CMGT 588 - Global Storytelling: The Power Of Narrative

 4 Units

Fall 2023 | Wednesday 2PM - 4:50PM
Section: 21807
Location: ANN 209
(if we shift online, Zoom Help Desk: open Monday-Thursday 8:00 am - 10:00 pm
Friday 8:00 am - 6:00 pm

Instructor: Daniela Kon Lieberberg
Office: ANN Lobby
Office Hours: Wednesday 12:00-1:45 PM pm by appointment
Contact: lieberbe@usc.edu

I. Course Description

"There is no greater power on this earth than story". - Libba Bray

This course will enhance and broaden your understanding of the power of global storytelling for social change by viewing and analyzing documentaries from around the world and implementing your own impact and engagement campaign. You will investigate social change strategies of critically acclaimed and high profile documentaries as well as independent and crowd supported films, learning to achieve the goals of impact storytelling from the grassroots level upwards. You will develop skills to understand and utilize the power of stories for social transformation; to identify and produce better social change strategies; to use them in your own lives and within the frameworks of any industry or organization. Whether your goal is to raise awareness, educate or build a movement, change attitudes or influence policies, you will learn what it takes to be both a creative storyteller and impact producer.

II. Course/ Assignments Overview

To give us a common frame of creative reference, in the first half of the semester we will analyze a variety of documentary styles and genres, from feature-length socio-political and cinema verite, to short format advocacy videos and immersive productions. Through lectures, screenings, discussions, guest speakers, and presentations, we will deconstruct the social change potential of global storytelling via interdisciplinary approaches to aesthetics, ethics, social psychology, politics and sustainable development. You will assess documentaries using the evaluation metrics of the global Social Impact Media Awards, and discuss examples of non-fiction media's impact on select groups, communities, and policies. You will present a case study of one documentaries' social impact. Utilizing the film's existing impact report as a reference (where available) for this assignment you will be required to conduct at least one stakeholder interview (e.g. film director, producer, film subject, partner organization) and present the film's campaign strategies, achievements and shortcomings.

In the second half of the semester you will investigate the operations of global impact media organizations and produce a global storytelling film festival/ event.

Drawing from frameworks for designing impact strategies for documentaries and in-class Q&As with social change leaders and impact producers, you will develop a new actionable engagement strategy for a short documentary of your choice, planning and executing a virtual screening event and panel discussion.

III. Student Learning Outcomes

- To recognize your own role as storytellers, content creators, marketers, producers and audiences in the social change industry.
- To develop expert understandings of the key components that make up high impact documentary storytelling and impact campaigns.
- To cultivate a global perspective and changemaker skillset to amplify the power of social issue media and design better social change strategies, and to apply those skills to your specific interests and passions.
- To be ready for careers in the ever-emerging fields of media that are designed for social impact, through hands-on experience.

Prerequisite(s): None

Co-Requisite(s): None

Concurrent Enrollment: None

Recommended Preparation: Interest in visual storytelling, particularly global social issue documentaries. Comfort delving into topics relating to global challenges and strategies to overcome them.

IV. Description of Assignments & Weights Toward Final Grades

Grading is on a point system. You will have points deducted based on these criteria: not following directions, failure to turn in forms and outlines etc.; weak research, including missing data, failure to conduct analysis, etc.; and, poor presentation design and performance. Maximum points are achieved by following all directions; strong research, presentation and performance; strong grasp of context; adding personal opinions or experiences in evaluations; demonstrating strong effort through performance and presentation.

15%   Film Judging (3x 5% each)

You will have 3 Film Judging Assignments (3x 5% each), each exploring a separate documentary film format. You will be required to watch a) 5 Short Documentaries, b) 2 Feature Documentaries, and c) 5 Impact Videos and utilize the judging metrics of the global Social Impact Media Awards to evaluate each film. You will be asked to rate each film from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) for each judging criteria and justify your score by answering a set of guiding questions. See assignment specifications for details.

