

SPED 861 201: FOCUS Film Festival (Fall 2009 CSU Chico)

Instructor:

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Office Hours:

Available by phone and email only

Class Meeting:

You may attend screenings at either venue as long as you meet the requirements listed under "Attendance and Assignments."

October 20, Sierra Nevada Big Room, Chico
October 21, Bell Memorial Auditorium, Chico

and one class meeting, date to be announced

Attendance and Assignments:

You must complete 15 hours of study for one Academic Unit.
To complete this course, you will:

1. attend at least three films OR two films and the Short Film Competition from the 2009 FOCUS Film Festival, Chico program (choose films from both venues)
2. complete a reaction survey
3. create a lesson plan that incorporates disability awareness, cultural diversity, or relationship or aging related issues in your classroom
4. attend a class where you will present and discuss your lesson plan. The date of this class is flexible and will be determined by the class participants

Festival admission will be waived for students enrolled in this class. A screening schedule and description of the films follows.

Objective:

This course explores documentary and feature films which "focus" on the complexity of the human experience: relationships, aging, disability, culture, lifestyle, and more. Our goal is to enlighten and inspire our community by featuring quality films which offer insight into the lives of people from all walks of life. By showing a broad range of human experience, we believe that we are closing the gap in perception, proving that we are more alike than we are different. See our website for more information: www.farnorthernrc.org/focusfilmfestival.

Grading: C/NC

Website: www.farnorthernrc.org/focusfilmfestival

Most films are followed by QA sessions with the filmmaker, experts in the field of study, or others associated with the film in order to enhance and/or contrast the perspective presented in the film.

FOCUS Film Festival, Sierra Nevada Big Room October 20, 2009

7:00 PM: ***Where's Molly***
Special Guests: Director/Cinematographer Jeff Daly and Producer Cindy Daly

FOCUS Film Festival, Bell Memorial Auditorium October 21, 2009

10:00 AM: ***Crossing Tahoe: A Swimmer's Dream***
Special Guests: Writer/Director Will Schermerhorn and Star Karen Gaffney

11:30 PM: ***Strong Love***
How's Your News

1:30 PM: ***Living with Fragile X***
Special Guest: Director/Editor Greg Mishey

3:30 to
6:00 PM: **Short Film Competition**
Best of Festival: *Beyond Borders*
Spirit of the Festival: *Independence* with Directors attending
Best Documentary: *We Thought You'd Never Ask* with Director attending
Best Drama: *Baby Boots*
Best Experimental: *Water Burns Sun* with Director and Star attending

Reception immediately following

7:00 PM: ***Under Our Skin***
Special Guests: Producer/Director/Cinematographer Andy Abrahams Wilson; Senior Editor Eva Ilona Brzeski, and US Forest Ranger Jordan Fisher Smith.

Where's Molly? (USA 2007, 72 minutes)

Director: Jeff Daly; Producer: Cindy Daly; Executive Producer: Don Hewitt; Editor: Mark Faulkner; Original Score: John Van Tongeren; Director of Photography: Jeff Daly

Where's Molly? Since he was 6-years-old Jeff Daly kept asking that question. When his sister Molly was not yet 3 years old, she was taken from their "perfect" home, never to return. While his parents refused to talk about Molly, Jeff was left to wonder and to mourn the sudden and mystifying loss of his only sister. Now, 47 years later, Jeff finally learns the truth to the family secret that kept him from his sister in a reunion that will warm your heart.

Crossing Tahoe: A Swimmer's Dream (USA 2008, 44 minutes)

Written and Directed by Will Schermerhorn; Produced by Blueberry Shoes Productions LLC with help from The Karen Gaffney Foundation; starring Karen Gaffney

On a frosty morning in September 2007, Karen Gaffney plunged into the dark waters of Lake Tahoe. Her ambitious goal: to join the few ultra-swimmers who've crossed the width of the lake and to be the first woman to cross in the bone-chilling cold of late September. Having Down syndrome was the least of her challenges. To

conquer the nine-mile distance, she would need all the strength, courage and spirit she had.

