

## EN383 Australian Literature – From Page to Screen

### Fall 22 Syllabus

**Instructor Name:** Jimmy Thomson

**Office Location:** BU Sydney Campus

**Contact Information :** mail@jimmythomson.com

**Office Hours:** 10 minutes prior to or following class times.

Meetings can be arranged via email outside these hours.

**Course Dates:** 22 August – 7 October (Teaching Session 1);

**Course Time & Location:** BUSAC Classroom 1

**Mondays:** 9.30-1.30 (Except Sep 12 Field Trip and Oct 3 Labour Day Holiday)

**Tuesdays** 9.30 am – 11.30 am

**Final Exam:** Friday Oct 7. 1pm - 3pm

**Field Trip:** There is a field trip to Canberra on Sep 12.

**Course Credits:** 4 BU credits; 3 BU Hub units

#### Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the literature of Australia through an eclectic collection of texts, and diverse forms and genres of writing, including the adaptation from page to screen. A critical exploration of these texts will be undertaken in terms of Australia's cultural formation/ evolution. Aspects and contexts of history, geographical location, urban and rural landscape, climate, and people will inform this exploration.

Critical material will be introduced to discussions and examples of this material are posted on blackboard learn. Where appropriate, videotaped footage will also be used and discussed as another form of critical appraisal of a text. The page to screen component of this course will use existing written texts and consider the ways in which they are adapted to become film/screen texts. The adaptation process is explored through first-hand experience as every student adapts a prose text to a screenplay.

### **EN383 Course Objectives:**

This course has a strong focus on students honing skills in critical reading, researching, and writing of texts across a variety of text-types, forms/genres, modes, styles, and media in order to understand a world beyond their own, and to decipher and create meanings still relevant to contemporary life.

Analytical interpretation, original insights, artistic appreciation, and raised awareness of the socio-historic, economic, and cultural context of award winning Australian literary texts and their global positioning, are expected course objectives. A major philosophical belief informing this course is the living landscape of literature; field trips to the actual settings of some texts serve to reinforce plausibility and the suspension of disbelief, and illustrate how fiction and fact often inform each other.

Beginning from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and crossing into the 21<sup>st</sup> century a selection of Australian prose fiction, poetry, stage drama, and screen adaptation will be included for exploration. Additional to these hallmark areas of study, each student will adapt scenes from a prescribed prose fiction short story they have read in class into a screenplay.

A demonstration of each student's skills: of analysis leading to original insights; of critical thinking; of use of language and literary terminology; and of research, will be displayed through a class presentation (accompanied by a short annotated bibliography), as well as a long written formal essay on a major text or texts, and a written examination, the latter of which presupposes knowledge of all set readings of the course.

These objectives satisfy various of the larger Study Abroad Program and specific Sydney Internship Program outcomes under which this course operates; please see below the outcomes for these programs. The course is approved by the Department of English, College of Arts and Sciences at BU. **EN383 satisfies** both requirements of English Majors and Minors.

### **Question-driven Course Description:**

Students will employ a variety of strategies in answering all the following questions. These include: attending lectures, classroom discussions, undertaking ungraded collaborative exercises in class, considering socio-historical and economic contexts, and presenting and writing analytical commentary on texts based on reading and researching; as well as undertaking a creative transfer from a required prose-fiction story to an original scripted screen adaptation of same. The areas of exploration include:

- Why do Australians write literature and how do we adapt our literary texts to film?

- How is Australian Identity expressed through our poetry, drama, prose fiction and literary screen adaptations?
- Do our stories of identity change against differing socio-historic, economic and political influences, and time periods?
- What role does historian Geoffrey Blainey's "tyranny of distance" play in forging our identity?
- Do changes in our stories align to shifting dominant landscapes (bush/city/coast/beach)?
- Are these settings of our stories both literal and psychological?
- How does the evolving role of the Australian family (as social regulator), in all its models, inform both the microcosm of personal identity and the macrocosm of national identity?

