

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

**FILM 409.19: Beyond Reenactment: Performance, Movement and Choreography in
Documentary Practice**

SPRING 2024, Block Week: May 6 to May 10, 2024

9:00am – 5:00pm (in person)

Instructor:	Michèle Pearson Clarke
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Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	M to F: 5:00-6:00pm

Course Description

While documentary often shows us that life can be stranger than fiction, the landscape of contemporary documentary practice underscores that fiction can be truer than life. Whether on documentary screens or the walls of galleries and museums, in recent years we have witnessed a keen resurgence in the use of reenactment and staged performance in documentary film and experimental video art. These techniques are not new, and fictionalizing aspects of reality has long been an accepted storytelling practice in the world of documentary filmmaking. But in pushing the boundaries of the conventional documentary form, filmmakers and visual artists have stretched the use of acting, performance and reenactment beyond simple reconstructions or dramatizations. Rather than just being preoccupied with restaging the past, contemporary artists, in particular, are drawing on performance, movement, and the choreographic to champion everyday “viewpoints traditionally kept outside the ‘grand narratives’ and to deconstruct the images and accounts that have composed these narratives,” as Ruth Erickson argues.

Drawing upon feminist film theory, performance studies, and affect theory, this course will examine a range of documentary hybrid films, experimental works and video installations that deploy performance strategies and methods to these ends. With an emphasis on works by Indigenous, racialized, feminist and LGBT media artists and filmmakers, together we will explore the affective power of performance, and the ways in which the body, movement and gesture can be used for reparative, conceptual and narrative purposes. Through a mixture of lectures, readings, discussion, hands-on exercises, and screenings, the course will move between the cinema and the art gallery, as we investigate the possibilities and complications of using staging and performance in non-fiction filmmaking.

Additional Information

The weekly schedule of topics, readings and screenings can be found at the end of this outline or on the Course D2L.

Students will be expected to work on assignments outside of scheduled class time.

Students are responsible for following all course and university policies discussed in this outline.

Objectives of the Course

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Identify key strategies and practices for using performance and movement in contemporary documentary film and experimental video art
2. Discuss a range of theoretical frameworks supporting the use of performance strategies and methods by Indigenous, racialized, feminist and LGBT media artists and filmmakers
3. Experiment with the use of staging and performance in their own documentary media projects

Textbooks and Readings

No textbook required. Required and recommended readings available on the Course D2L.

Learning Technologies and Requirements

In order to complete courses, University of Calgary students are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A smartphone for production purposes;
- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security and malware updates, with current antivirus software enabled;
- Broadband internet connection, and a current and updated web browser;
- A webcam (built-in or external), and a microphone and speaker (built-in or external) or headset with microphone (for online synchronous courses only).

If you need access to other software programs to complete assignments, your instructor will provide relevant information and links.

If you have technical difficulties, contact IT support services. See

<https://ucalgary.service-now.com/it>

Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices

Phones and laptops are allowed in class for note taking or production only.

Please familiarize yourself with the University's policy on the recording of lectures, which is outlined at <https://calendar.ucalgary.ca/pages/4ba66d5bd43b422ba2e9ab3d6331d5b0>, and carefully review the section on Instructor Copyright at the end of this outline.

Assignments and Evaluation (More details to be provided in class)

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
50%	<p>Assignment 1: Movement and Gesture, Short Video This project will focus on the use of gesture and choreographing movement. Drawing on the techniques and media works discussed in class and working in groups of 3, students will be asked to produce a short video that captures an action or activity not typically thought of as a performance. There will be a preliminary pitch session during class on May 8 and then the final projects will be due on May 10. More details about the pitch session and video project to be provided in class.</p> <p><u>Running time: 3-5 minutes</u></p>	May 10, 3pm
30%	<p>Assignment 2: Acting and Performance, Film Proposal The second assignment will focus on (re)staging history and in-person reenactment. Drawing on the theories and strategies discussed in class, students will be asked to produce a short film proposal that constructs an alternative viewpoint through the (re)performance of a past event, experience, culture or activity. More details about the written proposal and hypothetical project to be provided in class.</p>	May 24, 5pm
20%	<p>Course Participation Regular class attendance and active participation is expected of all students, and included is the requirement that each student contribute meaningfully to class discussions, work collaboratively on small group activities and assignments, and participate in workshop exercises (4% x 5 days).</p> <p>To track participation, each student will keep a sketchbook or diary log using either a physical notebook or Google Doc, and these will be submitted for final grading on May 10.</p>	May 10, 5pm

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: Active in-class participation is required in order to receive a passing grade in this course.

