

## FILM 481 Special Topic: Cinema, Trauma and Identity

**Trimester 1 2013**

4 March to 3 July 2013

**30 Points**



*The Scream* by Edvard Munch

### 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:	20 June 2013

### WITHDRAWAL DATES

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

### NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Course Coordinator	Email	Phone	Room	Office Hours
Dr Tim Groves	<a href="mailto:tim.groves@vuw.ac.nz">tim.groves@vuw.ac.nz</a>	463 5410	83FT303	TBA

### CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

#### Seminars

Monday	2.10-4.00pm	85 Fairlie Terrace room 108
Tuesday	11.00am-12.50pm	85 Fairlie Terrace room 108

### TEACHING LEARNING SUMMARY

This course will be taught through a combination of screenings and seminars. The seminars will explore course issues through focused analysis and discussion of the assigned readings and weekly screenings.

Students are encouraged to participate actively in order to develop critical responses to the material. There will be some informal lectures during seminars.

### **COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Additional information will be posted on Blackboard. If you are not going to use your VUW email address, we strongly encourage you to set a forward from the Victoria email system to the email address you do use.

### **COURSE PRESCRIPTION**

This course will examine the links between cinema, trauma, and individual and collective identities in contemporary American society.

### **COURSE CONTENT**

This course explores real and imagined traumatic events and in contemporary American society in the last 25 years, such as the September 11 attacks, Hurricane Katrina, serial killers, and alien abductions. It analyses the ways in which these have been represented in film and television. It considers how such phenomena form, challenge and even destabilise our understanding of individual subjectivity and collective identities. The course draws on theoretical material from psychoanalysis, philosophy and cultural studies.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Students who complete this course successfully should have acquired a good general knowledge of traumatic events and phenomena in contemporary American society. They should possess a critical understanding of the implications of such events for subjectivity and representation. They should be able to engage confidently with relevant scholarly debates. They should have enhanced analytical and critical skills. The course will also improve students' proficiency at film analysis and independent research. It will further develop their written and oral skills.

### **EXPECTED WORKLOAD**

The expected workload for a 30 point course is 300 hours over the trimester or 20 hours per teaching week. In addition to screenings and seminars, you should devote about sixteen hours per week to reading, evaluating texts (including screenings), and working on assignments.

### **GROUP WORK**

There will be some informal group work during seminar discussions. This will be assessed as part of assignment one.

### **READINGS**

A list of weekly readings will be posted on Blackboard.

### **ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS**

This course will be internally assessed, and there will be four assignments. Further information about assessment will be distributed during the course and on Blackboard.

#### **Assignment One: Seminar Participation (10%)**

**Due Date: Seminars in weeks 2-12**

Description:

You will be assessed on the quality of your contributions to seminars throughout the course, commencing in week 2.

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 and readings. It will also develop your critical skills, and enhance your verbal skills.

**Assignment Two: Seminar Presentation (20%)**

**Due Date: Any seminar in weeks 3-10**

Description:

In this assignment, you will deliver a seminar presentation on some aspect of the weekly topic. You will also be expected to lead the class discussion. The seminar presentation will be 20-25 minutes long, and you will provide a written summary of your presentation (800-1000 words).

Assessment Criteria:

- Fulfilling the set task in a clear, direct, relevant, complete, and timely manner
- Clear evidence of your engagement with the ideas and materials discussed in FILM 406
- The originality and quality of your presentation. This will include your ability to conduct independent research from reputable academic sources, synthesise research materials, engage in textual analysis where relevant, and develop and express your ideas
- Coherency, structure and argumentation of your seminar
- Quality and fluency of your verbal and written expression
- Ability to lead the ensuing class discussion
- Understanding and correct application of terms and concepts used in film analysis
- Quality of any audiovisual aids, such as powerpoint slides and film clips
- Technical ability in this use of any audiovisual elements
- Accurate and complete referencing of all sources, including a bibliography and filmography

Relationship to Learning Objectives:

This assignment is designed to improve your research, argumentation, analytical, and oral presentation skills.

**Assignment Three: Essay (30%)**

**Length: 2800-3000 words**

**Due Date: Monday, April 29**

Description:

This assignment will cover topics discussed in the first half of the course, such as wound culture, forensic pathology, panic and serial killers.

Assessment Criteria:

- Fulfilling the set task in a clear, direct, relevant and complete manner
- Clear evidence of your engagement with the ideas and materials discussed in FILM 481
- 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 written 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 half of the course. It will enable you to develop your textual analysis, independent research, critical and argumentation skills. It will also improve your written expression.

**Assignment Four: Essay (40%)**

**Length: 3500-4000 words**

**Due Date: Thursday, June 20**

Description:

This assignment will cover the topics dealt with in the second half of the course, such as trauma and narrative, representations of 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, and prosthetic memory.

Assessment Criteria:

- Fulfilling the set task in a clear, direct, relevant and complete manner
- Clear evidence of your engagement with the ideas and materials discussed in FILM 481
- 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 written 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 second phase of the course. It will enable you to develop your textual analysis, independent research, critical and argumentation skills. It will also improve your written expression.