### **Hub Learning Outcomes**

**BU Hub Units: 3** This course has been accredited with these units and students can transfer them.

#### **1. Capacity: Philosophical, Aesthetic, and Historical Interpretation.**

**Area: Aesthetic Exploration – one unit**

#### **2. Capacity: Communication**

**Area: Writing Intensive – one unit** (only available to students who meet the prerequisite requirement)

#### **3. Capacity: Intellectual Toolbox**

**Area: Creativity/Innovation – one unit**

### **Program Learning Outcomes**

#### **Study Abroad Sydney Program Outcome:**

The student will "demonstrate knowledge of Australian culture and society with respect to a combination of the following areas: Australian politics, industry, science and technology, economics, social policy, environmental policy, literature and the arts, film, marketing, advertising, and mass media".

#### **Instructional Format, Course Pedagogy, and Approach to Learning**

EN383 has a minimum of **40 hours of classroom lectures and seminars** and one compulsory field trip where students are challenged to find elements of a written work and its screen adaptation in urban and rural landscapes.

These stimulate interest and present a less formal environment for learning whilst simultaneously promoting the plausibility of the text within the surrounds of its setting.

Classes at the BUSAC run in basically 2-hour time slots according to the schedule. The course is delivered through lectures from the professor, in-class interactive discussions with students, and seminar presentations by individual students. However, to promote confidence and establish a non-judgmental classroom environment, many group discussions and activities are not individually graded. That said, participation will form part of each student's contribution mark.

These ungraded elements may include in-class activities such as team screenplay writing; cast readings of drama scenes; team quiz on a play; team crossword project as a reading reinforcement tool, and online interaction via the Blackboard Learn Discussion platform.

All ungraded projects are intended to stimulate further discussion and in the case of the crossword introduce an element of 'the game' as a learning tool. Classroom ungraded exercises all receive feedback from the professor and will subsequently have prepared students for like graded assessments to follow. The professor also leads by example: in the case of the translation of prose fiction to the screen, there is a template to follow: this lead-by-example concept is central to the instructional format for this course.

There is also a guest speaker session wherein students meet a professional author or screenwriter of some considerable standing. There will be a question and answer period at the end of this session, and previous guest speakers rate very highly with students on evaluations.

**Format:**

Discussions will suggest specific readings of texts - as well as providing the historical, geographical, social and environmental background to these texts – but students should not feel constrained to only read the suggested texts. Students will be encouraged to explore other meanings and to develop their own textually based and research-based analytical and evaluative skills. Students will be expected to contribute to all seminar discussions and therefore will need to prepare for each class by completing the reading/viewing designated in the following schedule, and by allowing all possible time for the consideration of issues raised in preparatory material provided in advance.

## Final Grades

All Grades out of 100 Points			
Grade	Max	Avg	Min
F	59.4	50	0.0
D	69.4	65	59.5
C-	72.4	72	69.5
C	76.4	75	72.5
C+	79.4	78	76.5
B-	82.4	82	79.5
B	86.4	85	82.5
B+	89.4	88	86.5
A-	93.4	92	89.5
A	100	96	93.5

## Books and Other Course Materials

### ESSENTIAL TEXTS

**Lawson, Henry**, in Stone, Walter (ed). *The World of Henry Lawson*. Paul Hamlyn: Sydney. 1974. "The Drover's Wife" (On Blackboard Learn)

**Purcell, Leah** (dir. wri.) (2021) "The Drover's Wife" (Film adaptation). Memento Films.

**Prichard, Katherine Susannah. (1927)** "The Cooboo" in *Collected Stories* (1967) Sydney: Angus and Robertson, (On Blackboard Learn)

**Andrew Barton "The Banjo" Paterson.** (1890): "Clancy of the Overflow", "The Man from Snowy River" (1890). (On Blackboard Learn)

**Miller, George T.** (dir.), (1982) *The Man From Snowy River* (film adaptation) 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox.