Strong Love (USA 2007, 56 minutes)

Director/Producer: Bonnie Burt

This film tells the story of what happens when world-class weightlifter Jon Shapiro and his childhood sweetheart Holly James, both born with Down syndrome, decide to marry. Their challenges, their triumphs, and their complex, sometimes surprising relationships with family and friends are at the heart of this inspiring film.

How's Your News (USA 2009, 21 minutes)

Produced for MTV

The zany crew of *How's Your News* hits the LA scene just in time for the Grammys. Made for MTV, Episode 1 covers the crew as they hit the red carpet and interview several celebrities.

Living with Fragile X (USA 2009, 64 minutes)

Producer: Kathy Elder; Directors/Editors: Greg Mishey and Kathy Elder; Original Music: John Vincent Barrett; Narrator: Aimee McCrary

This documentary reveals a new view of those in our society that are traditionally considered “flawed” or “abnormal.” Who decides what’s normal? Because an individual is different than you and me, should he or she be “fixed?” *Living with Fragile X* takes a rare and intimate look at the lives of several families who live with a member affected by fragile X syndrome.

Fragile X is the leading cause of inherited mental disability and the leading known cause of autism. The film explains what fragile X is and how it is passed, exposes the day-to-day challenges faced by those who have fragile X and reveals the frustrations of parents and their fears for what the future holds.

First Annual Filmmakers' Competition and Awards Ceremony

Join us for the Short Film Competition: we're screening the six winning entries including Best of Festival, Best of Category (Drama, Documentary, and Experimental), Spirit of the Festival, and Council's Choice. Help select the Audience Award, and meet the winning directors at a reception immediately following the screenings.

Beyond Borders (Belgium, in Dutch with English subtitles 2009, 19 minutes)

Director: Brecht Vanmeirhaeghe; Producer: Fabio Wuytack

This film is a strong poetical mosaic narration representing three people of different ethnic origin having a physical or intellectual disability: Amin, a boy with Down Syndrome from Iraq, Elena from Uzbekistan, who has MS, and Moroccan Mohamed, a blind man who runs marathons...three unique lives, one universal story.

Independence (USA 2009, 12:15 minutes)

Filmmakers: John Coulter, Steven Straus, Connie Chu; Narration: Liz Elmore; Interviewers: Mark Marshall, Rob Repke, Liz Elmore

A team of 12 adults with developmental disabilities, who knew little about filmmaking when their documentary “Independence” first began, managed all aspects of writing, production, direction and editing. The film offers an honest look at what it means to be on your own, and the barriers and prejudices that people with disabilities feel hold them back from being independent.

We Thought You'd Never Ask: Voices of People with Autism (USA 2009, 27:30 minutes)

Director/Producers: Paula Kluth and John Hussman; Cast: Jamie Burke, Sue Rubin, Jennifer Seybert, Stephen Hinkle, Kathy Grant, Barbara Doran

In this film we hear the intimate thoughts and feelings of six adults with autism. They belong to a diverse group of people that is often talked about, but not frequently listened to. In this revealing film, we learn what it feels like to live in their bodies and inhabit their lives.

Baby Boots (Canada 2009, 7 minutes)

Writer/Director/Producer: Hans Olson

Walt lives on the farm with his recently separated father. Their routine is interrupted when a young woman shows up to use the phone.

Water Burns Sun (USA 2009, 7 minutes)

Director/Choreographer: Petra Kuppers; An Olimpias Disability Culture Production; Dancers: Neil Marcus, Mayuko Abaye, Eboni Hawkins, Leslie Schickel; Composer: Dax Pearson; Editor: Sadie Wilcox

A Butoh dance video sheds light on skin, water, ghosts and the meaning of “cripple.” (note: “Butoh” is a dance form developed in postwar Japan which rejects Eastern and Western dance conventions, though it does borrow elements from some of each).

Under Our Skin (USA 2008, 103 minutes)

Producer/Director/Cinematographer: Andy Abrahams Wilson; Senior Producer: Kris Newby; Editor: Eva Ilona Brzeski; Composer: Justin Melland; Co-Producer: Cheryl Drake and Eve Morgenstern; Associate Producer/Assistant Editor: Renny McCauley

A gripping tale of microbes, medicine & money this eye-opening film investigates the tick-borne ailment Lyme disease, an emerging epidemic larger than AIDS. Each year thousands go undiagnosed or misdiagnosed.