Survey of Gay and Lesbian Documentary  
COMM 516-001  
Instructor: Bob Connelly  
American University, Spring 2004

Course Objectives
This course will follow the evolution of gay and lesbian-themed documentary within the historical context of the gay and lesbian movement. Students will examine the emerging voice of the gay documentarian, and discuss the topics of these films as they advance through themes of persecution, activism and diversity within the gay and lesbian community.

Required Texts
The Rise of a Gay and Lesbian Movement (Revised Edition)  
Barry D. Adam, 1995

Between the Sheets, In the Streets: Queer, Lesbian, Gay Documentary  
Chris Holmlund and Cynthia Fuchs, eds., 1997

Course Evaluation
Mid-Term Examination 20%
Paper 25%
Final Examination 25%
Screening Journal 10%
Class Notes 10%
Attendance and Participation 10%

Journal
Students are required to keep a screening journal of the films assigned. At least one typed or neatly hand-written page of your thoughts, observations and questions regarding each film is expected. When watching a film, consider the historical context in which the film was made, what the filmmaker is attempting to say, and how the images support the filmmaker's point of view. In those instances where a film is available only through a transcript, close attention to the monologues and/or dialogues of the individuals who appear on camera are your only means to interpreting the film's message. Read them carefully! These journals will be collected at the end of the semester; however, I may ask to see them during any class session, so please remain up-to-date in your entries and bring your journal to each class.

Class Notes
For each week's reading material, one student will be assigned to take notes for the entire class (this does not include taking notes on documentary transcripts; those are part of your journal assignment). A minimum of one page outlining the key text for the day, in bullet points if you desire, is sufficient. Please distribute your notes to me and to your classmates, either via e-mail (attachment or cut-and-paste) no later than 24 hours before class, or in hard copy at the beginning of class.

Paper
Students are required to write one research paper during the course of the semester. This paper must be from 8 to 10 pages in length, and must include a bibliography, filmography, and endnotes/footnotes. Papers must be typed, using 12-point Times or Times New Roman font, and exhibit proper grammar, punctuation, and double-spacing. For this paper, choose a lesbian/gay-themed documentary which is not included as an assignment on the syllabus, and analyze its themes either within the historical context in which it was created, or within the documentary style it represents. Certainly, you may consult me for other ideas of how to present an analysis. A one-paragraph typed or neatly handwritten summary of the film you choose to analyze is due during the class one week before the paper due date. Here are some tips to get you started:

1. The Bender Library has an extensive collection of lesbian and gay-themed documentaries. Check out their website, for documentary ideas. If you do not see a film that interests you, come talk to me for ideas.
2. For documentary films produced within the last twenty years, the Lexus-Nexus Academic Universe is a terrific source of news media information that can provide newspaper articles and reviews about the films you are interested in researching. You may access it through Bender Library computers.
3. Search engines such as Google and Alta Vista also provide pertinent information. Be sure to include the websites you access in your bibliography.

Presentations
I am allowing time during the next-to-last class for students to offer presentations of their papers (or, perhaps, any lesbian- or gay-themed documentary issue) to the class. Presentations should be between 10 and 15 minutes in length. This is not a required assignment, but rather an opportunity for those students who would like to receive extra credit for their work, or would like practice in public speaking.

Examinations
The mid-term examination is an in-class exam, and will be distributed at the beginning of the March 4 class. Students will have the full two-and-one-half hour class time to complete the exam. The final examination will be a take-home exam, distributed at the end of the next to last class and due at the beginning of the final class of the semester.

COURSE OUTLINE – COMM 516-001: Survey of Gay and Lesbian Documentary  
Spring, 2004

Week 1 – January 15  
Introduction

Section One: Living on the Fringe of Society  
Week 2 – January 22  
Read for Today: (1) Between the Sheets, Introduction (pp. 1 - 10)  
(2) The Rise of a G&L Movement, Chapter 4: "The Homophiles Start Over" (pp. 60 - 80)  
(3) Handout: Transcript of The Rejected (1961) [Journal]
In Class Screening: Gay Pioneers (2000; 20 minutes)

Week 3 – January 29
Read for Today: (1) Handout: "Gay Sexualist: Hal Call" (pp. 59 - 69)
(2) Handout: "The Very Mad Scientist: Frank Kameny" (pp. 93 - 103)
(3) Handout: "The Rabble Rousers: Barbara Gittings and Kay Lahusen" (pp. 104 - 126)
In Class Screening: The Homosexuals (1967; 45 minutes) [Journal]

