Building a documentary for your senior seminar promises to be a creative and satisfying experience. If you have never made a documentary before, you will soon realize that it is actually really fun—especially, because you get to watch other people watch it with you when you are done.

In the sections below, I have explained all the steps necessary for you to start and complete it. If you need help along the way, please make certain to use Kevin and me. We are here to help you.

**HOW DO I START?**

**Step 1: Select a Topic**

Choose a topic you want to explore and explain to others. Your topic can be anything related to visualizations and thinking with visualizations, broadly defined. It can also explain the way a theory helps us explain an interesting psychological phenomenon—things like body dysmorphia, or the expectations boys and girls develop as viewers of advertising. You can even explain a theory like schema theory and how the theory explains things like corporate branding or rebranding, or the way people react to stories in the news, or the way ‘stereotypes’ influence what we learn and remember from the news. Even a theory like multimedia theory is a topic you might want to explain. And, these a just a tiny fraction of the things out there to explore. Above all, your topic should be something that fascinates you, and that you are interested in learning.

**Step 2: Do Background Reading**

Do the background reading to educate yourself on the topic you choose. Scour the scholarly literature for theoretical papers, and papers reporting empirical research. However, make your reading easy and effective: first, go into a search engine like Google and read lightly on regular websites, blogs—even commercial papers; get a feel for the topic the way the lay community sees it. Then, go to Google Scholar, and search there for the scholarly pieces of research and review articles that give you refereed (curated) sources based in good science. Read those papers so that you can build a conceptual understanding of the phenomenon at a deep enough level that you can explain it to others. Rarely does research have a point of view—indeed, it should not have a point of view. Instead, it reports findings, and
anchors those finding in a selection of articles that report their findings and the findings from other investigations. The collection of these papers forms an epistemology (a base of knowledge that defines the methods, validity, and scope of an area of scientific inquiry). Develop an understanding from the collection of these papers that defines your topic, deep enough to be able to explain it to the viewers of your documentary (as best and as accurately as you can, relative to your reading).

AFTER I GET MY TOPIC AND READ MY RESEARCH, WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

Step 3: Discuss Your Understanding with your Partner and Sketch

In this step, you should draw out a diagram of what you understand. Agree on how the information goes together. That is, identify the problem or concept you are looking at, the issues that relate to that problem or concept, and how the problem/concept and issues affect people (e.g. students, consumers, etc.).

Step 4: Prepare Your Narration

From your diagram, prepare an outline of what you want to explain based on what you want your viewer to understand-- from the reading you did in step 2, and the diagram you sketched in step 3.

From your outline, write your paper, but use a rhetorical structure that is either explicative or narrative--that is, the underlying structure of your paper either explains the phenomenon, or it tells a story about the phenomenon. Don’t be shy about developing a point of view. A documentary generally always has a point of view. Take a perspective and explain your phenomenon, or tell the story about the phenomenon (e.g. the way it developed, how what is known about the phenomenon misses important elements or issues and does not address components that it should.) Just make certain that your viewpoint is based on evidence--evidence that you can anchor to empirical research or statements made from scholarly papers. The goal of your paper is to: inform, teach, give perspective, and above all make your viewers think. For good models, watch a couple of episodes of NOVA (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/) or FRONTLINE (https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/).

Your narrative will become your paper that you hand in at the end of the semester. There is only one difference between the paper you prepared to be used as your script (from which you will read as the narration) for your documentary, and the paper you turn in to me. Your paper will need to have: 1) citations in the text, and a reference list. It will also need to have a title, along with your names. Make sure that it is formatted according to APA style.

