

FILM 334 National Cinema

Trimester 1 2013

4 March to 3 July 2013

20 Points



Armageddon by Michael Bay

TRIMESTER DATES

Teaching dates:	4 March to 7 June 2013
Easter break:	28 March to 3 April 2013
Mid-trimester break:	22 to 28 April 2013
Last piece of assessment due:	17 June 2013

WITHDRAWAL DATES

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds>

NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Course Coordinator	Email	Phone	Room	Office Hours
Dr Tim Groves	tim.groves@vuw.ac.nz	463 5410	83FT303	tbc

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Screenings

Tuesday 3.10-6.00pm Hugh Mackenzie LT 002

Lectures

Wednesday 4.10-6.00pm Hugh Mackenzie LT 002

Tutorials

Tutorials begin in WEEK 2. Please register for tutorials via the FILM 334 site on Blackboard: go to "Tutorials" and then follow the instructions under the "SCubed - Tutorial Enrolment Instructions" link. Please read the instructions carefully. Tutorial rooms will be listed on S-Cubed, Blackboard and on the bulletin board outside the 83 Fairlie Terrace Administration office.

TEACHING LEARNING SUMMARY

This course will involve a weekly three hour screening, a two hour lecture and a one hour tutorial. You are expected to attend all of these. Lectures will examine the weekly topic, screening, introduce key concepts,

and issues; they may be interactive. Tutorials will involve discussions about screenings, lectures and assigned readings.

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information will be announced or distributed in class, and posted on Blackboard. Blackboard emails will be sent to your VUW email address, so if you don't use this address regularly, make sure you set up a forward from your Victoria email account to your home email address.

COURSE PRESCRIPTION

A study of the cinema of a selected country or countries from cultural, historical, and economic perspectives. In 2013, the course will focus on Hollywood cinema since about 1990. The topics may include blockbuster cinema, Indiewood, developments in narrative style, gender, race, and postmodernism.

COURSE CONTENT

This course will examine contemporary Hollywood cinema in three phases:

Weeks 1-4 will focus on economic issues relating to mainstream commercial cinemas, such as the importance of the blockbuster, high concept, marketing, franchises, and the 'back end'. We will also consider the 'Indiewood' sector.

Weeks 5-8 will explore significant recent aesthetic developments, such as the prominence of spectacle, immersive entertainment, 3D cinema, the use of irony and postmodern elements, post-classical narration, and complex narratives.

Weeks 9-12 will examine the social and cultural dimensions of contemporary Hollywood cinema, as well as some of its future possibilities. We will look at the influence of the 9/11 attacks, the representation of Arabs and 'others', and the implications of superhero films for our understanding of masculinity.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students who complete this course should have

- Acquired specific knowledge of the Hollywood blockbuster, the narrative vs spectacle debate, postclassical narration, 'independent' cinema, the 'smart' film, and representations of gender and race, the serial killer film, and genres such as crime and comedy.
- Acquired knowledge of some of the key debates within Film Studies about contemporary Hollywood cinema
- Developed their critical skills, including their ability to characterise and evaluate scholarly texts
- To improve the textual analysis and independent research skills of students.
- To enhance the ability of students to write essays and work in small pairs and groups.

EXPECTED WORKLOAD

The expected workload for a 20 point course is 200 hours over the trimester or approximately 13 week hours per teaching week in addition to classes.

GROUP WORK

There will be some informal group work during tutorials that will be assessed as part of the first assignment.

READINGS

A list of weekly readings will be posted on Blackboard.

ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

All the assessment for this course will be internal and there will be four assignments.

Assignment One: Tutorial Participation (10%)

Due Date: Tutorials in weeks 2-12

Description:

You will be assessed on the quality of your contributions to tutorials throughout the course. This will consist of answering questions, analysing clips and readings, and participating in pair, small group and whole class discussions. You are strongly encouraged to prepare for tutorials by attending and reflecting on screenings and lectures, as well as completing the assigned reading.

Assessment Criteria:

- Fulfilling the set task in a clear, direct, relevant and complete manner
- Quality and quantity of seminar participation
- Evidence of preparation for seminars
- Evidence of engagement with course issues and materials, including screenings and readings
- Originality of contributions to learning activities
- Quality, fluency and coherency of expression
- Respect for other students and their ideas

Relationship to Learning Objectives:

This assignment will enable you to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of issues and topics raised in screenings, lectures and readings. It will also develop your critical skills, and enhance your verbal skills.

Assignment Two: Reading Reports (20%)

Due Date: TBA

Length: 1200-1400 words in total

Description:

In this assignment you will write four short tutorial reports (about 300-350 words each). Each report will focus on an assigned reading for the week. You will either be asked to answer a set question about the article or evaluate a section of it. You must bring your report to your tutorial in the week indicated.