Submission of Assignments

Please submit all assignments by uploading them to the designated D2L dropbox. Include your name and ID number on all assignments. Be sure to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to submit the proper version. All assignments will be screened in class.

If you experience technical difficulties with the D2L Dropbox, please contact the course T.A., Berenice Cancino (email above).

Private information related to individual students is treated with the utmost regard by University of Calgary faculty. Student assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty, and personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. Please note that instructors may use audio or video recording for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments not completed before the end of course may be penalized, up to a third of a letter grade per day (ex. A to A-). Assignments submitted seven days (or more) after the end of the course will not be assessed and will receive a grade of zero.

Student Accommodations

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS); SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/. Students who require an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. For the full policy on Student Accommodations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/studentaccommodation-policy>

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors.

Expectations for Writing

Department policy directs that all written assignments and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization and proper documentation of research sources. For further information, please refer to the *University of Calgary Calendar* section on writing across the curriculum: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

The following table outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. Final grades are reported as letter grades. For components graded using percentages or numerical scores, those values will be used directly in calculating the final course grade, while for components graded using letter grades, the letter grades will be converted to the midpoint values listed in the final column of the table below in calculating the final course grade.

In this course, all assignments will be assessed using letter grades.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations*
4.00	Outstanding performance	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent performance	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70	Approaching excellent performance	A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30	Exceeding good performance	B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good performance	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70	Approaching good performance	B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance	C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory performance	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance	C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	F	0 - 49.99%	0%

* Column 4: If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades. Column 5: These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages, A.I. content generators, or visual media.

Students must adhere to the instructor's course policy regarding the use of A.I. generated content in course work. Unsanctioned use of A.I. generated content in course work may be reported as academic misconduct.

In this course, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and other essay-writing software is strictly prohibited when crafting one's own statements in written assignments or presentation assignments or written answers to quiz/exam prompts. However, AI may be used as a research aid or to generate an example. AI tools are to be treated like any other non-scholarly source with credibility issues, such as Wikipedia. Any ideas or wording from ChatGPT or other AI tool, must be cited as you would for other non-scholarly sources. When used, the full AI conversation must be saved and appended to the document.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. **In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin.** Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there.

For information on citation and documentation styles (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.), visit the Student Success Centre resource links at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/studentsuccess/writing-support> or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Resources at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support>

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including lectures, course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments, and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed, or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the same course section and term may be allowed under fair dealing. Check with the instructor if you have any questions about sharing materials with classmates.

To ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes & electronic versions of textbooks), all students are required to read the *University of Calgary Policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright* at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-usematerial-protected-copyright-policy> and the requirements of the *Copyright Act* (<https://lawslois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the *University of Calgary Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants, including surveys, interviews, or observations as part of your university studies, you are responsible for obtaining research ethics approval and for following university research ethics guidelines. In some cases, your instructors may apply for course-based research ethics approval for certain assignments, and in those cases, they must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, please see <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/arts-researchers/resources-researchers-andinstructors/ethics>

Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal

For university regulations and procedures related to deferral of term work, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

For information about deferrals of final examinations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>

For information about requesting a reappraisal of course work or of a final grade, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

Student Support Services and Resources

Please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information about student support services and resources, including Wellness and Mental Health Resources, Student Success programs and services, the Student Ombuds Office, the Student Union, and Safewalk. For resources on D2L, Zoom, Yuja, etc., see <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/resources-for-students/>. (Find the topic menu under the icon to the left of the ELEARN banner.)

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

Please see the schedule on D2L.