

How might you teach using the film *Justine*?

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Duration of video clip: 2 minutes 31 seconds

I've shown *Justine* to I think, every student, who has taken documentary film with me at USC in the past three years. Whether it's the undergraduate students, or the graduate students, and it never ceases to evoke conversation, discussion, some level of debate, although I have found that most people - there aren't too many differing points of view. I find that almost everyone understands how thoughtful you were, in trying to understand the world, as it were, if not through Justine's eyes, at least something of a sensitive relationship towards her and towards what representation of Justine means in the world. And I think everyone picked up on that and everyone. But it was a great way for me to say to them - the same holds true in all cases, you're just aware of it in this one because that's, in a way, what this film is about. That's why it's a good teaching tool by the way. It's not a unique instance, it's maybe a particularly privileged example, those same kind of issues are raised. And by the way, I tend to show this film not in the early going, I tend to wait until we've watched till over half way through the term, usually, so that they're really prepared and we have a common vocabulary of other films. Sometimes I'll start off with Sarah Polley's *Stories We Tell*, something like that, a kind of puzzling film where it's kind of difficult to tell the truth from the fiction and how she's really pushing family members to say things that maybe are difficult or painful. To see those films, or I don't know - *Grizzly Man* or other films that really push the envelope in certain ways. Or, the canon, because they may have watched, maybe - not - *Las Hurdes / Land without Bread* but they certainly would have watched, *Apropos de Nice* or they would have watched *Man with a Movie Camera*, they would have watched *Night Mail* more to the point I guess, *Housing Problems* and so it's a way for them to reflect on the canon as well by asking the same questions which are crystallised in your film but that really can be asked of equally of the more canonical and other films they may have seen on the course.

Filmography:

Justine (2013) Pratap Rughani

Stories We Tell (2012) Sarah Polley

Grizzly Man (2005) Werner Herzog

Las Hurdes: Tierra Sin Pan (Land without Bread) (1933) Buñuel

Apropos de Nice (1930) Jean Vigo

Man with a Movie Camera (1929) Dziga Vertov

Night Mail (1936) Basil Wright & Harry Watt

Housing Problems (1935) Arthur Elton & Edgar Anstey