Global Orientations: Australian Society and Culture

Class code: GLBL-UA 9109

Instructor Details
Dr. Toby Martin, assisted by the Director and staff
tm108@nyu.edu
Consultations by Appointment
Please allow at least 24 hours for your instructor to respond to your emails.

Class Details
Global Orientations: Australian Society and Culture

Required Course
Orientation Week
Friday mornings (Week 1-3)
Auditorium and Room 304
NYU Sydney Academic Centre

Prerequisites
None

Class Description
Australian society is replete with contradictions. Aussies famously describe their nation as the lucky country, yet from the Indigenous perspective, it might more aptly be called the stolen country. Australia is the land of the fair go, which cruelly detains refugees; a multicultural nation with a history of a white Australia policy; a place with distinctive local traditions, which takes many of its cues from global culture; an easy-going country with a surprisingly large degree of governmental control over individual liberties; a highly urbanised population that romances the Bush and the Outback as embodying ‘real’ Australia; a nation proud of its traditions of egalitarianism and mateship, with numerous rules about who is allowed in ‘the club’; a society with a history of anti-British and anti-American sentiment that simultaneously hold strong political allegiances and military pacts with Britain and the USA; and a place with a history of progressive social policy and a democratic tradition, which has never undergone a revolution. This course strives to make sense of Australian society and culture by exploring the complexities and contradictions in Australia’s self-image.

The course will be introduced with an overview, and followed by four sessions covering four distinct themes during Orientation and the first three weeks of semester. Each session will include a 1-hour lecture, either given by the instructor or a guest lecturer, and a recitation-style discussion. There are seven mandatory field trips: Sydney Harbour Cruise, Rocks
Walking Tour, The Blue Mountains, Featherdale Wildlife Park, Balmain Bowling Club Lawn Bowls, Overnight trip to Inglevale Farm, and the NYU World Tour.

Desired Outcomes

Students will be expected to develop:

- A critical understanding of Australian culture and its history;
- An awareness of the politics of gender, race and class in Australian society;
- An understanding of the ways in which issues in Australian society are both local and transnational.

Assessment Components

Short Paper (1000 words, 50%) Due Fri 17th October (end of Week 6)
Choose a site in Sydney that you have visited, and use it as a jumping off point from which to reflect on Australian society more broadly. You may wish to consider the way in which a particular place embodies an important theme or has played witness to an important event in Australian society. You must cite at least one of the course readings and one of the lectures.

Class Participation (50%)
Students will be assessed not just on the quantity of their contributions to recitation discussions, but also on their relevance to the readings and course themes and their respect for other students’ contributions. This may be judged partly on in-class written exercises.

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

Assessment Expectations

This course is graded Pass/Fail. Failure to submit or fulfil any required course component results in failure of the class.
Pass = 100-65
Fail = Below 65.

Grade Pass:
Students have completed all assignments and attended and actively participated in all sessions and field trips.

Students have written a paper that offers an original synthesis of the course readings, lectures, group discussions, field trips and their own personal experiences, demonstrating their ability to evaluate critically what they have encountered. Written arguments are clear, well-organised and well-presented. By the end of the course, students will have demonstrated an improved understanding of the complexities of the issues facing Australia today.

Grade Fail:
Student’s work does not demonstrate an understanding of the topics covered in the lectures,
field trips and assigned readings. The student has not come to class prepared and has not actively participated in class sessions and field trips.

**Late Submission of Work**

Written work due in class must be submitted to your instructor during class time.

Late work should be submitted in person to the Assistant Director, Academic Programs during regular office hours (9:00am-5:00pm, Monday-Friday). In the absence of the Assistant Director, Academic Programs, another member of the administrative staff can accept the work in person. The NYUS staff will mark down the date and time of submission in the presence of the student. Students must also submit an electronic copy of late written work to Turn-It-In within 24 hours.

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 (5) weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.

**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.

Any course work must be submitted as a hard copy AND in electronic form. All students must submit an electronic copy of each piece of written work to turn-it-in via NYU Classes. Instructions will be provided to you in class.

Penalties for confirmed cases of plagiarism are severe and are dealt with by the Director, NYU Sydney, not your instructor. Your home school will be notified and you will be dealt with according to the standards of that school. The codes of conduct and academic standards for NYU’s various schools and colleges are outlined in the respective school’s academic resources.