**Franklin, Miles.** (Edn. 1994) *My Brilliant Career*, Sydney: Angus & Robertson. (Excerpt: up to and including Chapter 13).

**Armstrong, Gillian.** (dir.) (1979) *My Brilliant Career* film; written by Eleanor Whitcombe, produced by Margaret Fink, NSW Film Corporation.

**Garimara, Doris Pilkington.** *Follow the Rabbit-Proof Fence*. Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1996.

**Noyce, Philip** (dir.) (2002) *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (film adaptation), Showtime Films

**Elliott, Sumner Locke.** *Careful, He Might Hear You.* Sydney: Pan Books, 1997.

**Schultz, Carl** (dir.) (1983) *Careful, He Might Hear You* (film adaptation) Writer: Michael Jenkins. Syme International Productions.

**Winton, Tim.** *Cloudstreet.* Melbourne: McPhee Gribble, 1991

**Winton, Tim & Fontana, Ellen** (cr.) (2011) *Cloudstreet* (TV SERIES – ep. 1) Showcase

**Lawrence, Ray.** (dir.) (2001) *Lantana* based on the play *Speaking in Tongues* by Andrew Bovell (1996), Screen writer: Andrew Bovell, Jan Chapman Productions, Sydney, Australia.

**Bovell, Andrew.** *Speaking in Tongues* (1996), this edn. 2010 by Nick Hern Books (London, UK).

**Temple, Peter.** (2010) *The Broken Shore.* Melbourne: Text Publishing

**Woods, Rowan.** (dir) (2013) *The Broken Shore* TV Movie. Writers: Andrew Knight, Peter Temple. Essential Productions/Easy Tiger Productions.

### **RECOMMENDED READING**

**Clarke, Sharon.** (2019). “Sumner Locke Elliott” (on Blackboard – Essential Reading)

**Thomson, Jimmy.** (2019) “Movie Synopsis – The Man From Snowy River” (on Blackboard – Essential Reading)

**Thomson, Jimmy.** (2019) “An Introduction to Adaptations” (on Blackboard – Essential Reading)

**Thomson, Jimmy** (2022). “How to Write Better Term Papers and Essays” (On Blackboard – Essential Reading.)

Please consult Blackboard Learn and the BU and Sydney Libraries for other secondary sources. These should inform your written work and seminar presentation. This is especially true of:

**Harwood, Ronald.** (2007) *Adaptations: From Other Works Into Films,* Guerilla Books, London.

### **Courseware**

[www.bu.edu/learn/EN383](http://www.bu.edu/learn/EN383)

This is an active online link to all materials including course outline, criteria sheets, due dates of assignments, secondary sources, online links, and announcements. There are also required viewing texts, and discussion platform responses on bbl which are required for the course.

## Assignments and Grading

### *Assessment Weighting and due date*

Assessment	Due Date	Weighting
Seminar Presentation/Annotated Bibliography	In class, or on field trip as indicated	25%
Screenplay adaptation	Friday 9 September 4pm through the library <b>and electronically</b> to coordinator	20%
Seminar Discussion Contribution, Attendance	Ongoing Power point version (or equivalent) including annotated bibliography to be emailed to both coordinators	5%
<b>Optional</b> one-page Term Paper proposal	Mon 19 September electronically	Ungraded
Term Paper	Tuesday October 4 by 8pm to library <b>and electronically</b> to coordinator	30%
Exam	Friday 7 October, 1pm	20%

### **ASSESSMENT DESCRIPTIONS**

To complete the 'Assessment' component of the requirements for this course, it is necessary to perform the following tasks:

#### **1) Seminar Presentation/ Annotated Bibliography (25%).**

**NB: No more than one internet source is acceptable for this assignment. (Wikipedia is not acceptable although the original texts referenced there may be)**

Based on a topic chosen from the list marked "Seminar Presentation Topics" in Appendices, this presentation will be carried out during relevant classes as indicated in the course schedule.

