This presentation is intended for elementary, middle and high school teachers and freshman or sophomore college or university instructors.

Holocaust documentaries are rhetorical devices which present a particular subject, from a particular viewpoint. Usually a documentarist, seeking to influence and inform, will formulate an organizational structure, employing arguments based on facts, and including compelling evidence and examples.

Using the genre of film or video means using film and literary devices in picture and sound. Within this pictorialization, the documentarist uses actual footage of people and events related to the Holocaust.

Holocaust documentaries must be concerned with ethical and moral considerations which should evaluated in terms of clarity, context and ultimately, truth. The receptivity and understanding of an audience has to be considered. The audience needs to see, understand, and feel the event in order to be engaged in the search for meaning and understanding. Furthermore, the teacher needs to consider what is age-appropriate, the nature of students' preconceptions, biases, and emotional make-up based upon cultural and nationalist backgrounds. This requires appropriate student preparation in each situation.

Using Holocaust documentaries in schools, and portraying attitudes, biases, antisemitism, cultural "truths" of parents and grandparents can create a special audience response and influence attitudes. It can change not only the attitudes of the students, but, equally, the content of the documentary. Students may find themselves confused by what they "knew" to be true and what they see and hear in the Holocaust documentary. Later in the paper I will discuss these ideas at greater length.

In relation to this topic, my background is in two major areas: rhetorical theory in my doctoral studies, and film, radio and television production. I have held both commercial and educational positions in the media, especially television, for eight years, which included producing and directing documentaries. I have taught at the university level both the practical and theoretical perspectives of the documentary for many years. A number of my students have won regional and national awards for their documentaries; some on the subject of the Holocaust. For the past twelve years I have taught Documentaries of the Holocaust; and, during the last three years, my wife and I have co-directed the Center for Holocaust Education at St. Cloud State University.
In order to provide some additional understanding of the analytical method employed, I will digress from the central theme of this paper to briefly demonstrate this mode of historical analysis.

You are probably familiar with Nanook of the North and Triumph of the Will. Let's consider how documentary techniques were used and misused in these films.

_Nanook of the North_, created by Robert Flaherty between 1919 and 1921, was first shown in the New York City, Capitol theatre in 1922 to strong audience response. Soon it became a national and international success.

In creating this film, Flaherty leaned heavily on his childhood memories of the Inuit or Eskimo people, visiting them a number of times with his prospecting father. Their culture deeply interested him. With a film camera, a one week course at Kodak and a strong dramatic and film sense, he spent over a year shooting this film. The leader of the Northern Canada Inuit tribe fully subscribed to this film and required his people to do as Flaherty told them.

With a naturally effective eye for picturization, Flaherty told his story using actual footage of events. He often, however, created and re-created the "actual" events until the Inuit lives fit his preconceptions of his past memories and, also, his strong inclination toward the dramatic and emotional. The New York audience in 1922 related well to this. Most critics highly praised the film. A few seriously questioned its authenticity or truth. Nanook, on film, became a larger-than-life hero against a background of World War I memories and the pandemic of 1919.

_Nanook of the North_ struck a cord; and we can see how the “occasion” or background of the times can assist in the creation of the hero, Nanook. The danger he lived was real (Nanook died in a snowstorm two years later). The mood of Americans following World War I and so much death was also real; and a strong, positive “ethos” hero helped relieve anxiety. This demonstrates the impact of the historical setting upon the reception of a documentary.

Many documentarists used Robert Flaherty's techniques; but none better than Leni Riefenstahl. In 1934 Leni Riefenstahl made _Triumph of the Will_ the “documentary” of the 1934 Nazi Party rally in Nuremberg. Riefenstahl, a well known and successful actress, producer and director agreed, under pressure from Hitler, to make _Triumph of the Will_ only after she gained a large budget and full control of all filming and editing. Riefenstahl was famous for creating commercial, German films; using strongly dramatic and emotional, historical myth, with a simplistic story of good versus evil.

In planning _Triumph of the Will_, Riefenstahl had at her disposal unlimited funds, a crew of 120 and 16 of the best camera people in Germany. While Hitler did not control the film, he had total control over the event she was filming. The objective of the drama of the event was to move strongly toward an almost mythic hero, Adolph Hitler. The
success of the "documentary" did, in fact, move the attitudes and feelings of the majority of the German people toward a positive response to their new leader. The purported objective of a national/military celebration became a creation of strong ethos and hero worship of Hitler. The brown shirted "bully boys" and Nazi killers of the 1920s were to be forgotten, along with the storm troopers who helped Hitler gain power.

*Triumph of the Will* won a number of national and international awards as a successful documentary. It was, of course, purely propaganda; but at that time not easily seen as such.

With the teacher's help, students watching this pre-Holocaust film will recognize the powe; the myth; the drama; and the hero. The teacher can assist the students by pointing to and clarifying these techniques. Hitler was surrounded by a mythic, Teutonic environment (a symbol) and an unreal occasion. The lie worked.

To reach and involve present-day elementary, middle and high school, college freshman and sophomores, the teacher needs to see Holocaust documentaries through the eyes and ears of the students, providing tools for them to understand the documentary in an objective and effective manner.

Students see many movies and documentaries both in and out of school. As they grow up much of the how and why of films and documentaries is internalized. It becomes subjective and is cloaked with the influence of the media. This influence is accomplished through sign, symbol, over- and understatement, analogies, metaphors, oxymoron antithesis, etc. For the students to understand what they see and hear, the teacher needs to unmask the methods of film making, thus allowing understanding and cultivating much needed critical skills. The student will begin to see the goal of the documentarist and understand how he or she is trying to accomplish this goal. These elements I refer to as documentary techniques.

The second set of tools to assist the student is sometimes called the grammar of film or, as I employ them, techniques of film. To provide examples I might include: the shot, type of shot, characteristics of lenses, cuts, types of cuts, camera movement, use of sound, editing and effects. Each of these (and this is a basic list) has an effect upon the audience response.

Lastly on the subject of techniques, it should be noted that the techniques in combination can provide pacing, tone, mood, intensity, naturalness, mystery, and so forth.

It is often thought that documentaries in their "pure" form do not use techniques, but, of course, they do. To affect the audience with a sense of the truth of the event they see, such techniques are used to fulfill these often unrepressed expectations of our filmgoers for the film to feel "right" or to appear truthful. Does this take away from the honesty of a film? Probably not in most cases; it is just the way they are made. Do we really need to understand this? Yes, if we are to understand what the form and the documents within the film are proving.
The teacher can illustrate techniques by discussing the various elements of the documentary. For example, the role of a narrator is to bring together the documentary evidence and provide clarity by relating all parts to the whole. Cause and effect arguments, syllogistic or enthymemic arguments are developed to interrelate facts, to demonstrate the truth within the documents and to provide logical sequences for audience members to follow.

The teacher and the instructor’s task, besides providing historical background to documentary evidence, is to demonstrate to students the nature and character of each documentary; pointing out such appeals as emotional, logical, and ethos (or ethical appeal).

Documentaries are great teaching aids if used with understanding, preparation, explanation and student discussion.

During my presentation, I will show a number of brief Holocaust documentary examples and we will discuss how documentary techniques, film techniques, logic, emotion, and literary visual devices function to support the documentary or to limit it.

Further, I will provide lists of techniques and suggested Holocaust documentaries for different age groups.