Expressive Culture: Film

Class Code
CORE-UA 9750 – 001

Instructor Details
Dr Megan Carrigy
megan.carrigy@nyu.edu
Consultations by appointment.
Please allow at least 24 hours for your instructor to respond to your emails.

Class Details
Fall 2015

Expressive Culture: Film

Monday, 3:00 – 7:00pm (4 hours per week including film screening)
August 31 to December 7
Room 302
NYU Sydney Academic Centre
157-161 Gloucester St, The Rocks 2000

Prerequisites
None

Class Description
How has Australian cinema engaged with significant and often contested historical, political and cultural events in the nation’s past? The films in this course offer critical perspectives on the history of colonisation in Australia; the legacies of the Stolen Generations; the controversies surrounding Australia’s role in World War One; as well as Australia’s relationships with its Pacific Asian neighbours. We will focus on films that have marked significant shifts in public consciousness about the past such as Gallipoli (1981), Rabbit-Proof Fence (2002) and Balibo (2009). We will also draw on films that have employed innovative narrative and aesthetic strategies for exploring the relationship between the past and the present such as Ten Canoes (2006) and The Tracker (2002). Throughout the course, students will develop their understanding of the basic methods and concepts of cinema studies. In particular, students will develop a critical vocabulary for analysing how filmmakers have approached the use of memory, testimony, re-enactment, researched detail, allegory and archives across a diverse range of examples.

Desired Outcomes
By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Apply the basic vocabulary of film form.
- Grasp the mechanics of structuring a written argument about a film’s meaning.
• Engage with different approaches to thinking and writing about cinema and film.
• Reflect upon their viewing position and their application of interpretive strategies to films from diverse historical and cultural contexts.
• Utilize a critical vocabulary for analysing representations of the relationship between the past and the present on film.
• Critically analyse the ways that representations of the past shape and are shaped by their historical, political and cultural contexts.
• Research and investigate aspects of the Australian cinema and communicate their findings in a coherent, well-structured written form.
• Situate contemporary Australian cinema in its national, regional and international contexts.

**Assessment Components**

Class Participation: (10%) Assessed throughout the semester.
Sequence Analysis: 4-6 pages (20%) Due in class Session 7.
Critical Paper: 4-6 pages (20%) Due in class Session 10
Proposal for Final Paper: 2-3 pages (10%) Due in class Session 12.
Final Paper: 10-12 pages (40%) Due by 5pm Friday 11 December

**Class Participation** Students are required to demonstrate accountability and responsibility in their preparation for, and engagement with, the course. Students are expected to engage in active discussion and to listen to and respect other points of view. Students will receive a midterm participation grade, worth half of you total participation grade, after the first seven weeks of classes.

**Sequence Analysis (Session 7)** Students will identify a sequence from a film presented in the first six weeks of the course and critically analyse how the sequence reflects key themes, issues, concepts and/or aesthetic strategies introduced in Sessions 1 - 6. Students will pay close attention to the formal (stylistic and technical) qualities of the sequence, demonstrating their understanding of the specificities of film form, style and narration.

**Critical Paper (Session 10)** Students will select two readings from the selection provided by the instructor and write a short critical essay in which they identify and analyze the key arguments, ideas, concepts and issues raised by the authors. Students will compare the arguments of the different authors and offer their own assessment of the authors’ claims and conclusions. The paper should be written in an appropriate academic style with consistent scholarly referencing and bibliography. This assignment will help to develop students’ critical reading, thinking and writing skills, essential for the final paper in this course.

**Proposal for Final Paper (Session 12)** Students will submit a proposal indicating how they intend to approach their chosen question.
Final Paper (Exam Week) Questions for the final papers will be released in Session 10. Students are required to apply their analysis to specific, carefully selected case studies and film examples and to demonstrate their critical thinking, analysis and evaluation skills. Students are expected to situate their argument in relation to the relevant required readings and undertake additional research and reading on their topic.

*Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component will result in failure of the class.*

The College Core Curriculum is designed to provide students with an intellectually rigorous general education in the liberal arts. Because Core courses seek to stretch you beyond your previous schooling and major course of study, they will likely be among the most academically challenging experiences you undertake as an undergraduate. The following guidelines outline our common expectations concerning the evaluation of students’ work across the curriculum.

The grade of A marks extraordinary academic performance in all aspects of a course and is reserved for *clearly superior* work.

As a faculty, we are similarly concerned to reserve the mark of B+ to signify *very good* work. It is our hope and desire that the majority of students will want and be able to do good work in their Core classes, work in the B range. Because these courses are intended by design to foster your intellectual development, the difference between merely satisfactory and good work will frequently depend on outstanding effort and class participation. For this reason, class participation is typically a substantial component of the overall grade in Core courses.

The grade of C denotes satisfactory work—regular attendance, ordinary effort, a minimum of demonstrated improvement across the semester. It is expected that every student is capable of and motivated to perform at least at this level.

Grades below C are reserved for less than satisfactory and, in the D range, for poor work and effort, and mark a need for improvement.