Each student is expected to deliver a seminar presentation, which will be a minimum of 10-minutes and a maximum of 15-minutes in duration, excluding a 5-minute period of fielding questions from the class/professor and generating discussion. It is the responsibility of each student to maintain these time limits. Failure to do so will impact on the grade.

The presentation should include a short, 3 item (secondary sources) annotated bibliography. An electronic text-only version of the presentation, preferably in MS Word, including the annotated bibliography, should be emailed to both professors prior to the presentation.

A **Criteria Sheet** for this presentation/annotated bibliography is also published separately in the document marked "Appendices".

**2) Page to Screen adaptation (weighting 20%)** Working from knowledge gleaned in class during a non-graded team collaborative writing of a similar screen adaptation, write a screenplay adaptation of an assigned story set by the coordinator. The adaptation should be 12-16 pages in length and must be presented in the screenwriting format provided in Blackboard – Study assets. Harwood's textbook *Adaptations* (Guerilla Books: London 2007) should inform your approach to this assignment.

A **Criteria Sheet** for the writing of the screenplay is published separately and available in "Appendices" and should be followed closely.

### **3) Seminar Discussion Contribution, Attendance (5%)**

There will be joint writing exercises (in prep for assessment event) and a discussion of each text and/or screen adaptation, which may be guided by the topic list and must be contributed to by all students at each session scheduled. This will necessitate a reading of the text/s (and a viewing of the film) and a processing of some ideas, analytical and descriptive, of how each text makes meaning/s.

### **4) A 2,000-2,250-word term paper (30%)**

The term paper should address a chosen topic from the list marked "Term Paper Topics". As the major piece of 'considered' writing for this course, this is a **researched paper**, which should follow the rules and practices of a formal essay. A Criteria Sheet for this essay is published separately in "Appendices".

Students are also encouraged to submit an optional one-page-only ungraded proposal earlier by email for discussion with and feedback from the course coordinator. This would be done up to one week prior to the submission date of the term paper. (See assessment schedule)

This proposal exercise is entirely optional and is purely for the guidance of students with regard to the content and structure of their proposed term paper. Neither seeking guidance nor choosing not to do so will have any bearing on the marking of the term paper.

### **5) A two-hour examination (20% of overall grade)**

Details of this examination are published separately.



## **Resources/Support/How to Succeed in This Course:**

There is the opportunity of students meeting professors face-to-face either ahead of or following class times; students can also make contact for longer meeting times via email or submit questions via email.

The most effective way to succeed in this course is to keep reading along the time line of required readings.

Being prepared for each scheduled class will mean students gain more from lectures and interactive class discussions. Failure to prepare properly for the lectures, for instance, by not reading prescribed texts, will become evident in the classroom discussions. The course coordinator will make himself available to clarify any issues before or after classes, as need be.

Time management is crucial to such success, as is an open and enquiring mind. There is also ample material on the BU learn site for students to expand their contextual knowledge of set texts and the BU Sydney library has books and visual material for research.

When writing or presenting, it is crucial that students are guided by the Grading Criteria Sheets provided in "Appendices" as a means to successful navigation of requirements.

Professors are notified of students with documented disabilities or special needs ahead of first classes and will offer assistance to these students in line with BU policy, which is also BU Sydney policy.

## **COMMUNITY OF LEARNING: CLASS AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

**Course members' responsibility** for ensuring a positive learning environment (e.g., participation/ discussion guidelines).

It is the responsibility of both the professor and all student members of the class to ensure a positive learning environment. It is thus understood that any member of the class who demonstrates behavior which undermines this positive learning environment will: firstly, be questioned and counseled regarding this behavior, seeking a satisfactory outcome; secondly, upon further recurrence, be brought into the delivery of the class material in an effort to involve them more; lastly, in light of the behavior continuing, the student will be expelled from the learning space for the rest of that day's class, and a grade deduction will be implemented as for "missing class without verifiable extraordinary reasons". (There is no precedent for this behavioral model thus far on our programs.)

