Session 1
Topic: Documentary beginnings; the city symphony

Screenings:
The First Interview (Tupicoff, 2011)
24 Dollar Island (Flaherty, 1926)
Rain (Ivens, 1929)
A propos de Nice (1930)
Polis (Pimentel, 2009)

Readings:

Session 2
Topic: Modernism, science and the state

Screenings:
Man with a Movie Camera (Vertov, 1929)
L’Hippocampe (Painleve, 1934)
Listen to Britain (Jennings, 1942)

Readings:
1) Michael Renov, “Charged Vision: The Place of Desire in Documentary Film Theory,” The Subject of Documentary, 93-103
2) Brian Winston, “Documentary Film as Scientific Inscription,” Theorizing Documentary, 37-57
3) Michael Renov, “Away from Copying’: The Art of Documentary Practice,” Truth or Dare: Art and Documentary, 13-24

Session 3
Topic: The avant-garde as species of documentary practice; the documentary gaze

Screenings:
The Wonder Ring (Brakhage, 1955)
Nostalgia (Frampton, 1971)
YouTube excerpt from *13 Lakes* (Benning, 2004)
*Natureza Morta* (de Sousa Dias, 2005)

Readings:
1) Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 1980

**Session 4**
Topic: The ethnographic gaze

Screenings:
*Chronicle of a Summer* (Rouch and Morin, 1961)
*Bicicletas de Nhanderu* (Coletivo Mbya-Guarani de Cinema, 2010)
*Paradox* (Katz, 2001)

Readings:

**Session 5**
Topic: Home movies as avant-garde practice

Screenings:
*The Maelstrom* (Forgacs, 1997)
*Sea in the Blood* (Fung, 2000)
*Phantom Limb* (Rosenblatt, 2005)

Readings:

**Session 6**
Topic: First person filmmaking; the animated documentary

Screenings:
*Video Nation* (BBC2, 1993-1998)
*Animated Minds* (Glynne, 2005-2011)
*Silence* (Yadin and Bringas, 1998)
*The Darra Dogs* (Tupicoff, 1993)
His Mother’s Voice (Tupicoff, 1997)

Readings:
2) Michael Renov, “Surveying the Subject: An Introduction,” The Subject of Documentary (Minnesota, 2004), xi-xxiv

Session 7
Topic: Documenting sexuality

Screenings:
Tongues Untied (Riggs, 1989)
The Skin I’m In (Fox, 2012)

Readings:

Session 8
Topic: The politics of memory; documentary as political practice

Screenings:
Now! (Alvarez, 1965)
79 Springtimes of Ho Chi Minh (Alvarez, 1969)
Mi Vida Con Carlos (Berger-Hertz, 2010)

Readings:

Session 9
Topic: The docu-musical; issues of reenactment

Screenings:
Songbirds (Hill, 2007)
The Swenkas (Ronde, 2004)

Readings:

Session 10
Topic: The essay film; the future of documentary
Screenings:  
*The Gleaners and I* (Varda, 2000)

Readings:  

**Journal Assignment**

The journal assignment is intended as a way to allow you to reflect upon and assimilate the wide range of films shown in class within the context provided by the readings and in-class discussions. The journal is a particularly valuable format for exploring your second thoughts towards the creative/critical work covered in the seminar. The written format will require a certain attention to detail and, more crucially, the exercise of your critical judgment. The journal provides an opportunity to process a great deal of material (screenings, writings, discussion) and then respond to it in a personal way.

The following is a series of suggestions to guide you in the writing of the journal. There should be entries for each film or tape screened in class although you may choose to write about more than one at a time. Clearly, this assignment allows, even encourages, a great deal of latitude and creativity in your responses. Since there are no exams, this is my primary method of judging the degree to which you have absorbed the subject matter covered in the class. I encourage you to include in your journal any film or video you happen to see outside of class which might be relevant to the course. In general, the entries should include these three components:

1) A straightforward presentation of titles, author, perhaps a brief summary of the visual/aural material as presented. This section is diary-like, an aid to memory. It need not be separate from the rest; it might well be incorporated into the overall pattern of your entry. Avoid over-narrativizing the work.

2) A brief evaluative response to the film that includes altered perceptions from previous viewings or upon further thought. This is your opportunity to express personal reactions and ideas spurred by the work. Remember -- personal response is only one category of this chronicle, albeit an important one. By this I mean that liking or disliking the work is only the starting point for an interrogation of why.
3) A concise account of the relationship between the film and the course material under consideration as presented in readings, lecture material and class discussion. This is the portion of the journal that requires you to analyze and think critically. This is also the context within which to consider the structures and strategies of the film or videomaker, his or her means of expression. What questions are raised by the work with regard to issues of documentary practice as explored in the assigned readings or in classroom discussions? What if any new ground is broken by the piece and what impact might it have upon theoretical premises or art-making protocols? In what ways does the piece illustrate or challenge the ideas contained in the writings? Analysis of this sort will be continually illustrated throughout our discussions. While this may be the most challenging category of response, particularly at the outset, you are likely to become more skillful at this kind of critical practice as the semester continues.

Do stay up-to-date with your entries or you will find the journal a far more difficult enterprise than it needs to be.

Final Paper

You are also asked to write a 10-15-page paper on a topic of your choice inspired by the material covered in the seminar. The essay may be theoretical or historical. It may focus on one or several films that have not been screened in the class that offer either a supplement or an alternative to the material covered.

Given the very short time span, this essay may end up being closer to a draft for a more finished piece. I suggest you share with me a brief paper proposal within the first two weeks of the class.