Preparation for the critical review
Moving beyond observation: finding your way to a viable thesis and strategy.

1. Observation: Here is where most of you began.
   o What are the distinctive features of the videos that you have chosen?
   o How are the two documentaries different?
   o Which of the two did you prefer?

2. Analysis: Moving beyond thoughtful observations toward an enlightening thesis.
   o How can you account for the distinctive features and differences that you observed? (lots of possibilities here)
   o What assumptions have the producers made about the audience?
     1. Do these assumptions affect the distinctive features & differences?
   o Is there an unintended cost to the transformation or filtering of scientific knowledge in this field? (You might ask similar questions about other types of knowledge presented in the film.)
   o Does one of the articles on science documentaries help you make sense of the decisions made by the directors of your documentaries?
   o Why do your specific conclusions matter? How do you move beyond two specific films toward some broader insight?

3. Persuasion & enlightenment: How do you translate your own insights into an engaging and enlightening critical review?
   • Where should you start?
     o What kinds of background information do your readers need?
       ▪ About the general topic?
       ▪ About the individual films?
     o Why should your readers care about the issues addressed in your critical review?
   • How should you explain the logic behind your thesis?
   • What kind of evidence do you need? How can you show—rather than tell—your readers how specific evidence from the films clarifies & supports your thesis?
     o Is there some scene or sequence of scenes in each documentary that offers a particular clear view of the way that the producers have transformed or filtered the scientific findings?
     o How might the critical article that you read help you articulate and support your thesis?
   • Where has this process taken you? What broader insight should your readers take away from this critical review?

Reminder: You cannot assume that your readers want to read about your documentaries just because you chose this particular pair. Make sure that you have something to say to your readers.