

Suggested Readings v.1

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Due to the relentless pace of the boot camp minimal reading was assigned, however, as a follow-up to the class, I suggest the following readings. All titles are links, either to the document when available on the web or to the appropriate Amazon book page. Please let me know your reactions to the readings via e-mail, my contact form at Kino-Eye.com/contact/, or call me at 617.216.1096.

Barnouw, Erik. *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film*, 2nd ed., Oxford University Press,, 1993.

For the longest time this was the definitive history of documentary and still a good read, however, for a first book on documentary history, *A New History of Documentary Film* provides a crisper introduction to the subject.

Barthes, Roland. "Rhetoric of the Image," in *Image-Music-Text*, Stephen Heath, trans. Hill and Wang, 1972.

In this book Roland Barthes provides an analytical system for the reading/interpretation of images.

Byers, Paul. "Cameras don't take pictures," *Columbia University Forum*, 95:1, 1966, pp. 27- 31.

While this essay is about photography, it applies to documentary filmmaking. The article discusses the notion that the image maker is always a part of the context of the events they record, we can never record what people do without being a part of the process. The media we make is necessarily a product of our interaction and selectivity.

Ellis, Jack C. & Mclane, Betsy A. *A New History of Documentary Film*, Continuum, 2005.

This book is well-suited as a first book on the topic documentary history. It provides an up-to-date survey of documentary (mostly from the U.S., U.K., and Canada) organized in a chronological format.

Nichols, Bill. *Introduction to Documentary*, Indiana University Press, 2001.

Presents a taxonomy of documentary modes, and while I don't think it works well to align them in a historical progression, the modes themselves, especially the reflexive mode (pp. 125-130), are important to think about as different approaches to making a documentary.

Pryluck, Calvin. "Ultimately We Are All Outsiders: The Ethics of Documentary Filming," in *Journal of the University Film Association* 28:1 (Winter 1976), reprinted in Alan Rosenthal, & John Corner, eds., *New Challenges to Documentary*, 2nd ed., Manchester University Press, 2005.

Calvin Pryluck asks, "What is the boundary between society's right to know and the individual's right to be free of humiliation, shame, and indignity?" A good starting point in the academic literature on documentary.

Rabiger, Michael. *Directing the Documentary*, 5th ed., Focal Press, 2009.

A well-written and comprehensive textbook on making documentaries, the sections on planning and process are excellent. Required reading for anyone making a documentary.

Worth, Sol. & Adair, John (1972). "How do People Structure Reality Through Film?", *Through Navajo Eyes*, University of New Mexico Press, pp. 11-20. (book is out of print, but [available online](#)).

In the late 1960s Sol Worth and John Adair embarked on a research project to teach Navajo people how to make films. They were exploring the question, "would filmmaking reflect the culture and particular cognitive style of a culture?"