CMA 3891: Special Topics in Film Production: Social Documentary-Guatemala

Instructor: Jonathan Waters

Location: Antigua, Guatemala

Dates: May 4-May 29, 2020

This course is intended to serve as an examination of the documentary mode of production—its forms, history, styles—and the potential this filmmaking approach can have as a tool for social impact on a global stage. Students will gain practical media production experience and a theoretical understanding of community activism, social justice, and documentary storytelling, while researching and creating films that focus on change-makers in Antigua, Guatemala working to solve social and/or environmental problems in the Mayan communities that surround the city.

The course will begin on the Vanderbilt home campus for the first four days of the Maymester term. During this time, students will learn about social issue documentaries and the various forms of non-fiction media. Since the course is created for a variety of production skill levels—from novice to expert—we will also go over basic film production techniques and visualization exercises prior to departing. On location in Antigua, Guatemala, students will be instructed on preproduction and research methods, writing story outlines for documentary, and get a chance to meet locals and explore the area, all before beginning production on their collective films. We will return to campus for the final four days of the Maymester term to continue post-production, wrap up the course, and finish our films.

FEES: Cost is approx.$7,770.83