**Attendance Policy**

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 affect students’ semester grades. 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.

For courses that meet once a week, one unexcused absence will be penalized by a two percent deduction from the student’s final course grade. For courses that meet two or more times a week, the same penalty will apply to two unexcused absences. Repeated absences in a course may result in 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.

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**Session 1  Co-curricular Event: Welcome to Country (10:30am)**

**Wednesday August 27**

An Aboriginal “Welcome to Country” will be performed in the NYU Sydney Auditorium. There will be the opportunity for discussion and questions after the Welcome.

**Welcome to the course and Introduction (Recitations 11.00am-12.00pm or 1.00-2.00pm)**

In small groups, the instructor will provide an overview of the course and its objectives.

**Required field trip/excursion: Sydney Harbour Cruise (Captain Cook Cruises) 2.30-4.30pm**

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**Session 2  Uncovering Sydney’s Past**

**Thursday August 28**

**Recitations 9:00-10:00am, 10:00-11:00am, or 11:00am-12:00pm**
Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

Required field trip/excursion: **Rocks Walking Tour, 1:30-3:30pm**

**Required Orientation Retreat: Blue Mountains**
**Friday August 29-Saturday August 30**

The Blue Mountains are rich in Aboriginal and European History. The area was inhabited by Indigenous Australians for thousands of years and was considered impassable by early European settlers. Now a popular tourist destination, the World Heritage listed Blue Mountains offers visitors an opportunity to study a very unique ecosystem.

On this two day field trip, students will follow in the footsteps of Charles Darwin, with interpretation from an archaeologist and qualified ecological guides. Aboriginal elder Chris Tobin of the Darug people will examine the history of the area before European settlement.

**Session 3  Issues in Environmental Politics in Australia**
**Friday September 5**

**Guest lecturer:** Fran Molloy (NYU Sydney)

Lecture 10:00-11:00am, Recitations 11:00am-12:00pm or 12:00-1:00pm

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:
- Kathy Marks, ‘Is Tony Abbott’s Australian administration the most hostile to his nation’s environment in history?’ *The Independent*, Tuesday 19 August 2014.


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**Guest lecture: Sacha Molitorisz (NYU Sydney)**

**Lecture 10:00-11:00am, Recitations 11:00am-12:00pm or 12:00-1:00pm**

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**

**Required field trip: Featherdale Wildlife Park**

**Sunday September 14**

This trip will bring students close to Australia’s native wildlife. Featherdale Wildlife Park is home to 2200 animals from over 280 species.

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**Lecture 10:00-11:00am, Recitations 11:00am-12:00pm or 12:00-1:00pm**

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**

**Required field trip: Balmain Bowling Club**

**Friday October 17**

First played in Australia in 1845 lawn bowls has a rich history. The game is popular with all ages. Lawn bowls is often played on the lawns of Returned Services Clubs the game is particularly popular with aging Australians.

Students will interact with members of the Balmain Bowling club learning about the history and traditions of the game.

**NYU World Tour**

**Monday October 27 – Monday November 3**

NYU World Tour is a celebration of the experiences unique to NYU students studying abroad. This program will offer insight into unique aspects of Australian culture.

**Required field trip: Visit to Inglevale Farm**

**Friday November 14 – Saturday November 15**

This overnight trip will see students travelling 350 km west of Sydney to Inglevale Farm in Eugowra. Inglevale farm is a sheep farm owned by the Norris family. At Inglevale students will learn about Australia’s sheep industry, watch draft horses plough the land, mix with locals from the surrounding farms and eat a meal under the stars. Students will visit the historic Jenolan Caves and learn the gold panning techniques of early prospectors.

**Your Instructor**

Dr. Toby Martin is an historian and musician. Since finishing his PhD at the University of Sydney in 2011 he has pursued a research interest in histories of music, tourism, and the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. He has published several articles and his first monograph —*Yodelling Boundary Riders: Country Music in Australia* — will be published in 2015. Toby was the 2011 'Folk Fellow' at the National Library of Australia where he researched the music of Dougie Young and other Indigenous songwriters from western New South Wales, and formed a band with Young’s grandson to perform these songs. Toby is currently the David Scott Mitchell Fellow at the State Library of NSW where he is researching tourism to Aboriginal communities, 1880s-1950s, and, after many years playing in the rock band Youth Group, he has recently released a solo album called *Love's Shadow*. 