The grade of F indicates failure to complete the requirements for a course in a creditable manner. It marks a judgment about the quality and quantity of a student’s work and participation—not about the student—and is therefore in order whenever a student fails to complete course requirements, whatever his or her intentions or circumstances may be.

The temporary mark of I (Incomplete) is given only when sudden and incapacitating illness, or other grave emergency, prevents a student from completing the final assignment or examination for a course. It must be requested by the student in advance; all other course requirements, including satisfactory attendance, must have been fulfilled; and there must be a reasonable expectation that the student will receive a passing grade when the delayed work is completed. Students must make arrangements with the faculty member to finish the incomplete work as soon as circumstances permit within the following semester. If not completed, marks of I will lapse to F.
This course uses the following scale of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Equivalent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>65-66</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>below 65</td>
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</tbody>
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Should work be submitted as a hard copy, or electronically?

Unless otherwise specified, all written work must be submitted as a hard copy. The majority of written assignments must also be submitted electronically via NYU Classes. All in-class presentations must be completed during class time.

Who may submit a student’s work?

Each student’s assigned work must be handed in personally by that student. The student may not nominate another person to act on his/her behalf.

When and where should the work be submitted?

The hard copy of any written work must be submitted to the instructor at the beginning of class on the date the work is due. If the assignment due date falls outside of class time, work must be submitted to the Staff Member on duty in Room 2.04 during prescribed Office Hours (11:30am-12:30pm and 2:30-3:30pm Mon-Thu), or by appointment with the Academic Programs Coordinator. Each submitted item of work received in Room 2.04 will be date and time stamped in the presence of the student. Work submitted in Room 2.04 will not be considered “received” unless formally stamped.

What is the Process for Late Submission of Work?

After the due date, work may only be submitted under the following conditions:

- Late work, even if an extension has been granted, must be submitted in person by appointment with the Academic Programs Coordinator. Each submitted item of work must be date and time stamped in order to be considered “received”.

- Work submitted after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100-point scale (for the assignment) for each day the work is late. Written work submitted beyond five weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension receives a mark of zero, and the student is not entitled to feedback for that piece of work.

- Because failure to submit or fulfil any required course component will result in failure of the course, it is crucial for students to submit every assignment even when it will receive a mark of zero. Early departure from the program therefore places the student at risk of failing the course.
Plagiarism Policy

The academic standards of New York University apply to all coursework at NYU Sydney. NYU Sydney policies are in accordance with New York University’s plagiarism policy. The presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

It is a serious academic offense to use the work of others (written, printed or in any other form) without acknowledgement. Cases of plagiarism are not dealt with by your instructor. They are referred to the Director, who will determine the appropriate penalty (up to and including failure in the course as a whole) taking into account the codes of conduct and academic standards for NYU’s various schools and colleges.

Class Attendance

Study abroad at Global Academic Centres is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centres is mandatory, and unexcused absences will be penalised with a two percent deduction from the student’s final course grade for every week of classes missed.

The class roster will be marked in the first five minutes of class and anyone who arrives after this time will be considered absent. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences will result in harsher penalties, including failure.

Classroom Expectations

This is a seminar subject and requires the active participation of all students. It also requires engaged discussion, including listening to and respecting other points of view. Your behaviour in class should respect your classmates’ desire to learn. It is important for you to focus your full attention on the class, for the entire class period.

- Arrive to class on time.
- Once you are in class, you are expected to stay until class ends. Leaving to make or take phone calls, to meet with classmates, or to go to an interview, is not acceptable behaviour.
- Phones, digital music players, and any other communications or sound devices are not to be used during class. That means no phone calls, no texting, no social media, no email, and no internet browsing at any time during class.
- Laptop computers and tablets are not to be used during class except in rare instances for specific class-related activity expressly approved by your instructor.
- The only material you should be reading in class is material assigned for that class. Reading anything else, such as newspapers or magazines, or doing work from another class, is not acceptable.
- Class may not be recorded in any fashion – audio, video, or otherwise – without permission in writing from the instructor.
Religious Observance

Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. Students must notify their professor and the Assistant Director, Academic Programs in writing via email one week in advance before being absent for this purpose.

Provisions to students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in a class are encouraged to contact the Moses Centre for Students with Disabilities at (212) 998-4980 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. For more information, see Study Away and Disability.

Required Texts


Supplemental Texts (Available in NYUS Library)

• Langton, Marcia, ‘Well, I heard it on the Radio and I saw it on the Television...’ An essay for the Australian Film Commission on the politics and aesthetics of filmmaking by and about Aboriginal people and things. Sydney: Australian Film Commission, 1993.

