
Course title: Trauma and Documentary Cinema – Film Analysis

Course convenors: Beja Margitházi

Class time and place: Wednesday 10:45-12:15, Múzeum krt. 6-8., lower level, room -137

Course type: seminar / **Max. 18 ppl.**

Course content: The seminar aims to analyze different strategies of approaching, investigating and representing individual and collective traumas in some selected documentary films. By raising consciousness towards various documentary methods of handling the memory and effect of traumatic situations, and by raising sensibility to different forms of social injustice, human losses, personal and historical traumas, the seminar plans to provide students with some basic theoretical and critical tools to discuss and to analyze documentaries made about conflictual, sensitive topics. Classes will imply three main activities:
(1) reading and interpreting some key theoretical texts for an introduction to theories of trauma and the basics of documentary film
(2) weekly preparation of individual reflections on the watched films
(3) in-class analysis and group discussion of the selected documentary films

Just watching: To observe

*Jairus McLeary – Gethin Aldous: *The Work* (2017)

Recommended: Katrine Philp: *Beautiful Something Left Behind* (2020)

Faces of remembrance: To interview

*Christian Krönes – Olaf S. Müller – Roland Schrotthofer – Florian Weigensamer: *A German Life* (2017)

Recommended: Claud Lanzmann: *Shoah* (1985)

On the spot: To accompany

*Bernadett Tuza-Ritter: *A Woman Captured* (2019)

Recommended: David France: *Welcome to Chechnya* (2020)

Collecting the pieces: To investigate

*Sarah Polley: *Stories We Tell* (2012)

Recommended: Andrew Jarecki: *Capturing the Friedmans* (2003)

Pretending as if: To re-enact

*Errol Morris: *Thin Blue Line* (1998)

Recommended: Joshua Oppenheimer: *The Act of Killing* (2012)

Trauma in the archive: To discover

*Yael Hersonski: *A Film Unfinished* (2010)

Recommended: Harun Farocki: *Respite* (2007); Sasha Joseph Neulinger: *Rewind* (2019)

Chased authenticity: To reanimate

*Jan Komasa: *Warsaw Uprising* (2014)

Recommended: Peter Jackson: *They Shall Not Grow Old* (2019)

Graphic tales: To animate

*Ari Folman: *Waltz with Bashir* (2008)

Recommended: Anca Damian: *Crulic* (2011); Keith Maithland: *Tower* (2016)

Loud thinking: To essay

*Raol Peck: *I Am Not Your Negro* (2018)

Recommended: Travis Wilkerson: *Did You Wonder Who Fired the Gun?* (2017)

Requirements: 1. **Class participation:** Continuous attendance and active participation in the group discussions is required (e.g. meaningful questions, notes, observations).

2. **Preparatory notes.** Students should watch the selected film for the respective class and send their notes and questions previously. Attention: the condition of attendance is sending the notes by the deadline.

3. **Group presentations:** During the semester each participant has to join a small group and prepare one in-class presentation related to a selected film. The type, exact topic and method of these presentations will be specified together with the instructor.

Grading: 30% (preparatory notes) + 30% (in-class activity) + 40% (group presentation).

Four or more absences result in an incomplete for the course. Attention:

*A delay of 10 minutes results in an invalid presence.

*No student will receive a final grade if their class presentation is missing or they have not submitted all their preparatory notes.

*First class on the first week!

Indicative Reading: Handbooks

* Bond, Lucy – Craps, Stef. 2019. *Trauma. New Critical Idiom*. London: Routledge.

* Nichols, Bill. 2017. *Introduction to Documentary*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Articles, book chapters

* Caruth, Cathy. 1995. Trauma and Experience. In: *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1996. 3-12.

* Hirsch, Marianne. 2001. Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory. *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 14: 5–37.

* Kaplan, Ann E. 2005. Vicarious Trauma and 'Empty' Empathy: Media Images of Rwanda and the Iraq War. In *Trauma Culture*, 87-100.

* Grindon, Leger. 2007. Q & A: Poetics of Documentary Film Interview." *The Velvet Light Trap* 60.1. 4-12.

* Melzer, Kym. 2019. "Vicarious trauma and emotion work in documentary filmmaking." *Studies in Documentary Film* 13.1 (2019): 38-52.

* Morag, Raya. 2012. Perpetrator trauma and current Israeli documentary cinema. *Camera Obscura* 27.2 (80): 93-133.

* Nichols, Bill. 2010. How Can We Describe the Observational, Participatory, Reflexive, and Performative Modes of Documentary Film? How Can We Write Effectively About Documentary? In: *Introduction to Documentary*, Indiana University Press, 172–211. 253–270.

* Plantinga, Carl. 2005. What a documentary is, after all. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 63.2. 105-117.

* Turim, Maureen. 2001. The trauma of history: flashbacks upon flashbacks. *Screen* 42 2 Summer, 205-210.

* Walker, Janet. 2001. Trauma cinema: false memories and true experience. *Screen* 42 2 Summer, 211–216.

* Walker, Janet. 1997. The Traumatic Paradox: Documentary Films, Historical Fictions, and Cataclysmic Past Events, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 22, no. 4. 803-825.

* Williams, Linda. 1993. Mirrors without Memories: Truth, History, and the New Documentary." *Film Quarterly* 46.3.1. 9– 21.
