Documentary Assignment Checklist

1. Propose an original documentary of any length on any topic. Choose a topic that you are genuinely interested in, one that has a special meaning to you based on your personal experience. Give it a catchy title.
2. Base your proposal on solid research. It should include a bibliography of at least 3 research sources, although you should feel free to use as many sources as you need to cover all the interesting facets of your topic. The bibliography can be in any standard format. Include a list of earlier documentaries done on your topic, and explain why yours is different.
3. Begin with a one-liner, **a full sentence** that tells the gist of what your documentary is about. You might think of this as the “TV Guide” blurb that would entice a viewer to tune to your documentary, but its main function is to keep you focused as you develop your proposal. Like any other component of this assignment, the one-liner will probably change as your proposal develops.
4. The proposal should include a list of segments. Researchers in human information processing tell us that information should be broken up into “the magic number 7, plus or minus 2” parts for optimum comprehension, so the ideal number of segments should be 5 to 9.
5. The segments should each have an interesting title that represents the focus of that segment clearly.
6. The segments should include interesting information that should be new or surprising to your target audience.
7. The segments, taken together, should completely cover your topic, without being boring or redundant.
8. The segments should be arranged so they tell an intriguing story with a beginning, middle, and end.
9. Script out one segment of your documentary in split-page format. For the purposes of your script, assume that you have whatever video you need. Your script excerpt should demonstrate the style of your documentary: VO Narrator, On-Screen Narrator, Cinema Verite (no narrator), and so on (See reading on documentary storytelling techniques).
10. Attach your assignment in MS Word format in an email to grodman@brooklyn.cuny.edu with the file name firstname lastname doc 1 or 2 . So, if your name is Jane Doe (which I would find highly suspicious), your file name and the subject line in your email to me would be Jane Doe Doc 1. The title of your posting on BB, however, would be the working title of your documentary.
11. Respond on BB with reactions to at least three of your classmates’ assignments.