35%   Impact Case Study and Presentation

The case study encompasses an in-depth research, analysis and presentation of the impact intentions and campaign outcomes of a feature length documentary of your choice. You will be required to deconstruct the campaign into both quantitative and qualitative elements including: campaign goals, targets, strategies and methods, partners and budgets, its press and social media visibility, its achievements and shortcomings. You will assess the impact of the campaign with regards to the larger ecosystem surrounding the social issue addressed in the film, and are required to conduct at least 1 stakeholder interview to challenge or corroborate

reports and findings from your research. This assignment requires a written report and in class presentation. See assignment specifications for details.

30%   Global Story Fest (Group)

For this group assignment you will be divided into 4 groups of 6 students each (subject to change depending on overall class size). Members will assume one of the following roles: Producer, Partnerships Director and Marketing Manager. You will collaborate to produce the Global Story Festival where each group will develop and execute a virtual film screening campaign and panel discussion that drives audience engagement towards an identified call to action. Each group will be required to design and submit an impact strategy, production schedule, marketing designs and schedule, partner outreach templates and progress reports, execute the screening, panel discussion, audience engagement campaign and audience follow up. See assignment specifications for details.

10%   Global Story Fest Reflection

This assignment is a blog style written report reflecting on your experience producing the Global Story Fest and assessing the impact of your screening campaign by synthesizing the lessons learned over the course of the class. See assignment specifications for details.

10%   Class Participation + Pre and Post Survey

Teaching and learning online remotely may not be the mode we prefer. Still, key principles remain, one of which is to participate actively and meaningfully in our shared experience. To participate well takes preparation, i.e., to read and watch the various materials assigned, before class. Participation can take different forms, a range of actions count. Asking a question, offering a comment, responding to a discussion – all count. <u>Staying silent will not.</u> As we will discuss and watch films on a range of topics that may be controversial, when we disagree, we want to acknowledge and respect different opinions and positions, and express our points of view respectfully. At the beginning and end of the course you will be asked to fill out a survey that will prompt you to rate your pre and post course knowledge of a variety of global social issues, as well as your inclination to advocate for various causes. The result of the survey will measure a collaborative class index towards which your answers are a crucial contribution.

a. Grading Scale

A	95.0% or higher
A-	90.0-94.9%
B+	87.0%-89.9%
B	83.0%-86.9%
B-	80.0%-82.9%
C+	77.0%-79.9%
C	73.0%-76.9%

C-	70.0%-72.9% (C - or lower is a failing grade)
D	60.0%-69.9%
F	59.9% or lower

b. Grading Standards

For evaluation standards, see assignments' specific instructions.

- In general, an "A" grade represents excellent (near perfect) performance given assignment's parameters. Achievement is extraordinarily high, grasp of the topic is firm, substantial, detailed, and nuanced. Exceeds expectations.
- "B" grade represents a good performance. Grasp of topic is generally good with some lapses or gaps. Meets expectations.
- "C" grade represents a passing performance but barely. Work has noticeable gaps and lapses. Student must make effort to improve.
- Worse than a "C" (e.g., "C-minus", "D") is a failure in terms of passing the course. Such a performance stems from inattention to fundamental and crucial requirements in terms of scope, depth, quality, and timeliness; inability to deliver on key requirements.

c. Grading Timeline

Your work can be classified as simpler tasks, or complex multi-faceted, coordinated clusters. Simpler smaller assignments can be usually evaluated within 7 days. Complex work typically needs about 15 days to evaluate thoroughly.

V. Assignment Rubrics

Rubrics will be specified for most assignments. More details to come.

VI. Assignment Submission Policy

Assignment submission policies involve the following aspects:

- Deadlines: Deadlines are Los Angeles time. All assignments are due on the dates specified. Lacking prior discussion and agreement with the instructor, late assignments will automatically be given a grade of F. This practice is not meant to be punitive. Rather it is designed to cultivate professionalism, especially about reliability.