**Please note:** Marks for Honours level assignments and final course grades are not finalised until feedback from the external examiner has been considered. Note also that Honours grades gained in individual courses remain provisional until the overall final classification made by the Honours programme examination committee.

### **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**

To be eligible to gain a pass in this course you must:

- Complete all the assignments for this course, on or by the specified dates (subject to such provisions as are state for late submission of work).
- Attend at least eighteen seminars.

### **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](http://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](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress). Most statutes and policies are available at

[www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy](http://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](http://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](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic).

## COURSE PROGRAMME

### Week 1: Introduction

**Screening:** *Fearless* (Peter Weir, USA, 1993)

**Reading:** Kaplan, E. Ann. "Why Trauma Now?" *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature*. New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2005. 24-41.

### Week 2: Representing and Displacing Trauma: 9/11 and the Horror Film

**Screening:** *Cloverfield* (Matt Reeves, USA, 2008)

**Readings:** Wetmore, Kevin J. *Post-9/11 Horror in American Cinema*. New York and London: Continuum, 2012. 23-56.

Middleton, Jason. "The Subject of Torture: Regarding the Pain of Americans in *Hostel*." *Cinema Journal* 49.4 (Summer 2010): 1-24.

### Week 3: Alien Abductions

**Screening:** *The X-Files* episodes

**Readings:** Luckhurst, Roger. "The Science-Fictionalization of Trauma: Remarks on Narratives of Alien Abduction." *Science Fiction Studies* 25.1 (March 1998): 29-52.

Burns Christy L., "Erasure: Alienation, Paranoia, and the Loss of Memory in *The X-Files*." *Camera Obscura* 45 (2001): 195-225.

### Week 4: Dissociative Identity Disorder

**Screenings:** *Identity* (James Mangold, USA, 2003)

**Readings:** Borch-Jacobsen, Mikkel. "Who's Who? Introducing Multiple Personality." *Supposing the Subject*. Ed. Joan Copjec. Verso, 1994. 45-63.

Hacking, Ian. *Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Sciences of Memory*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998. **TBA**

### Week 5: Serial Killers

**Screening:** *Se7en* (David Fincher, USA, 1995)

**Readings:** Seltzer, Mark. "Wound Culture: Trauma in the Pathological Public Sphere." *October* 80 (Spring 1997): 3-27.

Seltzer, Mark. "Serial Killers (II): The Pathological Public Sphere." *Critical Inquiry* 22.1 (Autumn 1995): 122-149.

### Week 6: Panic, Crowds and Zombies

**Screening:** *Quarantine* (John Erick Dowdle, USA, 2008)

**Readings:** **TBA**

**Recommended:**

Shaviro, Steven. "Contagious Allegories: George Romero." *The Cinematic Body*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993. 83-105.

**Week 7 : Forensic Bodies and Representing the Wound**

**Screening:** *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* episodes

**Readings:** Sue Tait, "Autoptic Vision and the Necrophiliac Imaginary in *CSI*." *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 9.1 (March 2006): 45-62.

David Pierson, "Evidential Bodies: The Forensic and Abject Gazes in *C.S.I.: Crime Scene Investigation*." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 34.2 (April 2010): 184-203.

**Week 8: Trauma, Witnessing and Representation: Hurricane Katrina**

**Screening:** *When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts* (Spike Lee, USA, 2006)

**Readings:** Walker, Janet. "Moving Testimonies and the Geography of Suffering: Perils and Fantasies of Belonging after Katrina." *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies* 24.1 (February 2010): 47-64.

**TBA**

**Week 9: Memory, Trauma and Narrative**

**Screening:** *Memento* (Christopher Nolan, USA, 2000)

Thomas, Peter. "Victimage and Violence: *Memento* and Trauma Theory." *Screen* 44.2 (2003): 200-207.

**TBA**

**Week 10: 9/11, the Gulf War and Virtual Trauma**

**Screening:** *Lessons of Darkness* (Werner Herzog, Germany, 1992); *United 93* (Paul Greengrass, USA, 2006)

**Readings:** Sturken, Marita. "Spectacles of Memory: Remembering the Persian Gulf War." *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, AIDS, and the Politics of Remembering*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997. 122-144.

**TBA**

**Week 11: Prosthetic Memory**

**Screening:** *Forrest Gump* (Robert Zemeckis, USA, 1994)

**Readings:** Burgoyne, Robert. "Prosthetic Memory/Traumatic Memory: *Forrest Gump* (1994)." *Screening the Past* 6 (1999) <http://tlweb.latrobe.edu.au/humanities/screeningthepast/firstrelease/fr0499/rbfr6a.htm>

Wang, Jennifer Hyland. "'A Struggle of Contending Stories': Race, Gender, and Political Memory in *Forrest Gump*." *Cinema Journal* 39.3 (Spring 2000): 92-115.

**Week 12: Trauma Tourism**

**Screening:** NO SCREENING (Public Holiday)

**Reading:** *Tourists of History: Memory, History and Kitsch from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007. **TBA**