

documenting

INJUSTICE

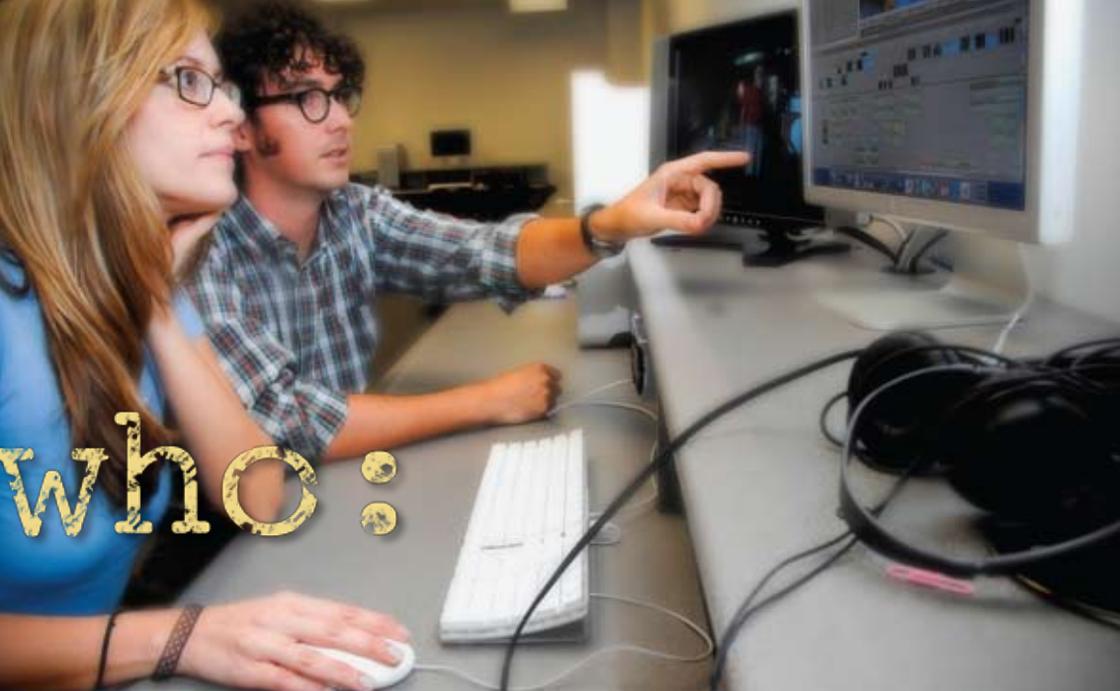


THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

“[Through documentary film]
you’re on a serendipitous journey,
a journey which is much more akin to the life experience.
When you see somebody on the screen in a documentary,
you’re really engaged with a person going through
real life experiences. So for that period of time,
as you watch the film, you are, in effect,
in the shoes of another individual ...

WHAT A PRIVILEGE TO HAVE THAT EXPERIENCE.”

—Albert Maysles
Documentary filmmaker



Designed for students interested in **characterizing the people and issues of concern to the state of Alabama**, Documenting Justice is a specialized interdisciplinary course that uncovers these stories through documentary filmmaking and critical journalism.

The year-long course is open to any student pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree in any department at The University of Alabama. No prior experience in filmmaking or production is required. Because class size is limited, an application process in March determines participation.

what:

Harnessing perspectives from disciplines across the humanities, Documenting Justice teaches students to use film to **document and analyze the many dimensions of cultural and social experience** central to a story of justice or injustice in Alabama. This course traces the ways in which documentary filmmakers have sought to represent culture and the relationship between the individual and society. Study of visual anthropology, ethnographic film, and the ethics of cinematic nonfiction will culminate in the creation of a **seven- to nine-minute film.**

In an increasingly image-driven world, Documenting Justice encourages students to acknowledge the responsibilities of telling true stories so that the films they make may help foster more ethical and engaged citizenship. The course is team taught by an award-winning group of filmmakers and features guest lectures from professionals in documentary filmmaking and anthropology.



when :

The fall semester of the course is dedicated to instruction, exercises, and readings that familiarize students with the fundamentals of video production and their application to ethnographic and documentary approaches. Students will also **address representational, methodological, and ethical issues** in approaching and working through documentary film projects.

During the spring semester of the course, students create and edit an ethnographic film on their chosen subject. The final projects will premier at a public screening in May held at the Bama Theatre in downtown Tuscaloosa.



where :

Demonstrating a concern for justice in Alabama, student pieces may focus on an individual, a relationship, an occurrence, an institution, a subculture, or a worldview. Students **will become well-acquainted with individuals and communities in Alabama** through extensive fieldwork and observation.

why :

“Ethical citizenship requires an obligation to understand that every individual’s life has dignity and worth, and that everyone’s health, education, and potential to succeed is worth fighting for. Possessing such an awareness requires moral emotions, such as empathy and compassion.

Developing skills in ethnographic filmmaking, students will connect with the personal stories of people outside their immediate spheres and be better able to analyze dimensions of cultural and social experience. **Seeing the world through another’s eyes is the essential component of empathy and compassion.”**

— Stephen Black
Director, CESR

Center for ETHICS
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
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