Week 4 – February 5
Read for Today: (1) The Rise of a G&L Movement, Chapter 5: "Gay Liberation, Lesbian Feminism" (pp. 81 - 108)
See for Today: Gay Power, Gay Politics (1980; 60 minutes) VHS 6669 [Journal]
In Class Screening: Silent Pioneers (1985; 40 minutes)

Section Two: Celebrating the Lesbian and Gay Community and Redefining History
Week 5 – February 12
Read for Today: (1) Between the Sheets, Chapter 6: "Walking on Tippy Toes: Lesbian and Gay Liberation Documentary in the Post-Stonewall Period 1969 – 1984" (pp. 107 - 124)
See for Today: Word Is Out (1977; 130 minutes) VHS 4166 [Journal]

Week 6 – February 19
Read for Today: (1) Handout: "The Event: Archive and Newsreel" (pp. 11 -39)
See for Today: Before Stonewall (1985; 87 minutes) VHS 1935 [Journal]

Week 7 – February 26
Read for Today: (1) Handout: "Narration: The Film and Its Voice" (pp. 40 - 65)
See for Today: The Times of Harvey Milk (1984; 88 minutes) VHS 284 [Journal]

Week 8 – March 4
Mid-Term Exam

Week 9 – March 11: Spring Break

Section Three: Diversity within an Issue-Oriented Lesbian and Gay Community
Week 10 – March 18
See for Today: Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt (1989; 80 minutes) VHS 806 [Journal]

Week 11 – March 25
Read for Today: (1) Between the Sheets, Chapter 2: "Imaging the Queer South: Southern Lesbian and Gay Documentary" (pp. 30 - 45)
(2) Handout: "Independent Producers and PBS Programmers" (pp. 10 - 24)
(3) Handout: "Inside P.O.V." (pp. 31 - 36)
See for Today: Tongues Untied (1989; 55 minutes) VHS 1327 [Journal]

Week 12 – April 1
Read for Today: (1) Between the Sheets, Chapter 8: "Love, Death and Videotape: Silverlake Life" (pp. 144 - 157)
(2) Between the Sheets, Chapter 9: "Autobiography, Home Movies, and Derek Jarman’s History Lesson" (pp. 158 - 171)
In Class Screening: Silverlake Life: The View From Here (1993; 99 minutes) [Journal]
Paper Summary Due!!

Week 13 – April 8
Read for Today: (1) The Rise of a G&L Movement, Chapter 8: "Queer Politics" (pp. 145 - 164)
(2) Between the Sheets, Chapter 1: "Queer Representation and Oregon's 1992 Anti-Gay Ballot Measure: Measuring the Politics of Mainstreaming" (pp. 15 - 28)
See for Today: Ballot Measure Nine (1996; 72 minutes) VHS 5102 [Journal]
Paper Due!!

Week 14 – April 15
Read for Today: (1) Between the Sheets, Chapter 4: "Of Hags and Crones: Reclaiming Lesbian Desire for the Trouble Zone of Aging" (pp. 71 - 89)
See for Today: Golden Threads (1999; 56 minutes) VHS 6610 [Journal]
In Class Screening: Forbidden Love: The Unashamed Stories of Lesbian Lives (1992; 85 minutes)
Week 15 – April 22
In Class Screening: Filmmaker Ryan Butler presents A Union in Waite (2000; 45 minutes)

Week 16 – April 29
Final Examination due at the beginning of class.

Handouts

Transcript of documentary film, The Rejected (1961); written by John W. Reavis, Jr.; produced by John W. Reavis Jr., and Irving Saraf.
A National Educational Television Presentation
Premiere Telecast: September 11, 1961
KQED, Channel 9, San Francisco
Transcript Contents Copyright 1961 by KQED, 525 4th St., San Francisco 3, Calif.
“This booklet transcribed, designed, composed and published by
Pan-Graphic Press, 693 Mission Street, San Francisco 5, California

Sections Requested:
"Gay Sexualist: Hal Call" (pp. 59 - 69)
"The Very Mad Scientist: Frank Kameny" (pp. 93 - 103)
"The Rabble Rousers: Barbara Gittings and Kay Lahusen" (pp. 104 - 126)

Rutledge, 29 West 35th St., New York, NY 10001
Sections Requested:
Chapter 1: "The Event: Archive and Newsreel" (pp. 11 -39)
Chapter 2: "Narration: The Film and Its Voice" (pp. 40 - 65)

Rutgers University Press, Livingston Campus, Bldg. 4161, P.O. Box 5062, New Brunswick, N.J. 08903.
Sections Requested:
Chapter 1: "Independent Producers and PBS Programmers" (pp. 10 - 24)
Chapter 2: "Inside P.O.V." (pp. 31 - 36)