## **COURSE MATTERS**

### **Attendance at all classes is mandatory.**

Any absence for medical reasons or other misadventure must be supported by a medical certificate or a letter offering a satisfactory explanation. Strict penalties apply, on a pro rata

basis, for any unapproved absence. Missing one class without reason would attract as much as a 10% penalty.

### **Statement on Plagiarism**

All students are responsible for having read the Boston University statement on plagiarism, which is available in the Academic Conduct Code. Students are advised that the penalty against students on a Boston University program for cheating on examinations or for plagiarism may be "... expulsion from the program or the University or such other penalty as may be recommended by the Committee on Student Academic Conduct, subject to approval by the Dean".

### **Late Work**

In general, there will be no extensions granted for any coursework. The exception is where there are clear and acceptable reasons for late submission. In this case a written statement outlining any serious illness or misadventure together with supporting documentation (e.g. medical certificates) must be provided or a strict penalty of 5% per day will apply.

### **Outline of Class Meetings: Date, Topic, Readings Due, Assignments Due**

#### **CLASS SCHEDULE**

Although the following schedule is intended to be final, it may, from time to time, be necessary to alter it. Should changes be needed, students will be given adequate time to accommodate them.

**Any student missing class without verifiable extraordinary reasons will be penalized through grade deduction (implemented by the Program's Academic Director) in fairness to those who do attend. This includes any guest speaker sessions, supervised screenings and field trips.**

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	<b>Class content</b>	<b>Student Reading (before Class) and Assignments</b>
<b>WEEK 1</b> <b>Mon Aug 22 Part 1</b> <b>(9.30-11.15)</b>	<p><b>Course Introduction</b> (See Study Notes, below, for details)            Theme of identity – why we write? Contextual Information. Themes and recurring characters/images in Australian Literature and film adaptations. Identity: personal, family and national. Autobiography and the Bildungsroman. Oral and written traditions and screen adaptations Images and iconography of the Australian rural and urban landscapes. The evolution of the male and female protagonist; the emergence of first nations characters in literature and film. The Tyranny of Distance – Role of the male and female protagonist. Treatment of First Nations figures. The role of family.</p> <p><b>General introduction to texts</b>            The Drover’s Wife; Man from Snowy River; The Cooboo; My Brilliant Career; Careful He Might Hear You; Rabbit-Proof Fence, Cloudstreet, Speaking in Tongues (Lantana), The Broken Shore</p>	<p><b>Blackboard Learn materials:</b> Course Outline, Appendices</p> <p><b>Paterson:</b> <i>The Man From Snowy River</i></p> <p><b>Henry Lawson:</b> <i>The Drover’s Wife</i></p> <p><b>Katharine Susannah Prichard:</b> “The Cooboo”.</p> <p><i>Read The Broken Shore by final week of course. This novel will be the basis of a mandatory exam question</i></p>
<b>Part 2 (11.30am-1.30)</b>	<p><b>WATCH</b> The Drover’s Wife MOVIE (1hr 49)</p>	<p><b>Choose a presentation topic</b></p>
<b>Tuesday Aug 23 (9.30-11.30)</b>	<p><b>DISCUSS</b> <i>The Drover’s Wife</i> short story. Why has this story endured – how has it evolved? “The Cooboo” – sympathetic or otherwise portrayal of First Nations people?</p> <p><b>WATCH:</b> <i>The Man from Snowy River</i> (the ride). Discuss and compare the brief but dynamic narrative poem and its depiction on screen with the “romantic Western” story as outlined in the “Movie Synopsis” document in Blackboard content for Week 1.</p>	<p><b>Read first 12 chapters of My Brilliant Career by next week</b></p>
<b>WEEK 2</b> <b>Mon Aug 29 Part 1</b> <b>(9.30-11.10)</b>	<p><b>WATCH:</b> <i>My Brilliant Career</i> (1hr.35)</p>	
<b>Part 2 (11.30am-1.30)</b>	<p><b>DISCUSS</b> <i>My Brilliant Career</i> book and movie</p> <p><b>Student presentation 1</b></p>	

