

## Omeka Exhibit: Documentary Selection

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Documentaries are unique to other types of filmmaking in that they are constructed around a “call to action” to their audiences – this is their professed *raison d’etre*, or reason for being. They require us to wrestle with the problem they illuminate long after we have seen the film. This quality makes them ideal cases for studying the processes of film reception and culture’s extended engagement as part of its afterlife outside the movie theatre.

- In the first two weeks of class, select a documentary from this list whose topic strikes you – one that you are willing to spend the semester with. Set aside some time and give it a first viewing. Don’t take notes, but rather make it an event: get a friend, make some popcorn, turn down the lights and absorb the experience the film cultivates for you.
- Do note, if you have a documentary in mind that you’d like to work on that is not on this, do schedule a meeting with me so we can chat and I can confirm your selection. I’ve included university call numbers for most of them; the selections tend to be recent releases only available from [Amazon VOD](#) from 99¢ to a couple bucks.

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*An Inconvenient Truth*. Directed by Davis Guggenheim. 2006. Hollywood, CA: Paramount, 2006. DVD. [DVD QC981.8.G56 I53 2006]  
A documentary on former Vice President Al Gore's campaign to make the issue of global warming a recognized problem worldwide.

*Bowling for Columbine*. Directed by Michael Moore. 2002. Santa Monica, CA: MGM Home Entertainment, 2003. DVD. [DVD HV7436 .B69 2003]  
Filmmaker Michael Moore explores the roots of America's predilection for gun violence.

*Capturing the Friedmans*. Directed by Andrew Jarecki. 2003. New York, NY: HBO Video, 2004. DVD. [DVD HV6592.U6 C37 2004]  
Documentary on the Friedmans, a seemingly typical, upper-middleclass Jewish family whose world is instantly transformed when the father and his youngest son are arrested and charged with shocking and horrible crimes.

*Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room*. Directed by Alex Gibney. 2005. Los Angeles, CA: Magnolia Home Entertainment, 2006. DVD. [DVD HD9502.U54 E573 2005]  
A documentary about the Enron corporation, its faulty and corrupt business practices, and how they led to its fall.

*Exit Through the Gift Shop*. Directed by Banksy. 2010. New York, NY: Oscilloscope Laboratories, 2010. DVD. [DVD GT3912 .E95 2010]  
The story of how an eccentric French shop keeper and amateur film maker attempted to locate and befriend Banksy, an infamous graffiti artist, only to have him turn the camera back on its owner.

*The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara*. Directed by Errol Morris. 2003. Culver City, CA: Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment, 2004. DVD. [DVD E840.4.M46 F64 2004]

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A film about the former US Secretary of Defense and the various difficult lessons he learned about the nature and conduct of modern war.

*Food, Inc.* Directed by Robert Kenner. 2008. Los Angeles, CA: Magnolia Home Entertainment, 2010. DVD. [DVD HD9005 .F66 2009]

An unflattering look inside America's corporate controlled food industry.

*Gates of Heaven.* Directed by Errol Morris. 1978. Santa Monica, CA: MGM Home Entertainment, 2005. DVD, VOD.

A documentary about a pet cemetery in California, and the people who have pets buried there.

*Grizzly Man.* Directed by Werner Herzog. 2005. Santa Monica, CA: Lions Gate Home Entertainment, 2005. DVD. [DVD QL737.C27 G7588 2005]

A devastating and heartrending take on grizzly bear activists Timothy Treadwell and Amie Huguenard, who were killed in October of 2003 while living among grizzlies in Alaska.

*Harlan County, USA.* Directed by Barbara Kopple. 1976. Irvington, NY: Criterion Collection, 2006. DVD. [DVD HD5325.M62 H37 2006]

A filmed account of a bitterly violent miner strike.

*How to Die In Oregon.* Directed by Peter Richardson. 2011. New York, NY: New Video Group, 2012. DVD, VOD.

In 1994 Oregon became the first state to legalize physician-assisted suicide. At the time, only Belgium, Switzerland, and the Netherlands had legalized the practice. 'How to Die in Oregon' tell the stories of those most intimately involved with the practice today -- terminally ill Oregonians, their families, doctors, and friends -- as well as the passage of an assisted suicide law in Washington State.