There are a number of Internet-based resources to help you with APA Style. A few I found are:

1. https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/
AFTER I WRITE MY SCRIPT, WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

Step 5: Procure Your Visuals and Sounds

Scour the Internet for visualizations-- or make your own. Visualizations can be infographics, diagrams, animations, pictures, schematics, maps-- any images that can bring the points of your narration to life (e.g. statistical trends, models of the way things work, etc.). Take video clips of relevant events-- clips of historical footage, or news clips (to illustrate a point); take videos for “establishing shots”-- shots that give context of place (a university building, students sitting on a bench, or a college classroom) or situation (a family talking over dinner). Take videos of brief interviews-- enough to make a point. Create an image containing the text of a brief quote from an article. Take brief recordings of relevant sounds-- chairs moving, Trinity Hall bells chiming, relevant sounds of a location.

Step 6: Create Your Storyboard

A storyboard is nothing more than a visual organizer that allows you to lay out the sequence of your visual material relative to your script. This organizer permits you to pre-visualize what your documentary will look like as a completed video. There are a number of free storyboard organizers on the Internet, (e.g. http://www.printablepaper.net/category/storyboard, http://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/page.cfm?id=23&cid=23&sublinkid=37, https://www.howto.gov/sites/default/files/video-storyboard-template.pdf)

Step 7: Audio Record Your Script

Find a person with good reading skills, a pleasant voice, who knows how to make a script interesting to listen to. There are several sites online that give very good tips on selecting the right narrator, along with ways to prepare a script for audio recording. You might find the following links valuable: http://theelearningcoach.com/media/audio/audio-recording-scripting-conventions/, http://www.articulate.com/rapid-elearning/13-more-tips-to-help-you-record-narration-like-the-pros/, http://grumomedia.com/how-to-record-great-voiceover-audio-with-an-iphone/

Step 8: Edit Your Material for Your Timeline

Edit your material so that the material fits into your timeframe. You can extend frames for the amount of material you want to show, and for the duration you want to show it. You can also adjust the time of your transitions. When editing your material, listen to your script very carefully, and think about the time your viewer needs to cognitively process the information your script explains.
Step 9: Place Your Shots and Images into Frames & Choose Your Transitions

From your storyboard, create your frames in your video software. Perhaps the best and easiest software to use is iMovie—a software application that comes standard on most MACs. Transitions are very important—they convey information about relationships between frames. Choose them wisely.

Steps 7 and 8 are accomplished using your video (movie) software. While the programs suggested to you on your syllabus are fairly intuitive, iMovie, for example, comes with a tutorial—and of course, there are tutorials online.

Step: 10: Add Music

Music can be added on an additional track to the voice recording of your script. Music influences emotional arousal and valence. It also has the capacity to focus attention by providing emphasis. Choose
your music clips carefully—or leave music out all together. It is your call. Again, consider watching an episode of NOVA or FRONTLINE to see how music can be used in a documentary.

Step 11: Add Credits and Know Copyright Infringement

It is possible that you will be using material that is copyrighted. And, unless you get permission to use copyrighted material, it is illegal to do so. Therefore, use your material carefully. The same goes for music. On the other hand, the documentaries you create are for class purposes only—exclusively for education. They are not for publication or dissemination outside of class--on the Internet or otherwise. Therefore, some material or pieces of material may be exempt according to the Fair Use Exemption. It is essential that you familiarize yourself with copyright law as it pertains to the material you use. If you have questions, consult Carson Medley, in the graduate office. His on campus extension is: 5392. His email is: cmedley@csuchico.edu.

Credits should be added under Crew and Research. Under Crew identify the people by name who helped you, in addition to their role. Under Research, list your references, in APA style.

Step 12: Render Your Project

When the documentary is completely assembled in the video (movie) software, it will need to be rendered. Make certain that it is completely assembled before rendering because rendering takes a long time. Your video should not exceed 15 minutes. When it is complete, either drop it into a protected Dropbox file (for which you give me access), or find a big thumb drive and download it there.

Make sure to test it on different computers so that you know it runs smoothly, well before you show it to the class. Sometimes, it will run fine on the computer on which you built it; sometimes, it will not. Also, when you see it as a movie, it should work exactly as it should—with sound at the same level and fidelity, and transitions smooth. You won’t know that until it is completely rendered.