- Format: In general, assignments are due via google form or use APA 7th edition style to guide paper formatting. Document files must be named in specific ways per instructions.

- Procedures: Assignments must be submitted as instructed: via google form, via email to instructor and sometimes also uploaded to the class' Google Drive.

See separate assignment instructions for specific additional guidance.

VII. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

REQUIRED READING

- Patricia Aufderheide, Documentary Film: A Very Short Introduction (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- The Fledgling Fund Papers, Diagrams, and Case Studies at http://www.thefledglingfund.org/impact-resources/
- Britdoc's *The Impact Field Guide and Toolkit.* Download the PDF to your device and/or print at http://impactguide.org/
- Center for Media and Social Impact resources at cmsimpact.org : "Designing for Impact" by Jessica Clark and Barbara Abrash (2011) and "Assessing the Social Impact of Issues-Focused Documentaries" by Caty Chattoo (2015)

SUGGESTED VIEWING

- Battleship Potemkin (Sergei Eisenstein, 1925)
- Triumph of the Will (Leni Riefenstahl, 1935)
- Bowling For Columbine (Michael Moore, 2002)
- Jesus Camp (Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady, 2006)
- An Inconvenient Truth + Sequel (Davis Guggenheim 2017, Bonnie Cohen, 2017)
- Food, Inc. (Robert Kenner, 2008),
- Please Vote for Me (Weijun Chen, 2007)
- Granito: How To Nail A Dictator (Pamela Yates, 2011)
- A World Not Ours (Mahdi Fleifel, 2012)
- The Invisible War (Kirby Dick, 2012)
- A River Changes Course (Kalyanee Mam, 2013)
- The Square (Jehane Noujaim, 2013)
- Vessel (Diana Whitten, 2014)
- Tell Spring Not to Come This Year (Saeed Taji Farouky & Michael McEvoy, 2015)
- Omo Child (John Rowe, 2015)
- True Cost (Andrew Morgan, 2015)
- Swim Team (Lara Stolman 2016)
- A Plastic Ocean (Craig Leeson, 2016)
- Dead Donkeys Fear No Hyenas (Joakim Demmer, 2017)
- Thank You for the Rain (Julia Dahr, 2017)

- People's Republic of Desire (Hao Wu, 2018)
- Family in Transition (Ofir Trainin, 2018)
- On Her Shoulders (Alexandria Bombach, 2018)
- Radio Silence (Juliana Fanjul, 2019)
- The Judge, (Erika Cohn, 2017)
- Anbessa (Mo Scarpelli, 2019)
- Born in Evin, Maryam Zaree (2019)
- Welcome To Chechnya (David France, 2020)
- A Plastic Ocean (Craig Leeson, 2020)
- A Thousand Cuts (Ramona S. Diaz, 2020)
- In The Same Breath (Nanfu Wang, 2021)
- Fly So Far (Celina Haydee Escher, 2021)
- Not Going Quietly (Nicholas Bruckmann, 2021)
- Lowndes County And The Road to Black Power (Sam pollard, Geeta Gandbhir)
- Delikado (Karl Malakunas, 2022)
- Sirens (Rita Baghdadi, 2022
- Sanson And Me (Rodrigo Reyes, 2022)
- Black Mambas (Lena Karbe, 2022)
- Documentaries in the line-up of HRW FILM FEST: https://ff.hrw.org/past-festivals

VIII. Participation/ Class Contribution

Class contribution includes offering insightful comments during group discussions, asking thoughtful informed questions during question and answer sessions with guests, having read and watched the weekly readings/ films in advance, being prepared to speak about them in class. Completing weekly blog posts as assigned, including your personal response in terms of your own experiences and thoughts about the topic and content. Turn in summary.

In person class attendance: This includes being on time to class and after the break. Tardiness is disrespectful to your instructor and your colleagues. Anyone not in class five minutes after the starting time or after the break will be considered late. Two times being late equals one unexcused absence. Written medical are required for excused absences, in advance (by email) except in case of emergency. Two unexcused absences result in a lowered grade; four absences are grounds for failing the class.