*Screening the Past*: [http://www.screeningthepast.com/]
*Senses of Cinema*: [http://sensesofcinema.com/]
*Australian Screen*: [http://aso.gov.au/]
Session 1  *Newsfront* – Introducing Australian National Cinema and Film Analysis  
Monday August 31

Film: *Newsfront* (Philip Noyce, Australia, 1978, 110 min)

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**

Session 2  *Gallipoli* – Narrative Form, Historical Film and National Myth  
Monday September 7

Film: *Gallipoli* (Peter Weir, Australia, 1981, 110 min)

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**

Session 3  *Australia* – *Mise-en-Scene* and the Historical Epic  
Monday September 14

Film: *Australia* (Baz Luhrmann, Australia, 2008, 165 min)

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**

### Session 4  Balibo – Cinematography, Historical Reconstruction and Researched detail

**Monday September 21**

**Film:** *Balibo* (Robert Connolly, Australia, 2009, 111 min)

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**

### Session 5  Ned Kelly – The Biopic and the Ned Kelly Story

**Monday September 28**

**Films:** *Ned Kelly* (Gregor Jordan, Australia, 2003, 110 min)

**Required Reading:**
- Dennis Bingham, ‘Introduction,’ *Whose Lives Are They Anyway? The Biopic as Contemporary Film Genre*, Rutgers University Press, 2010, pp. 3-28 (also available online via NYU Libraries)

**Recommended Reading:**

**Recommended viewing:**
- *The Story of the Kelly Gang* (Charles Tait, 1906, restored NFSA 2006, 30 min)

**FALL BREAK October 5-9**
Session 6  
Shine – The Biopic, Film Sound and Film Stardom
Monday October 12

**Guest Lecture:** Dr Anne Barnes

Film: *Shine* (Scott Hicks, Australia, 1996, 105 min)

Guest Lecture: Dr Anne Barnes

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**

Session 7  
The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert – Genre and the Australian Road Movie
Monday October 19

**Guest Lecture:** Dr Anne Barnes

Film: *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (Stephan Elliott, Australia, 1994, 104 min)

**Required Reading:**

Recommended Reading:

**Assignment: Sequence Analysis due, 4-6 pages (20%)**

Session 8  
Beneath Clouds – Historical Memory, Identity and the Australian Road Movie
Monday October 26

**Guest Speaker:** Dr Adam Gall

Film: *Beneath Clouds* (Ivan Sen, Australia, 2002, 90 min)
Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

Assignment: Midterm Participation Grades awarded (5%)

Session 9  *Rabbit Proof Fence* – The Stolen Generations and Film Adaptation
**Monday November 2**

Film: *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (Phillip Noyce, Australia, 2002, 94 min)

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

Session 10  *The Tracker* – Australian Cinema after Mabo, Traumatic Memory and the Road
**Monday November 9**

Film: *The Tracker* (Rolf de Heer, Australia, 2002, 90 min)

Required Reading:
Recommended Reading:

**Assignment: Critical Paper due, 4-6 pages (20%)**

**Session 11  Ten Canoes – Collaborative Histories and the Archive, Pre- and Post-Colonial Australia**

Monday November 16

Film: *Ten Canoes* (Rolf de Heer & Peter Djigirr, Australia, 2006, 90 min)

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**

**Session 12  The Tall Man – Documentary Reconstruction and Contested Pasts**

Monday November 23

Film: *The Tall Man* (Tony Krawitz, Australia, 2011, 79 min)

**Required Reading:**

**Assignment: Proposal for Final Paper due (10%)**

**Session 13  Mrs. Carey’s Concert – Observational Documentary and Narration**

Monday November 30

Film: *Mrs Carey’s Concert* (Bob Connolly, Sophie Raymond, Australia, 2011, 95 min)

**Required Reading:**
Interview:
- Ray Argall interviews Bob Connolly for Australian Screen (Transcript also available online): http://aso.gov.au/people/Bob_Connolly/interview/

Watch - Uncontrolled verite; The hardest form of documentary; Choosing a subject; Creating out of nothing; Learning to edit; Bringing in an editor; Exploring human character; [...]Ground rules for conflict; The perfect score; Shooting the right material; Shooting film focuses the mind.

Session 14  Wake in Fright – Restoring a Cinema Classic and the Death of Cinema
Monday December 7

Film: Wake in Fright (Ted Kotcheff, Australia/USA, 1971, 114 min)

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

Final Paper: 10-12 pages (40%) Due by 5pm Friday 11 December.

Your Instructor

Dr. Megan Carrigy (Ph.D., University of New South Wales) is the Assistant Director for Academic Programs at NYU Sydney. Before joining NYU she was the Education Projects Manager at the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS). She has taught film and media studies at UNSW and at the University of Technology, Sydney. For four years, she programmed Sydney’s annual queerDOC and Mardi Gras Film Festival, building partnerships with local and international distributors, filmmakers, festivals and community organisations. Megan was awarded the Best Doctoral Thesis Prize in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at UNSW in 2011 for her PhD thesis titled ‘Performing History, Troubling Reference: Tracking the Screen Re-enactment’. She has also been awarded the Mari Kuttna Memorial Prize for Film Studies and the English Association Prize for Best Long Essay in English Literature by the University of Sydney. Her research interests include contemporary film theory, re-enactment, film stars, and the cinema of Ritwik Ghatak.