Assessment Criteria:

- Completion of the set task in a clear, direct, legible, relevant, complete and timely manner.
- Evidence of engagement with the specified article
- Evidence of critical and analytical skills
- Quality and originality of the report
- Quality and fluency of your expression

Relationship to Learning Objectives:

This assignment will develop your understanding of key concepts and/or issues in contemporary Hollywood cinema. It will also enhance your critical and expression skills.

Assignment Three: Take Home Test (30%)

Due Date: Monday, April 29th, 5pm

Length: 1800 words (approx.)

Description:

This assignment will cover topics discussed in the first five weeks of the course. The test will consist of a mixture of short answer questions and an essay. Topics will be distributed in week 6.

Assessment Criteria:

- Completing the set task in a clear, direct, relevant, and complete manner
- Clear evidence of engagement with the ideas and materials discussed in FILM 334
- The originality and quality of your findings. This will include your ability to synthesise research materials, engage in textual analysis, and develop and express your ideas
- Coherency, structure and argumentation of your essay
- Quality and fluency of your expression
- Understanding and correct application of terms and concepts used in film analysis
- Accurate and complete referencing of all sources, including a bibliography and filmography

Relationship to Learning Objectives:

This assignment will improve your knowledge of one of the topics studied in the first six weeks of the course. It will enable you to develop your textual analysis, critical and argumentation skills. It will also improve your written expression.

Assignment Four: Essay (40%)

Due Date: Monday, June 17th, 5pm

Length: 2500-2800 words

Description:

This assignment will cover the issues discussed in weeks 6-12 of the course, such as 3D cinema, the 'smart' film, representations of race and masculinity, responses to 9/11, puzzle films and postclassical narration.

Assessment Criteria:

- Completing the set task in a clear, direct, relevant, and complete manner
- Clear evidence of engagement with the ideas and materials discussed in FILM 334
- The originality and quality of your findings. This will include your ability to conduct independent research from reputable academic sources, synthesise research materials, engage in textual analysis, and develop and express your ideas
- Coherency, structure and argumentation of your essay
- Quality and fluency of your expression
- Understanding and correct application of terms and concepts used in film analysis
- Accurate and complete referencing of all sources, including a bibliography and filmography

Relationship to Learning Objectives:

This assignment will improve your knowledge of one of the topics studied in the weeks 6-12 of the course. It will enable you to develop your textual analysis, independent research, and critical and argumentation skills. It will also improve your written expression.

ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEETS

Assignment cover sheets and extension forms can be found on Blackboard or outside the Administration office: 83 Fairlie Terrace. Remember to fill in your tutor's name.

COLLECTING MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

Your marked assignment will be handed back by your tutor in tutorials or during their office hours. Any uncollected assignments can be picked up from the Programme Administrator after the last day of teaching. Assignments will be held in the Administration office until the end of the following trimester. You need to show your student identification to collect marked assignment from the Administration office.

EXTENSIONS AND PENALTIES

Extensions will be granted only in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. Issues of workload do not constitute exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. 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. Tutors cannot grant extensions.

Work submitted after the deadline will be penalised by a 2.5 percent deduction from your total mark per work day. Late work also receives only minimal comments from your marker.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In order to pass this course students must:

- Complete assignments 2, 3 and 4
- Attend at least 8 out of 11 tutorials

CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students. You can find out more information on Class Representatives on www.vuwsa.org.nz.

STATEMENT ON LEGIBILITY

You are expected to present work that meets appropriate standards. Work submitted during the course (i. e. work that is internally assessed) should be typed or prepared on a computer. Where handwritten work is required you are expected to write clearly. If this is deemed 'illegible', you will be given a photocopy of the work and asked to transcribe it to an acceptable standard (preferably typed) within a specified time frame.

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>

TURNITIN

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. 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.

WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study. Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress. Most statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic.

COURSE PROGRAMME

Week 1: Introduction to the Course; Planet Hollywood

Screening: *The Player* (Robert Altman, 1991)

Readings: Schatz, Thomas. "New Hollywood, New Millennium." *Film Theory and Contemporary Movies*. Ed. Warren Buckland. New York: Routledge, 2009. 19-46.

Week 2: High Concept and Blockbusters

Screenings: *Batman* (Tim Burton, 1989)

Readings: Buckland, Warren. *Directed by Steven Spielberg: Poetics of the Contemporary Hollywood Blockbuster*. New York: Continuum, 2006. 7-28.

Cucco, Marco. "The Promise Is Great: The Blockbuster and the Hollywood Economy." *Media, Culture & Society* 31.2 (2009): 215-230.

