Course Description: The indigenous people of Australia have long been the subject of interest and imagination by outsiders for their cultural formulations of kinship, ritual, art, gender, and politics and they have entered into representations as distinctively "Other"- whether in negative or positive formulations of the "Primitive." These representations -- in feature films about them such as Walkabout and Rabbit Proof Fence, in New Age Literature, or museum exhibitions -- are now also in dialogue with their own forms of cultural production. At the same time, Aboriginal people have struggled to reproduce themselves and their traditions in their own terms, asserting their right to forms of cultural autonomy and self-determination. In this course, we will explore a range of Aboriginal Australian forms of social being, ranging historically and geographically. Through the examination of ethnographic texts, art, novels, autobiographies, film and other media, we will consider the ways in which identity is being challenged and constructed.

Requirements:

Students will be expected to do the assigned readings, and to attend lectures and recitation sections. Required readings include books, to be purchased at the NYU Bookstore, and articles that will be posted electronically on the course Blackboard site for you to download. The written assignments will be 3 short (4-5 page) papers on topics handed out during the semester, a final exam, and a written review of one of the three films that will be scheduled for viewing outside of class time.

For a large lecture class, a certain decorum is necessary. In order to avoid disturbance and distractions, please turn off cellphones and pagers, and you should not get up to leave class to pick up calls or messages! Unless there is a special need, laptop computers should also be turned off. Failure to observe these rules will result in the reduction of grade for participation.

Required Books: (to be purchased at the NYU Bookstore)

Attwood, Bain Rights for Aborigines.
Bell, Diane Daughters of the Dreaming.
Morgan, Sally My Place.
Pilkington, Doris Rabbit-Proof Fence.
Assignments:

**Week 1**
January 18  Introduction: Indigenous People, Settler Society

**Week 2**  Contact: the Power of Representation and the Telling of Stories
January 23
- James Cook: excerpt from *Explorations*, pp. 82-85 (BB)
- Bernard Smith: Chapter 6 from *European Vision and the South Pacific* (BB)
- Deborah Rose: “The Saga of Captain Cook” (BB)

Optional background -- Michel Foucault: “Truth and Power” (BB)

Film: *Babekueria*

**Week 3**  Classical Aboriginal Society: Cosmology, People, and Place
January 30

Optional background -- Clifford Geertz (1974): “From the Native’s Point of View” (BB)

**Week 4**  Classical Aboriginal Society: Myth, Art, Land, and Identity
February 6

Film: *Waiting for Harry* or *One Man’s Response*

**Week 5**  Ethnography and the Problems of Representing People’s Lives
February 13
- Diane Bell: *Daughters of the Dreaming* (1st half)

Film: *Desert People*
Film: *Benny and the Dreamers*
Week 6  Men, Women, and History
February 20
-Diane Bell: Daughters of the Dreaming (complete)
-Elizabeth Povinelli (1993): excerpt from Labor’s Lot. (BB)


Week 7  History: State Policies and Aboriginal Rights
February 27
-Bain Attwood (2004): Rights for Aborigines, pp 1-128
-Diane Barwick (1974): “And the Lubras are Ladies Now”(BB)
-Horner and Langton, “The Day of Mourning” (BB)

Film: excerpt from Strachan and Cavadini, “police time” from Two Laws

Week 8  History: Aboriginal Rights/Civil Rights
March 6
-Bain Attwood (2004): Rights for Aborigines, pp 128-211

Film: Freedom Ride

Spring break

Week 9  History: Land Rights/Self-Determination
March 20
-Bain Attwood (2004): Rights for Aborigines complete

Film: Tent Embassy

Week 10 Identity: Who/What is Aboriginal?
March 27
  (useful website http://www.artistsfootsteps.com/html/Artists_Namatjira.htm)
-Sally Morgan, My Place (begin)

Film: Two Bob Mermaid

Week 11 Whose History? – Identity, Aboriginality, and The Stolen Generations
April 3
-Morgan, My Place (complete)
- Bain Attwood, “‘Learning about the Truth.’” (BB)

**Film: Stolen Generations**

**Week 12**  
**Imaging Indigeneity: Self-Determination**  
April 10  
- Doris Pilkington (1998), *Follow the Rabbit Proof Fence*  

**Film: Rabbit Proof Fence**

**Week 13**  
**Indigenous Media**  
April 17  


**Film: Night Cries**  
**Film: Bush Mechanics**

**Week 14**  
**Indigenous Futures: Indigenizing/Mixing/Circulating**  
April 24  
- Fred Myers (1991): “Representing Culture: The Production of Discourse(s) for Aboriginal Acrylic Paintings” (BB)  
- Tony Fry and Anne Marie Willis (1989): “Aboriginal Art: Symptom or Success?” (BB)  
- Ginsburg and Myers, “A History of Aboriginal Futures” (BB)

May 1  
**Indigeneity**

**FINAL EXAM**