Virtual class attendance: In pre-pandemic times, this class highly values attendance, with penalties for being absent. However, we are in different circumstances now. We may be living with our families, who need more attention and accommodation. Our internet connections may be unstable at times. So, the class will not penalize you if you cannot attend in person or Zoom-in synchronously every session. At the same time, in-person or synchronous attendance is strongly encouraged and much appreciated. Especially when we have guest speakers or work with classmates, being in the same (Zoom) room at the same time offers a level of engagement not possible otherwise. So, make every effort to attend.

X. Laptop and Technology Policy

All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. For the class' online delivery, laptops must have functioning cameras. Earbuds, or headphones with microphones will be needed. If you lack these, let the instructor know so she can help.

Please refer to the Annenberg Digital Lounge for more resources. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's Information Technology Services (ITS) website.

Students in China particularly must have a reliable VPN, preferably one that does not significantly degrade connection speed. While USC ITS provides a VPN (AnyConnect), it slows connection speed too much, such that viewing video becomes infeasible. It is worth paying for a better VPN, especially one that can work in China (e.g. ExpressVPN).

For students attending remotely and on certain occasions for all students, the class will rely on Zoom for its delivery and interactions. Consult the Zoom sign in , tutorial and support resources.

X. Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: August 23 to December 6, 2023) Link:

https://classes.usc.edu/term-20223/calendar

Friday, September 08: Last day to register and add classes

Friday, September 08: Last day to drop a class without a mark of "W,", and receive a refund

Friday, October 6: Last day to drop a course without a mark of "W" on the transcript.

Friday, November 10: Last day to drop a class with a mark of "W".

XI. Course Schedule

The syllabus will change due to guest speaker schedules and connected media. Changes will be emailed and/or announced in class when possible.

DATE	TOPICS	Due Pre-Class	ASSIGNMENTS / DUE DATES
WEEK 1 8/23	INTRODUCTION Course + Metrics	Course syllabus	Judge: Evaluate 5 short docs w/ Metrics Due Sunday 8/27 11:59 PM

WEEK 2 8/30	LECTURE: 100 Years of Impact Storytelling	Reading: Marshall Gantz Interview Viewing: Eisenstein's Battleship Potemkin	Judge: Evaluate 2 Feature Length Docs w/Metrics Due Sunday 9/3 11:59 PM
WEEK 3 9/6	LECTURE: Good Intentions vs. Good Impact / Guest	Reading: 2030 Agenda Viewing: True Cost + Plastic Ocean	Judge: Evaluate 5 Impact videos w/ Metrics Due Sunday 9/10 11:59 PM
WEEK 4 9/13	LECTURE: Power of Authenticity (choose Impact Case Studies)	Reading: Documentary Future: Call For Accountability Reading: Beyond Empathy by Sonyia Childress Viewing: On Her Shoulders + Omo Child	Submit chosen Case Study Film Title/ Synopsis Due Sunday 9/17 11:59 PM Complete Case Study - Due Monday 10/17 11:59 PM
WEEK 5 9/20	LECTURE: Impact Distribution 1 - The Impact Producer	Review: Doc Society Case Studies Reading: Social Justice Documentary, Designing for Impact by Jessica Clarke Viewing: Thank You For The Rain/ An Inconvenient Sequel	Instructor Meeting: Case Study
WEEK 6 9/27	LECTURE: Impact Distribution 2 - Global Canvas	Review: Social Impact Industry Canvas	Instructor Meeting: Case Study
WEEK 7 10/4	LECTURE: Global Story Fest Production (Assigning groups/ Production Schedule)	Reading: The Secret to Better Storytelling for Social Change: Better Partnerships Review: Evaluation Toolbox	Assignment 5 Draft 1: Submit Screening Title and List of: Team Responsibilities/ 5 suggested Partners / Call toAction Due Sunday 10/8 11:59 PM
WEEK 8 10/11	MEETING BEFORE FALL BREAK	Instructor Meetings / Case Study Presentation / Book Office Hour	Book Office Hour/ Instructor Meeting
WEEK 9 10/18	Impact Case Studies/ Presentation		
WEEK 10 10/25	Impact Case Studies/ Presentation		Instructor Meetings
WEEK 11 11/1	Pre-production Global Story Fest 1/ Guest		Instructor Meetings (Global Story Fest) Book Panelist
WEEK 12 11/8	Pre-production Global Story Fest 2 / Guest	Book Panelist Review: SIMA RAMA Impact Talks Review: IDAs Getting Real Working Group	Assignment 5 Draft 2: Submit Master Outreach Package/ Flyer / Panel Bios Due Sunday 11/12 11:59 PM / Complete Panel Invitations
WEEK 13 11/15	Production Launch: Global Story Fest SAVE THE DATE	Confirm Key Outreach Partners Record Panel Discussions between (11/1 - 11/19)	Upload Panel Video and Submit Link / Due Sunday 11/19 11:59)
WEEK 14 11/22	NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING)		
WEEK 15 11/29	GLOBAL STORY FEST LIVE (11/29 - 12/3)		USC Course Evaluations
WEEK 16 12/6	Debrief / FINAL Post-Fest Reflection + Survey		Due 12/6 11:59 PM Submit Fest Reflection + Survey

