Cultures and Contexts: Indigenous Australia
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CORE-UA 536     Fall 2018
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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. Required readings include books, to be purchased at the NYU Bookstore, and articles that are posted electronically on the course NYU Classes site for you to download. The written assignments will be 4 short (4-5 page) papers on topics handed out during the semester. These are worth 20% of the grade each. 20 % will be derived from 10% for section participation and 10% for a review/analysis of a film to be assigned during the semester.

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. (available in various formats in CLASSES)
Morphy, Howard Aboriginal Art (available in PDF in CLASSES)
Myers, Fred Pintupi Country, Pintupi Self
Pilkington, Doris. Follow the Rabbit Proof Fence. (available in PDF in CLASSES)
An important 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 in Australia by podcast, at Avery Fisher Media Center in Bobst Library, and I have posted them on NYU Classes. They also have a fabulous accompanying website that articulates a timeline and topics of Indigenous Australian history [http://www.programs.sbs.com.au/firstaustralians/content/](http://www.programs.sbs.com.au/firstaustralians/content/)

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Academic accommodations are available to any student with a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, learning disability, or is deaf or hard of hearing. Students should please register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980.

NYU's Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities
726 Broadway, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10003-6675
Telephone: 212-998-4980
Voice/TTY Fax: 212-995-4114
Web site: [www.nyu.edu/csd](http://www.nyu.edu/csd)

Assignments:

**Week 1 -- September 4**

*Introduction: Indigenous People, Settler Society*
- James Cook: excerpt from *Explorations*, pp. 82-85 (CLASSES)
- *They Have Come to Stay*, episode 1. *First Australians* (CLASSES)
  
  In class film: *Babekueria*

**Optional:** - Bernard Smith, excerpts from *European Vision and the South Pacific*. (CLASSES)

**Week 2 -- September 11**

*Cultural Translation, Cultural Knowledge*
- WEH Stanner: “Durmuugam, a Nangiomeri.” (In Casagrande, *In the Company of Man*: 63-100. (CLASSES)
- B. Malinowski, (1922), Introduction, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. (CLASSES)

Week 3 – September 18

**Classical Aboriginal Society: Cosmology, People, and Place**

Week 4 – September 25

**Classical Aboriginal Society: Myth, Land, and Identity**
- Myers: *Pintupi Country*, pp 103-180
- Diane Bell: “Women’s Business is Hard Work” (*Signs* 7: 314-337)

Week 5 – October 2

**Culture, Contact, Change, Continuity**
- Myers: *Pintupi Country*: pp. 219-285

Film: *Remembering Yayayi*. Dirs: Deveson, Dunlop, Myers

Week 6 – October 9

Legislative Day – No Class on Tuesday

**History and Settlement/Invasion: Aboriginal Perspectives**
- Attwood, Bain. “My father’s country.” Chapter 1, *Rights for Aborigines*. (CLASSES)

Background: *Freedom for our lifetime.* Episode 3 *First Australians*. (CLASSES)

Week 7 – October 16

**History: State Policies and Aboriginal Rights**

Film: *Freedom Ride* or *Tent Embassy*

Background: *There is No Other Law.* Episode 4 *First Australians*. (CLASSES)

Week 8 – October 23

**Art: The Circulation and Exhibition of Indigenous Culture**
- Morphy: *Aboriginal Art*, intro plus chapters 1, 3, 4.

Optional Reading: -Morphy: “Seeing Aboriginal Art in the Gallery” (CLASSES)
Week 9 – October 30

*Art: Culture, Survival, Visibility*
- Morphy: *Aboriginal Art*, chapters 6, 7, 8
- Aileen Moreton Robinson: “Whiteness, epistemology and indigenous representation.” In *Whitening Race*.

Week 10 – November 6

*Identity: Who/What is Aboriginal?*
- Morphy, *Aboriginal Art*, chapter 9
- Sally Morgan, *My Place* (begin)


Film: *Two Bob Mermaid*. Director Darlene Johnson.

Week 11 – November 13

*Whose History? – Identity, Aboriginality, and The Stolen Generations*
- Morgan, *My Place* (complete)

Film: *Stolen Generations*. Director Darlene Johnson.

Week 12 -- November 20  November 22 - Thanksgiving

*Imaging Indigeneity: Self-Determination*
- Doris Pilkington (1998), *Follow the Rabbit Proof Fence* (CLASSES)

Film: *Rabbit Proof Fence*

Week 13 – November 27

*Imaging Indigeneity: Self-Determination* (completion)
- Doris Pilkington (1998) *Follow the Rabbit Proof Fence* (CLASSES)

Week 14 – December 4

*Indigenous Futures: Indigenizing/Mixing/Circulating*
- Ginsburg and Myers, “A History of Aboriginal Futures” 2006 (CLASSES)
Film *Djakhier vs. the King*

**Week 15 – December 11**
TBD