*Jiro Dreams of Sushi.* Directed by David Gelb. 2011. Los Angeles, CA: Magnolia Home Entertainment, 2012. DVD, VOD. [DVD TX649.O56 J57 2012] As his son Yoshikazu faces the pressures of stepping into his father's shoes and taking over the legendary restaurant, Jiro relentlessly pursues his lifelong quest to create the perfect piece of sushi.

*The King of Kong: A Fistful of Quarters.* Directed by Seth Gordon. 2007. Burbank, CA: New Line Home Entertainment, 2008. DVD. [DVD GV1469.35.D66 K564 2008]

Diehard video game fans compete to break World Records on classic arcade games.

*Kumaré.* Directed by Vikram Gandhi. 2011. New York City, NY: Future Bliss Films, 2013. DVD, VOD. A provocative social experiment-turned-documentary, KUMARE follows American filmmaker Vikram Gandhi as he transforms himself into a wise Indian guru, hoping to prove the absurdity of blind faith.

*Man On Wire.* Directed by James Marsh. 2008. Los Angeles, CA: Magnolia Home Entertainment, 2008. DVD. [DVD GV550.2.P47 M36 2008]

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A look at tightrope walker Philippe Petit's daring, but illegal, high-wire routine performed between New York City's World Trade Center's twin towers in 1974, what some consider, "the artistic crime of the century."

*Paris Is Burning*. Directed by Jennie Livingston. 1990. Burbank, CA: Miramax Home Entertainment, 2005. DVD. [DVD HQ76.2.U52 N535 2005]

A chronicle of New York's drag scene in the 1980s, focusing on balls, voguing and the ambitions and dreams of those who gave the era its warmth and vitality.

*Resurrect Dead: The Mystery of the Toynbee Tiles*. Directed by Jon Foy. 2011. Port Washington, NY: Entertainment One, 2012. DVD, VOD.

An urban mystery unfurls as one man pieces together the surreal meaning of hundreds of cryptic tiled messages that have been appearing in city streets across the U.S. and South America.

*Room 237*. Directed by Rodney Ascher. 2012. New York, NY: IFC Films, 2013. VOD.

A subjective documentary that explores the numerous theories about the hidden meanings within Stanley Kubrick's film *The Shining* (1980).

*Shut Up & Sing*. Directed by Barbara Kopple and Cecilia Peck. 2006. Montreal, Canada: Alliance Films, 2006. DVD, VOD.

A documentary on the Dixie Chicks in the wake of singer Natalie Maines' anti-George W. Bush statement at a 2003 concert.

*Super Size Me*. Directed by Morgan Spurlock. 2004. New York, NY: Hart Sharp Video, 2004. DVD. [DVD RA645.N87 S87 2004]

While examining the influence of the fast food industry, Morgan Spurlock personally explores the consequences on his health of a diet of solely McDonald's food for one month.

*This Film Is Not Yet Rated*. Directed by Kirby Dick. 2006. Los Angeles, CA: Magnolia Home Entertainment, 2009. DVD, VOD.

An exposé about the American movie ratings board and the mechanisms behind public censorship practices.

*Vernon, Florida*. Directed by Errol Morris. 1981. Santa Monica, CA: MGM Home Entertainment, 2005. DVD, VOD.

This early Errol Morris documentary intersplices random chatter he captured on film of the genuinely eccentric residents of Vernon, Florida, including a preacher giving a sermon on the definition of the word "therefore," and the obsessive turkey hunter who speaks reverentially of the "gobblers" he likes to track down and kill.

*Waiting For Superman*. Directed by Davis Guggenheim. 2010. Hollywood, CA: Paramount Home Entertainment, 2011. DVD. [DVD LA212 .W35 2011]

A documentary that follows a handful of promising kids through a system that inhibits, rather than encourages, academic growth, Guggenheim undertakes an exhaustive review of public

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education, surveying "drop-out factories" and "academic sinkholes," methodically dissecting the system and its seemingly intractable problems.

*Who Killed the Electric Car?* Directed by Chris Paine. 2006. Culver City, CA: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2006. DVD. [DVD TL220 .W46 2006]

A documentary that investigates the birth and death of the electric car, as well as the role of renewable energy and sustainable living in the future.