

# Boston University Sydney Internship Program

## **FT 345: Australian Cinema**

### **Course Outline**

Please ensure that you have completed each of the readings prior to class. We will also have an excursion to see a recent Australian film at the movies.

<u>Assessment:</u>	Attendance and participation	5%
	Exam 1 [take home]	30%
	Major Essay [prior to exam]	40%
	Exam 2 [closed book]	25%

Please note that attendance is **compulsory**. If you must be absent from class please let us know in advance. Absence from class and unpunctuality will be reflected in attendance mark.

### Week One

Lecture: Overview of the early industry. Urban and outback themes; landscape and national identity; the argument for a local industry; culture and commerce; indigenous culture.

Films may include: *Celluloid Heroes* Part One (documentary)

*Walkabout*, (1971) dir. Nicholas Roeg; 95 mins

*Kiss or Kill*, (1999) dir. Bill Bennett; 90 mins

Reading: Ina Bertrand and William D. Routt, 'The big bad combine: some aspects of national aspirations and international constraints in the Australian cinema, 1896-1929', in *The Australian Screen*, Penguin, 1989.

Ross Gibson, 'The Nature of a Nation', in *South of the West*, Indiana University Press, 1992.

Andrew Pike, 'The past: boom and bust', in *The New Australian Cinema*, Cinema papers Pty Ltd, 1980.

## Week Two

Lecture: The Renaissance; Early Ocker Movies; the beginning of the 'New Wave'; Australian comedy

Films: *The Adventures of Barry Mckenzie* (1972), dir. Bruce Beresford, 114 mins

*Don's Party* (1976) dir. Bruce Beresford, 90 mins.

*The Castle*, (1997), dir. Rob Sitch. 82 mins

*Muriel's Wedding* (1994), dir. PJ Hogan, 106 mins

Reading: Tom O'Regan, 'Cinema Oz: The Ocker Films', in *The Australian Screen*, Penguin, 1989.

Megan Morris, 'Personal relationships and sexuality', in *The New Australian Cinema*, Cinema papers Pty Ltd, 1980.

## Week Three Mon

Lecture: revenge of the arthouse; Historical revisionism and the question of national mythology; quality mainstream; masculinity and femininity in Australian cinema.

Films: *My Brilliant Career* (1979) dir. Gillian Armstrong; 100 mins.

*Gallipoli*, (1981) dir Peter Weir; 110 mins

*The Piano*, (1993) dir. Jane Campion. 121 mins

*Ned Kelly*, (2003) dir. Gregor Jordan,

Susan Dermody and Elizabeth Jacka, 'The Aesthetic Force-Field', in *The Imaginary Industry*, AFTRS Publications, 1988.

Graem Turner, 'Art directing history: the period film', in *The Australian Screen*, Penguin, 1989.

Peter Weir, 'The director's voice', in *Third Take, Australian Film-makers Talk*, Allen and Unwin, 2002.

Felicity Collins, "The artist as a young woman", *The Moving Image*, Number 6, 1999.

## Week Four

Lecture: Alternative Directions; impure genres, and quirky combos

Films: *Mad Max 2* (1981) dir. George Miller, 94 mins.

*Love and Other Catastrophes* (1997) dir Emma-Kate Croghan

*One Night the Moon*, (2001), dir Rachel Perkins,, 57 mins

*Looking for Alibrandi* (2000) dir. Kate Woods

Felicity Collins and Therese Davis, 'Escaping history and shame in *Looking for Alibrandi*, *Head On* and *Beneath Clouds*', in *Australian Cinema After Mabo*, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Reading: Barret Hodsdon, 'The concept and practice of film culture', in *Straight Roads and Crossed Lines*, Bernt Porridge Group, 2001.

Adrian Martin, 'Mad Max 2', in *The Mad Max Movies*, Sydney: Currency Press, 2003, pp. 34-61.

Jon Stratton, 'What made *Mad Max* popular?', *Art and Text* 9, 1983.

#### Week Five

Films may include: *Lantana* (2001) dir. Ray Lawrence, 121 mins.