	<b>Class content</b>	<b>Student Reading (before Class) and Assignments</b>
Tuesday Aug 30 (9.30-11.30)	<b>ADAPTATION</b> – How it's done, the options, the assignment  <b>Student Presentation 2</b>	<b>Assignment – Adapt selected text (Submit by Friday, Sep 9)</b>  Read "Follow the Rabbit-Proof Fence"
<b>WEEK 3 - Mon Sep 5</b> Part 1 (9.30-11.30)	<b>WATCH</b> <i>Rabbit-Proof Fence</i>	
Part 2 (12pm-1.30)	<b>DISCUSS:</b> The themes in both versions of <i>Rabbit-Proof Fence</i> and similarities with concepts present in other texts.  <b>Student Presentation 3</b>	
Tuesday Sep 6 (9.30-11.30)	<b>GUEST SPEAKER 1 (TBA)</b>	
<b>Friday, Sep 9</b>	<b>Submit adaptation exercise (by 6pm)</b>	
<b>WEEK 4</b> Monday Sep 12	<b>FIELD TRIP</b>	
Tuesday Sep 13	<b>WATCH:</b> <i>Careful He Might Hear You</i> (supervised)	Start reading <i>Careful He Might Hear You</i>
<b>WEEK 5 - Monday Sep 19</b> Part 1 (9.30-11.30)	<b>DISCUSS</b> and compare adaptation of <i>Careful He Might Hear You</i> (with Dr Sharon Clarke)	<b>Submit optional essay plan for discussion and consideration</b>
Part 2 (12.00pm-1.30pm)	<b>WATCH:</b> Episode 1 of <i>Cloudstreet</i> <b>Student Presentation 4 &amp; 5</b>	Have read selected parts of <i>Cloudstreet</i> .
Tuesday Sep 20 (9.30-11.30)	<b>DISCUSS</b> adaptation of <i>Cloudstreet</i> in terms of family, place and society  <b>Student Presentation 6</b>	Read <i>Speaking In Tongues</i>
<b>Friday, Sep 22</b>	<b>RETURN (BYJT) OF ADAPTATION EXERCISES VIA LIBRARY</b>	
<b>WEEK 6</b> Monday Sep 26 Part 1 (9.30-11.00)	<b>WATCH:</b> <i>Lantana</i>	<b>ALSO WATCH</b> Broken Shore (in library or online)  <b>Complete reading of Broken Shore</b>

	<b>Class content</b>	<b>Student Reading (before Class) and Assignments</b>
<b>Part 2 (11.30am-1.30)</b>	<p><b>READ (ALOUD)</b> Selections from <i>Speaking in Tongues</i></p> <p><b>DISCUSS:</b> Differences and similarities between play and film, evolution of male and female characters from earlier prose</p> <p><b>Student Presentation 7</b></p>	
<b>Tuesday Sep 27 (9.30-11.30)</b>	<b>DISCUSS</b> <i>The Broken Shore</i> themes – male protagonist, female antagonist, treatment of First Nations people, presentation of urban/rural Australia. The myth of a classless society.	
<b>WEEK 7 - Monday Oct 3</b>	<b>LABOR DAY HOLIDAY – NO CLASSES</b>	
<b>Tuesday Oct 4 (9.30-11.30)</b>	Wrap up and prep for Exam including test crossword	<b>Deliver final essay to Library by 8pm</b>
<b>Friday Oct 7</b>	<b>EN 383 EXAM – 1pm start</b>	

# NOTES