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 challenged and constructed.

Requirements:

Students will be expected to do the assigned readings, and to attend lectures and recitation sections. Additionally, you will be visiting and reviewing an exhibition of Aboriginal art at the Grey Art Gallery, “Icons of the Desert: Early Aboriginal Paintings from Papunya.” 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 4 short (4-5 page) papers on topics handed out during the semester, including one that requires visiting the exhibition. Extra credit can be earned by attendance and writing a short response to one of the program events scheduled around the “Icons” exhibition, some other exhibition or event that has been approved by the instructor.

In order to avoid disturbance and distractions, please turn off cellphones, 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)

Morgan, Sally My Place.
Morphy, Howard Aboriginal Art
Myers, Fred Pintupi Country, Pintupi Self
Pilkington, Doris Rabbit-Proof Fence
An important new resource for this class is the groundbreaking 7-part series, produced for Australian television by Indigenous Producers Rachel Perkins and Daren Dale, *The First Australians*.

The films are available by podcast [http://www.sbs.com.au/firstaustralians/about] and also have a fabulous accompanying website that articulates a timeline and topics of Indigenous Australian history [http://www.programs.sbs.com.au/firstaustralians/content/]

Assignments:

**Week 1**

Sept 8 **Introduction: Indigenous People, Settler Society**
- James Cook: excerpt from *Explorations*, pp. 82-85 (BB)
- Deborah Rose: “The Saga of Captain Cook: Remembrance and Morality.” BB

- Background: *They Have Come to Stay*, episode 1. *First Australians*  

In class film: *Babekueria*

U.S. premiere of three recent documentaries by one of Australia’s most talented filmmakers, *Beck Cole* (Luritja/Warumungu), who will screen and discuss these groundbreaking works: *A Fair Deal for A Dark Race* (2008, 55 min.), which tells the story of the Indigenous struggle for citizenship in Australia, part of the acclaimed 2008 Australian public-television series, *First Australians*; *Lore of Love* (2005, 25 min., camera: Warwick Thornton), in which Urban Indigenous teen Jessie Bartlett takes a journey with her feisty Pintupi grandmothers to their homelands, where they teach her the lore of love—the traditional way; and *Making Samson and Delilah: The Documentary* (2009, 55 min.), which goes behind the scenes with Aboriginal teems Marissa Gibson and Rowan McNamara as they negotiate their lead roles in the feature film *Samson and Delilah* (director: Warwick Thornton), which in 2009 won the prestigious Camera d’Or prize at the Cannes Film Festival. Discussion to follow with Beck Cole, Warwick Thornton (Kayteye), and Faye Ginsburg, Director, Center for Media, Culture and History, NYU.

**Week 2**

Sept. 15 **Cultural Translation, Cultural Knowledge**
- Ian Anderson, “Introduction: the Aboriginal critique of colonial knowing.” (BB)
- Faye Ginsburg, “Native Intelligence: A Short history of debates on Indigenous Media and the Ethnographic.” In Banks and Ruby, eds. A Short History of Visual Anthropology. BB
- WEH Stanner: “Durmugam, a Nangiomeri.” (BB)

optional: Michel Foucault: “Truth and Power” (BB)

Film: Wirriya. Director Beck Cole will show this in class. Tues, Sept 15.

Week 3
Sept 22 Classical Aboriginal Society: Cosmology, People, and Place

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

Week 4
Sept 29 Classical Aboriginal Society: Myth, Land, and Identity
- Myers: Pintupi Country, pp 103-180
- Diane Bell: “Women’s Business is Hard Work” (BB)


Film: One Man’s Response. Director Ian Dunlop.

Week 5
Oct. 6 Culture, Contact, Change, Continuity
- Myers: Pintupi Country: pp. 219-285

Film: Benny and the Dreamers. Director Ivo Burum.


Week 6
Oct. 13 Art: The Circulation and Exhibition of Indigenous Culture
- Morphy: Aboriginal Art, intro plus chapters 1, 3, 4.
- Dussart: “A Body Painting in Translation.” In Banks and Morphy, eds. Rethinking Visual Anthropology. (BB)

Optional Reading: - Morphy: “Seeing Aboriginal Art in the Gallery” (BB)

Visit the Grey Art Gallery

Week 7
Oct. 20
Art: Culture, Survival, Visibility
(a) “Icons of the Desert”: the Significance of Papunya Tula Artists
- Vivien Johnson: “Desert Art.” (BB)

(b) Aboriginalities
- Morphy: Aboriginal Art, chapters 6, 7, 8
- Michael Dodson: “The End in the Beginning: Re(de)fining Aboriginality” (BB)

Week 8
Oct. 27
Identity: Who/What is Aboriginal?
- Ian Anderson: “Black bit, white bit.” (BB)
- Morphy, Aboriginal Art, chapter 9
  (useful website http://www.artistsfootsteps.com/html/Artists_Namatjira.htm)
- Sally Morgan, My Place (begin)

Film: Two Bob Mermaid. Director Darlene Johnson.

Week 9
Nov. 3
Whose History? – Identity, Aboriginality, and The Stolen Generations
- Morgan, My Place (complete)
- Bain Attwood, “Learning about the Truth.” (BB)

Film: Stolen Generations. Director Darlene Johnson.

Week 10
Nov. 10
History: State Policies and Aboriginal Rights -- Victoria
- Diane Barwick (1974): “And the Lubras are Ladies Now”(BB)
- Bruce Pascoe: “How It Started.” In Perkins and Langton, eds. The First Australians. BB
Week 11
Nov. 17  **Imaging Indigeneity: Self-Determination**
-Doris Pilkington (1998), *Follow the Rabbit Proof Fence*


Film: *Rabbit Proof Fence*

Week 12
Nov. 24  **Imaging Indigeneity: Self-Determination** (completion)

Discussion of film and literary representation

Week 13
Dec 1  **Indigenous Media**


Film: *Freedom Ride*
Film: *Bush Mechanics*

Week 14
Dec. 8  **Indigenous Futures: Indigenizing/Mixing/Circulating**
-Ginsburg and Myers, “A History of Aboriginal Futures” (BB)

Film  *Djakhiarr vs. the King*

Week 15
Dec. 15  **Discussion**

FINAL EXAM