Expressive Culture: Film

Class Code  CORE-UA 9750 – 001

Instructor Details  Dr Anne Barnes  anne.barnes@nyu.edu
Consultations by appointment.
Please allow at least 24 hours for your instructor to respond to your emails.

Class Details  Spring 2016

Expressive Culture: Film

Monday 3:00 – 7:00pm (4 hours per week including film screening)
February 1 to May 9
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.

Class Participation: (10%) Assessed throughout the semester.

Sequence Analysis: 4-6 pages (20%) Due in class Week 6.

Critical Paper: 4-6 pages (20%) Due in class Week 11.

Proposal for Final Paper: 2-3 pages (10%) Due in class Week 13.

Final Paper: 10-12 pages (40%) Due in class Week 15.

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 (Week 6) 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 Weeks 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 (Week 11) 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 (Week 13) Students will submit a proposal indicating how they intend to approach their chosen question.
Final Paper (Week 15) Questions for the final papers will be released in Week 11. 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 Range</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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<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<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>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>65-66</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>below 65</td>
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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 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 penalised 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.

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)

• Harris, Lauren, November 2013, Not at a Cinema Near You: Australia’s film distribution problem, Currency House, Australia.
• 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.
• Rosenstone, Robert, History on Film/Film on History. Longman/Pearson, Harlow and Sydney, 2006.

Screening the Past: http://www.screeningthepast.com/
Senses of Cinema: http://sensesofcinema.com/

Week 1  Newsfront – Introducing Australian National Cinema and Film Analysis
Monday 1 February

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

Recommended Reading:

Week 2  *Gallipoli* – Narrative Form, Historical Film and National Myth  
Monday 8 February

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

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

Week 3  *Australia* – Mise-en-Scene and the Historical Epic  
Monday 15 February

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

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:
Week 4  *Balibo* – Cinematography, Historical Reconstruction and Researched detail

Monday 22 February

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

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**

Week 5  *Ned Kelly* – The Biopic and the Ned Kelly Story

Monday 29 February

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)

Week 6  *Shine* – The Biopic, Film Sound and Film Stardom

Monday 7 March

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

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**

**Assignment: Sequence Analysis due (20%)**

**SPRING BREAK: 14 – 20 March (Week 7)**

**Week 8  The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert – Genre and the Australian Road Movie**

**Monday 21 March**

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

**Required Reading:**
• Rama Venkatasawny, Catherine Simpson and Tanja Visosevic, ‘From Sand to Bitumen, From Bushrangers to “Bogans”: Mapping the Australian Road Movie’, *Journal of Australian Studies*, Vol. 25 no. 70 (December 2001), pp. 75–84.

**Recommended Reading:**

**Week 9 Beneath Clouds – Historical Memory, Identity and the Australian Road Movie**

**Friday 1 April (Make-up Class for Easter Monday Holiday)**

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

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**
Assignment: Midterm Participation Grades awarded (5%)

Week 10  *Rabbit Proof Fence* – The Stolen Generations and Film Adaptation

Monday 4 April

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

Required Reading:


Recommended Reading:


Week 11  *The Tracker* – Australian Cinema after Mabo, Traumatic Memory and the Road

Monday 11 April

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

Required Reading:


Recommended Reading:


Assignment: Critical Paper due (20%)

Week 12  *Ten Canoes* – Collaborative Histories and the Archive, Pre- and Post-Colonial Australia

Monday 18 April

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

Required Reading:

**Recommended Reading:**

**Week 13  The Tall Man – Documentary Reconstruction and Contested Pasts**

Friday 29 April (Make-up Class for ANZAC Day Holiday)

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

**Required Reading:**

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

**Week 14  Mrs. Carey’s Concert – Observational Documentary and Narration**

Monday 2 May

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

**Required Reading:**

**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.

**Week 15  Wake in Fright – Restoring a Cinema Classic and the Death of Cinema**

Monday 9 May
Film: *Wake in Fright* (Ted Kotcheff, Australia/USA, 1971, 114 min)

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**

**Assignment: Final Paper due (40%)**

**Your Instructor**

Dr Anne Barnes (Ph.D., University of New South Wales, M.A. 1st Class Hons., Australian Film Television and Radio School) has worked in both the New Zealand and Australian film industries as a sound professional and has taught film and media studies at the University of New South Wales. Her research interests in the field of film studies include film sound, history and film, Australian cinema, global and national cinemas, transcultural cinema, genre, spectatorship, memory and trauma. She is interested in practice led research, multi-disciplinary collaborations, cross-platform initiatives and new media. Anne has been nominated and has won awards for both location and post-production sound including an AFI nomination for *Walking on Water* (Ayres, 2002) and two Australian Screen Sound Awards for *The Quiet American* (Noyce, 2002). She is the director of Sonic Reflections, a documentary that outlines the director/sound designer relationship and is currently completing articles, and working on a book that investigates the role of sound as a key site for locating diaspora, memory trauma and loss in Australian transcultural cinema.