XIII. Policies and Procedures

Returning to Campus

We are starting the semester with in person instruction. This will remain possible only by following the strictest health guidelines and safety protocols. These are listed in

the Trojans Return page (https://coronavirus.usc.edu/students/). Please take the time to read this ahead so that you are prepared and knowledgeable about all requirements for in-person instruction. Should public health conditions not continue to improve enough for us to stay on campus, the class may move to a hybrid or online only instruction.

Should the Course Transition to Online, the Following pplies.

Zoom Session Recordings

Live class sessions will be recorded and made available to students through Blackboard (including transcriptions. USC policy prohibits sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment. As a student, you are responsible for the appropriate use and handling of these recordings under existing SCampus policies regarding class notes (https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-c/). These rules will be strictly enforced, and violations will be met with the appropriate disciplinary sanction.

Zoom Etiquette

Zoom is now the primary interface through which we live our professional lives. Turn on your camera whenever you can. Projecting some level of professional demeanor on screen is still worth the effort. Dress comfortably and appropriately when on Zoom. Zoom allows use of backgrounds, choose appropriate ones.

Where possible, set up a designated space for work. Class sessions are a time for learning and work, so mind your posture. What you project on screen becomes important cues for the instructor and classmates to gauge interest and engagement. For example, sitting straight in a chair vs laying down on a bed projects different impressions. If you are having a low-energy day, it is fine to turn off the camera part of the session.

Communication

Given the online modality, we lack convenient means to spontaneously meet in person. So, many meetings need to be prescheduled. Discussions can be more spontaneous still. In either case, it is crucial that you check email and messaging apps regularly. Instructor is on email and relevant messaging app all waking hours, and typically respond within 48 hours. Most meetings will be via Zoom or messaging apps. Contact the instructor to schedule mutually convenient times.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

a. Academic Conduct

Plagiarism

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

b. Support Systems

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following *protected characteristics*: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity |Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710

uscsa.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Annenberg Student Success Fund

https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenberg-scholarships-and-awards

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

About Your Instructor

Daniela Kon Lieberberg is a global media executive and veteran impact producer whose career at the intersection of human rights, community development and non-fiction storytelling spans over two decades. She is the founder and Executive Director of SIMA Studios, an award-winning global media agency that created a new paradigm for merit, distribution and impact of social issue documentaries. With strategic focus on "responsible impact through creativity", SIMA brings award-winning stories to communities and classrooms in over 100 countries.