

FILM/MEDIA 402

FILM, CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Trimester 1 2009
(Monday 2 March – Friday 5 June 2009)

30 Points

STAFF

Course Coordinators:

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CLASS TIMES AND ROOMS

Seminar

Monday 10am-12pm 42KP 101

Screenings/Seminar

Thursday 1.10-5pm 42KP 101

COURSE CONTENT

This course will explore the relationships between cinema and the city. We will examine the figure of the flâneur and the ways in which the city is documented on film in order to establish the relationships between modernity, movement, urban space and visual culture. We will focus on key urban types in cinema, such as the gangster and detective, and how film noir depicts the urban jungle. We will examine filmic representations of gender and race in urban contexts. We will consider how different spaces – the mall, the suburbs, the global city – are articulated cinematically. We will explore urban subcultures and aural pleasures. The course concludes by looking at dystopic cinematic visions of the city.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To provide students with general knowledge of the relationships between the cinema and the city
- To provide students with specific knowledge of cinematic figures such as the flâneur, gangster and detective; filmic spaces such as the mall, suburb, and global city; subcultures; and the dystopic, racialized and gendered cinematic city
- To enhance students' research, analytic and critical skills
- To improve students' written and oral expression skills
- To develop the ability of students to work in pairs and small groups

COURSE DELIVERY

This course will be delivered through a combination of seminars and film screenings. The Monday seminar will examine the set reading and involve extensive discussion. There may be some short, informal lectures. Students will undertake a range of learning activities, such as pair and small group work, whole class discussions, and textual analysis of film clips. The Thursday class will consist mainly of film screenings but some time may also be devoted to discussion and student presentations.

EXPECTED WORKLOAD

The University expects that a 30 point unit will involve 300 hours of work. There are 6 hours per week of classes. During the teaching period, students are expected to spend about 14 hours per week on reading, preparing for class, and working on assignments. The remaining time should be spent on research and essay writing.

GROUP WORK

There will be some informal group work in classes that will be assessed for Assignment One. For Assignment Two, students will be expected to work in pairs to deliver a presentation on a particular topic.

READINGS

There is no set text for the course. Each week students will be expected to read a number of assigned readings related to the weekly topic and/or screening. These readings will be available on Electronic Closed Reserve in the Central Library.

ASSESSMENT

All the assessment for this subject will be internal. There will be four assignments.

Assignment One: Tutorial Participation (10%)**Due Date: Seminars in weeks 2-12**

You will be assessed on the quality of your contributions to seminars throughout the semester, starting in Week 2. This assignment will enable you to demonstrate your knowledge of issues raised in the course. It will also develop your critical skills, enhance your verbal skills, and improve your ability to work in pairs and small groups. Non-attendance at seminars without a valid excuse (such as illness) will affect your grade.

Assignment Two: Seminar Presentation (20%)**Due Date: Seminars in weeks 3-12**

In this assignment you will work with one other class member to deliver a 20-25 minutes oral presentation in a seminar on some aspect of the weekly topic. You and your partner will also provide a written summary. This assignment will develop your research skills, enhance your analytical and argumentation skills, and improve your oral skills and ability to work in pairs. Further details will be available early in the course. Please note that although this is a joint presentation each student will be assessed on an individual basis.

Assignment Three: Close Analysis Essay (30%)**2800-3000 words****Due Date: Friday, April 10th**

This assignment will cover topics discussed in the first six weeks of the course, such as the flâneur, documenting the city, gender and the city, gangster films, detective films, the nocturnal city and film noir. You will be expected to undertake a close reading of an article on one of these topics. This assignment will enable you to develop your analytical, critical and argumentation skills. It will also improve your written expression. Details will be available early in the course.

Assignment Four: (40%)**3500-4000 words****Due Date: Friday, June 5th**

This assignment will cover the issues discussed in weeks 7-12 of the course, such as race and the city, the mall, the suburbs, urban subcultures, the aural city, the global city, and dystopian cinematic visions of the city. This assignment will enable you to develop your independent research, critical, argumentation and analytical skills. It will also enhance your written expression. Details will be available during the course.

ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEETS

Assignment cover sheets and extension forms can be found on Blackboard or outside the Programme office.

PENALTIES AND EXTENSIONS

Work submitted late without an extension will be penalised two percent per working day. Except under exceptional circumstances, no work will be accepted more than two weeks after the due date unless specific prior arrangements have been made.

Extensions

If you require an extension, you must complete an extension request form (available on your course Blackboard site) prior to the assignment due date. This must be accompanied by relevant documentation (e.g. a doctor's certificate) where appropriate. Extension requests must be submitted to the Course Co-ordinator. Tutors cannot grant extensions.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In order to pass this course students must complete all assignments by the due date. They must attend at least 80% of classes.

PRESENTATION OF WORK

All students should submit their essays to the drop box in 44KP, the Media Studies office. You must also submit an electronic copy of your essay to one of the course coordinators by the due date.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such MATERIAL.

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

TURNITIN

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine <http://www.turnitin.com>. Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted material on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions is not made available to any other party.

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

All additional information concerning the course, including changes, will be posted on Blackboard.

GENERAL UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND POLICIES

A copy of the General University Statutes and Policies can be found on Blackboard.

COURSE PROGRAMME

FILM/MDIA 402 Film, Culture and Society

Week 1:

Monday: Introductory class

Thursday: *Slacker* (Richard Linklater, USA, 1991)

Week 2:

Monday: The Flaneur

Thursday: *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* (Walter Ruttmann, Germany, 1927); *London* (Patrick Keiller, UK, 1994)

Week 3:

Monday: Documenting the City

Thursday: *Public Enemy* (William Wellman, USA, 1931); *Chinatown* (Roman Polanski, USA, 1974)

Week 4:

Monday: Gangsters; Detectives

Thursday: *Night and the City* (Jules Dassin, UK, 1950); *M* (Fritz Lang, Germany, 1931)

Week 5:

Monday: Film Noir; The Nocturnal City

Thursday: *Cleo from 5 to 7* (Agnes Varda, France, 1961); *Sex and the City* [Episodes TBA]

Week 6:

Monday: The Gendered City

Thursday: *La Haine* (Mathieu Kassovitz, France, 1995) ; *Shaft* (Gordon Parks, USA, 1971)

Week 7:

Monday: Race and the City

Thursday: *Chungking Express* (Wong Kar-Wai, Hong Kong, 1994); *Lost in Translation* (Sofia Coppola, USA, 2003)

Week 8:

Monday: Cinema and the Global City

Thursday: *Dawn of the Dead* (George A. Romero, USA, 1978); *Suburbia* (Penelope Spheeris, USA, 1983)

Week 9:

Monday: The Mall and the Suburbs

Thursday: *Wild Style* (Charlie Ahearn, USA, 1983); *Downtown 81* (Edo Bertoglio, USA, 1981)

Week 10:

Monday: Urban Scenes and Subcultures; Sounds of the City

Thursday: *Falling Down* (Joel Schumacher, USA, 1993) ; *Se7en* (David Fincher, USA, 1995)

Week 11:

Monday: Dystopian Cities

Thursday: *Strange Days* (Kathryn Bigelow, USA, 1995)

Week 12:

Monday: The Virtual City

Thursday: Essay Writing