Week 3: Making Money

Screening: *Jurassic Park* (Steven Spielberg, 1993)

Readings: Drake, Philip. "Distribution and Marketing in Contemporary Hollywood." *The Contemporary Hollywood Film Industry*. Eds. Paul McDonald and Janet Wasko. Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell, 2008. 63-82.

Balides, Constance. "Jurassic Post-Fordism: Tall Tales of Economics in the Theme Park." *Screen* 41.2 (Summer 2000): 139-160.

Week 4: The 'Indiewood' Sector

Screening: *The Royal Tenenbaums* (Wes Anderson, USA, 2001)

Readings: Tzioumakis, Yannis. "'Independent', 'Indie' and 'Indiewood.'" *American Independent Cinema*. Eds. Geoff King, Claire Molloy and Yannis Tzioumakis. New York: Routledge, 2013. 28-40.

Newman, Michael Z. "Indie Culture: In Pursuit of the Authentic Autonomous Alternative." *Cinema Journal* 48.3 (Spring 2009): 16-27.

Week 5: Narrative, Spectacle and Immersive Entertainment

Screening: *Con Air* (Simon West, 1997)

Readings: King, Geoff. *Spectacular Narratives: Hollywood in the Age of the Blockbuster*. London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000. 28-39.

Lavik, Erlend. "The Battle for the Blockbuster: Discourses of Spectacle and Excess." *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 6.2 (August 2008): 169-187.

Week 6: 3-D Cinema (Guest Lecturer: Dr Miriam Ross)

Screening: No Screening

Readings: Ross, Miriam. "The 3-D aesthetic: *Avatar* and Hyperhaptic Visuality." *Screen* 53.4 (2012): 381-397.

Sandifer, Philip. "Out of the Screen and into the Theatre: 3-D film as Demo." *Cinema Journal* 50.3 (2011): 62-78.

Week 7: Complex Narratives and Puzzle Films (Guest Lecturer: Simin Littschwager); TAKE HOME TEST DUE

Screening: *Lost Highway* (David Lynch, 1997)

Readings: Simons, Jan. "Complex Narratives." *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 6.2 (August 2008): 111-126. **TBC**

Elsaesser, Thomas. "The Mind-Game Film." *Puzzle Films: Complex Storytelling in Contemporary Cinema*. Ed. Warren Buckland. Oxford and Maldon, MA: Blackwell, 2009. 13-24.

Week 8: Irony, Sincerity, Postmodernism

Screening: *Ghost World* (Terry Zwigoff, 2001)

Readings: Sconce, Jeffrey. "Irony, Nihilism and the New American 'Smart' Film." *Screen* 43.4 (Winter 2002): 349-369.

McDowell, James. "Wes Anderson, Tone and the Quirky Sensibility." *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 10.1 (2012): 6-27.

Week 9: Representing 9/11

Screening: TBA

Readings: TBA

Week 10: Reading Orientalism (Guest Lecturer: Dr Jo Smith)

Screening: *Three Kings* (David O. Russell, USA, 1999)

Readings: Nadel, Alan. "A Whole New [Disney] World Order: Aladdin, Atomic Power and the Muslim Middle East." *Visions of the East: Orientalism in Film*. Eds. Matthew Bernstein and Gaylyn Studlar. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997. 184-203.

Kitaeff, Lila. "Three Kings: Neocolonial Arab Representation." *Jump Cut* 46 (Summer 2003)

<http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc46.2003/kitaeff.threeKings/index.html> (This article has a number of sections)

Week 11: Superheroes, Masculinity and the Rise of the *Urbemensch*

Screening: *X-Men* (Bryan Singer, USA, 2000)

Readings: Barker, Jennifer. "'A Hero Will Rise': The Myth of the Fascist Man in *Fight Club* and *Gladiator*." *Literature/Film Quarterly* 36.3 (2008): 171-187.

TBA

Week 12: The Old and the New

Screening: *Man on Fire* (Tony Scott, 2004)

Readings: Dixon, Wheeler Winston. "Twenty-Five Reasons Why It's All Over." *The End of Cinema As We Know It: American Film in the Nineties*. Ed. Jon Lewis. London: Pluto Press, 2002. 356-366.

Knapp, Larry. "Tony Scott and *Domino*: Say Hello (and Goodbye) to the Postclassical." *Jump Cut* 50 2008

<http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc50.2008/DominoKnapp/index.html> [this has three or four sections]

Recommended:

Thanouli, Eleftheria. "Post-Classical Narration: A New Paradigm in Contemporary Cinema." *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 4.3 (December 2006): 183-196.

Bordwell, David. "Intensified Continuity." *Film Quarterly* 55.3 (2002): 16-28.

FINAL ESSAY DUE MONDAY JUNE, 17