. The aim of this section is to gain a basic familiarisation with the terms and the different requirements for conceiving narratives.

### **Class assignments**

You will produce two creative presentations during the semester which will introduce specific questions of a theory and film to your peers. The presentation will demonstrate that you have understood the key concepts of films / theories. It provides a basis for discussions that follow in each session.