*Moulin Rouge*, (2001) dir. Baz Luhrmann, 124 min

Felicity Collins and Therese Davis, 'Home and abroad in *Moulin Rouge*, *The Dish* and *Lantana*', in *Australian Cinema After Mabo*, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

#### Week Six

Lecture: Home and abroad; the 1990s and the internationalisation of the industry

Films: *The Dish* (2000) dir. Rob Sitch, 101 mins.

*Beneath Clouds* (2002) dir. Ivan Sen, 90 mins.

Christos Tsiolkas, 'Bad Australian Cinema, or how watching *One Perfect Day* made me want to make a bomb', *Senses of Cinema*, April 2004.

Peter Sainsbury, 'Visions, illusions and delusions: part II', *Realtime*, January 2004.

#### Week Seven

Lecture: Revision and final round up on the future and likely directions of the Australian cinema.

Films: Cinema excursion to see first-release Australian film

## Assessment Criteria

**Essay marks** will be determined according to how your written work meets the following criteria:

1. Proper punctuation, grammar and sentence structure is essential.
2. Proper referencing procedure in footnotes and bibliography. In other words, the formatting of your footnotes and bibliography must conform to a style recognised in a style manual.
3. Originality and rigour of argument. All claims and interpretations must be supported with detailed argument. This means providing empirical evidence from the films, key historical facts and a lucid presentation of material. Please avoid presenting unsubstantiated opinion or value judgements lacking cogent argument. Avoid at all costs falling into a journalistic mode of writing.
4. Care in matters of spelling and factual information concerning dates, names and titles.
5. Essays and assignments must reflect that the student has undertaken research and read widely on the topic.
6. Essays and assignments must reflect an engagement with issues and ideas discussed in class and in the readings contained in your study kit.
7. A concerted effort to come to terms with film as a unique and specific medium. In other words, you must make an effort to come to terms with the formal as well as the thematic qualities of the films that you choose to write about. A film is not a book. Your essays and assignments must highlight this.
8. All written work must be typed and double spaced. Do not use a font size that is difficult to read. Font sizes below 12 point are unacceptable for essays.

Essays and assignments that do not meet **each** of these criteria will be marked down. **Please note: students found guilty of plagiarism will automatically fail the course.**

**Attendance and Participation** marks will be based upon how well you meet the following criteria:

1. attendance in each class
2. punctuality
3. quality of contribution. Quality of contribution refers to your willingness to contribute to discussion in class and the quality of your contribution. In other words, your remarks must reflect a critical engagement with the films and the readings.

Please note: it is expected that all students complete the readings set down for each week.

The **Examinations** will be based upon material presented in the lectures and the weekly readings.

Students are expected to have read and understood the assessment criteria. If you are unable to meet these criteria, please inform the course convenor as soon as possible.

### **Some Useful Websites to Get You Started**

Please make sure that you acknowledge all sources, and do not cut and copy material found on the web into your work. This is plagiarism, and you can fail the entire subject if you are caught doing this. If you are in any doubt, please check with the professor.

**The Australian Film Commission** <http://www.afc.gov.au/>

especially their Get the Picture documents for fast facts and figures, accessible here:

<http://www.afc.gov.au/gtp/>

### **ScreenSound National Film and Sound Archive**

<http://www.screensound.gov.au/screensound/screenso.nsf>

**Australian Centre for the Moving Image [ACMI]** <http://www.acmi.net.au>

**Metro Magazine** <http://www.metromagazine.com.au/metro/default.asp>

**Screening the Past** <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/screeningthepast/>

### **The Australian Film Database**

<http://wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/film/dbase/index.html>

**Inside Film Magazine** <http://www.if.com.au/>

**Internet Movie Data Base** <http://www.imdb.com>

## **Sample Essay Questions**

**Length: 1500 words**

Important: Please write the selected essay question at the top of your essay. Before attempting your essay make sure that you have understood the Assessment Criteria presented in the Course Matter package.

1. Apply the themes of *Walkabout* to at least two films screened in this course. Your answer should also take into account Ross Gibson's accompanying article on landscape.
2. *Master and Commander* and *Gallipoli* are both directed by Peter Weir. Compare these films, in both theme and style, in relation to the state of the Australian film at the times when they were made. Consider the differences between a film made by an Australian director in Hollywood, and in their own country.
3. 'Australia has to make a fundamental choice between a commercially oriented film industry and one that has national and artistic integrity'. Discuss.