

**JNST OOOE**

## **Documentary & Controversy**

**T/TH 11:00am-12:20pm**

**Prof. Kelly Hankin**

As a form that purports to “speak the truth,” the documentary film is often the subject of great debate and controversy. The goal of this class will be to investigate these debates and controversies. Classes will be organized around the central questions and dilemmas that inform the public and academic discourses on documentary film, including:

1. **Documentary as “Truth”:** Why do we *believe* documentary footage is true? How do we know a documentary is a documentary? What makes it “Real”? What makes a documentary different from fiction?
- **Documentary Ethics:** What are the ethical questions involved in filming “real” images and people? What are documentary filmmakers’ responsibilities when filming human subjects and communities not their own? What is “informed consent” and what does this mean for documentary practitioners, subjects, and audiences?
  - **Documentary as Evidence:** How does documentary footage work as “evidence” to legitimize ideas and sway the public?
  - **Documenting Atrocity:** How does one represent tragedy? What are the questions and responsibilities here? Can atrocity become art? When is and isn’t it appropriate?
  - **Documentary in the Age of Reality TV:** Is reality television documentary? How do we distinguish documentary in the age of televised “reality”? Do we need to?