

# Video documentary

## *Assignment*

Create a 4-8 minute video documentary that tells a story about an event/phenomena/trend of larger cultural significance, import, and interest to a broad audience that is appropriate for submitting to Current TV. <http://www.current.tv>

Because you will be submitting your video documentary to CurrentTV, you must use only music, images, video footage for which you can clear permissions. You can create your own materials (e.g., music you create, pictures you take), use materials for which you have written permission (e.g., snapshots that interviewees give you, music that your friends make), or music from the Current TV site. <http://www.current.tv>

To create your video, identify an event/phenomena/trend in or around Ladue High School or the Ladue community that is of larger cultural significance, import--and of interest to you, Choose an event/phenomena/trend that you know something about, and to which you have considerable access (e.g., interviews with individuals, attendance at events, access to advertisements and/or documents).

Start by finding 3-4 print sources (preferably newspaper articles) about the community you have chosen. Search the campus newspaper like The Panorama, the Post-Dispatch, alternative newspapers, or Lexis-Nexis. These sources should provide you with a general public characterization of an event/phenomena/trend or identify some pertinent issue associated with the event/phenomena/trend.

Your purpose in creating a video is to document a story about an event/phenomena/trend of larger cultural significance, import, and interest to a broad audience. Your audience for this video is the general public.

You can use either of the following two choices for focusing your documentary:

**\* CHOICE #1:** Confront the existing public understanding of the event/phenomena/trend you have chosen. What are the public's beliefs about the event/phenomena/trend? Their understanding of the people involved in the event/phenomena/trend? Their perception of the beliefs associated with the event/phenomena/trend? The challenges/problems/opportunities they think the event/phenomena/trend poses?

Create a documentary that tells an story of a person or people involved in the event/phenomena/trend and that, in doing so, argues persuasively for a point of view that runs counter to the public perception.

**\* CHOICE #2:** Explore a community issue. Using 3-4 print sources that you have researched, identify an issue/problem/tension that

characterizes/faces this event/phenomena/trend. How does the general public/outside characterize/understand this event/phenomena/trend? How do community insider's characterize/understand the event/phenomena/trend?

Create a documentary that tells a story of this event/phenomena/trend and, in doing so makes a persuasive argument about it.

### ***Goals***

1. To provide you some writing practice as you compose your video proposal.
2. To provide you practice in documenting a persuasive and compelling story that extends/expands the public's understanding of an event/phenomena/trend around Ladue High School or in the Ladue community that has larger cultural significance or importance. Your video should extend/expand the public's understanding of this event/phenomena/trend.
3. To provide you practice in using a range of resources—alphabetic, video, audio, and still photography—to make a persuasive argument about community.

Remember, before you interview anyone, he or she will need to sign an Informed Consent/Release Form that clearly lays out such matters. Keep this signed form and hand it in when you hand in your final project. Do not interview or record anyone who has not signed such a form. If the person you want to interview is younger than 18 years of age, their parents need to sign the Informed Consent/Release form.

Please be sensitive about people's privacy and do not intrude on them for an interview if they are reluctant about any aspect of this project. See me if you encounter any situations on which you need advice in this regard.

If you are video recording in a public place, you must contact the person/authority responsible for that location and receive their permission to do so. You must also post visible notices about the recording so that anyone who enters the public place is notified of what is going on.

### ***How to Get Started***

1. Read the Interviewing Tips handout.
2. View (and re-view) the video documentaries produced by professional.
3. Brainstorm about possible people to interview. Think about your friends, people you have met, your parents, your grandparents, your teachers. What event/phenomena/trend do they attend? Why? What controversial issues are associated with they event/phenomena/trend?
4. Write a list of questions for your interview.
5. Storyboard your video.

6. Tell a story about a person, a place, or an event—the story must be placed within a larger social context to make it compelling to a broader audience. It has to have a beginning, a middle, and an end.

### ***Grading***

I will use the following criteria to grade your video documentary:

- Is the documentary intellectually engaging? Does it have import for a broader audience? Does it help the audience extend/expand their understanding of a particular event/phenomena/trend or a particular issue associated with an event/phenomena/trend?
- \* Does the video project help the audience relate to the people involved in the event/phenomena/trend in a respectful and positive way?
- Does it reveal careful thinking and preparation on the part of the author/videographer?
- \* Does the documentary tell a good story? Is the story richly textured with both A-roll and B-roll material?
- Are the production criteria high? (images, shots, sound quality, editing)?
- Has the student followed directions in submitting the essay to Current TV and to the instructor, clearing all permissions for materials not your own, attaching signed Informed Consent/Release forms, including citation of all work that is not your own on the credit screens.