



## FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

### SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

#### HISTORY PROGRAMME

#### HIST 423: A TOPIC IN HISTORIOGRAPHY AND HISTORICAL METHOD 2: FILM AND HISTORY

#### TRIMESTER 1 AND 2 2015

### Important dates

Trimester dates: 2 March to 15 November 2015  
Teaching dates: 2 March to 16 October 2015  
Easter/Mid-trimester break: 3–19 April 2015  
Mid-year break: 2–12 July 2015  
Mid-trimester break 2/3: 24 August to 6 September 2015  
Final assessment: 14 October 2015

**Withdrawal dates:** Refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds). If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats).

### Class times and locations

**Seminar time:** Wednesdays, 2:10-4.00 p.m.  
Old Kirk 406

**Film Screening:** Wednesdays, 4:10-7.00 p.m.  
Old Kirk 406

### Names and contact details

Course Coordinator: Dr Giacomo Lichtner  
Room No: Old Kirk 425  
Phone: (04) 463 6756  
Email: [giacomo.lichtner@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:giacomo.lichtner@vuw.ac.nz)  
Office hours: Tuesdays and Fridays, 12.00-13.00p.m. or by appointment

### Communication of additional information

This course uses Blackboard and presumes that all enrolled students have valid myvuw.ac.nz addresses. Please check that this account is active and you have organised email forwarding.

Additional information and any changes to the timetable or lecture and seminar programme will be advised by email, announced in lectures, and posted on the course Blackboard site.

## **Prescription**

This course is designed to explore the different ways in which history and film interact, how filmmakers use history in their trade and vice-versa, and how the study of history can profit from using the moving image.

## **Course content**

The course is primarily concerned with historical cinema as a 'vector of memory': a medium at once informed by its societal context and able to construct and mould the historical understanding of its audiences. The context of the course will be the Holocaust, or Shoah, however the cinematographic texts will be employed not as sources for knowledge about the Shoah, but in the study of how this has been interpreted and remembered in different times and places. The analysis of the films and of their reception will be focused on discussing how representational (aesthetic and narrative) choices reveal issues of politics, ideology, myth-building and the shifting taboos of modern societies. Adopting a thematic approach, in the first trimester the course will discuss issues concerning fiction films and the Holocaust, comparing alternative solutions to representational problems. In the second semester, we will turn to documentary filmmaking and address some of the issues surrounding the medium and its relation with historical research, such as varyingly rigorous use of footage.

## **Course learning objectives (CLOs)**

This course is designed to explore the different ways in which history and film interact, how filmmakers use history in their trade and, vice versa, and how the study of history can profit from using the moving image as source. The course will cover the representation of history in film, but also cinema as evidence of social and political attitudes to history, and the reception of films in the study of how these attitudes change with time. Similarly, the material used will include works from several countries, covering most genres, and fiction as well as documentary. The aim of this course is to increase the students' historical understanding of post-war societies' relationship with their past, while discussing methodologies for the study of representation and the reception of films. Moreover the course hopes to stimulate the students' awareness of the potential and dangers of using film in historical research, as well as their critical thinking with regards to both film and history.

Students passing the course should be able to:

1. recognise through what narrative and aesthetic methods a film can be used to convey or construct a political reading of history;
2. discuss in depth how films shape our understanding of history while at the same time being shaped themselves by the society of which they are a product;
3. understand key concepts in film criticism;
4. grasp key theoretical and issues in the post-war representation of the Holocaust;
5. evaluate critically relevant secondary sources, making reasoned judgements about conflicting arguments;
6. analyse relevant primary sources, including moving and still images;
7. formulate a high level of competency in written and oral communication.

## **Teaching format**

This course will be taught in two-hour seminars held fortnightly, a total of twelve seminars over the 24-week teaching period.

Honours courses are not lecture courses in which students are presented with information that has been collected, organised and interpreted by the lecturer. At Honours level, these tasks are required of the students, who are expected to prepare seminar discussions on a specified topic.

With the seminar format, the course convenor will act as a moderator, who will select the main topics for investigation, but expects the students to carry the bulk of the discussion, whether by presenting papers to the class, by commenting on those papers, or by presenting their own views on a particular topic.

Your preparation for each seminar is expected to be of a consistent level throughout the year, irrespective of the proximity of essay deadlines. The important point to remember is that seminars are not lectures and should not be treated as a substitute for your own independent course of reading.

The seminars will comprise a two-hour meeting on a specific topic, and written guidelines for each seminar will be provided at the beginning of the course. Readings for each meeting will be drawn from book chapters on Blackboard or articles from journals available online. All students are expected to read the material and come to the class prepared to make a contribution to the discussion.

## Mandatory course requirements

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, students must:

1. attend at least 9 of the 12 seminars;
- AND
2. complete the assignments specified for this course, on or by the specified dates (subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of work).

University guidelines permit you to miss up to 3 tutorials without penalty. Extra absences will result in a student failing terms, except in cases of serious illness (supported by a medical certificate), or serious personal crisis.

THERE IS NO PROVISION IN THIS COURSE FOR MAKE-UPS TO COMPENSATE FOR ADDITIONAL ABSENCES EXCEPT UNDER THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES. You should allow for the possibility of unforeseen illness when using up your quota of permissible absences. If for any reason you are unable to attend seminars or to complete work on time, you must discuss this with the course convenor well before the due date.

## Workload

In accordance with University Guidelines, this course has been constructed on the assumption that students will devote 300 hours to HIST 423, approximately 13 hours a week across the year. This total includes the following:

- 26 hours for fortnightly seminars and meetings with course coordinator;
- 4 hours a week (or 8 hours a fortnight) reading, taking notes, and preparation for the fortnightly seminars, and
- 177 hours divided between three assignments, allocated proportionately to the grade percentage, e.g. around 70 hours for the final essay, which is worth 40% of the total grade.

## Assessment and Marking Criteria

This is an internally assessed course and every student will be expected to complete four assignments, as follows:

Assessment items and workload per item	%	CLO(s)	Due date
1 Seminar presentation, 20 minutes	10%	2, 5-7	Dates vary
2 Review Essay, 2500 words	20%	1-7	2 June, 12.00 noon
3 Research Essay, 5000 words	50%	1-7	21 September, 12.00 noon
4 In-class Test, 2 hours	20%	1, 3, 4, 6	14 October, 14.00-16.00

### Further details and marking criteria for each piece of assessment.

- (a) **One Research Essay: of 5000 words, worth 50%** of the final grade, consisting of:
1. **One essay proposal: due no later than Monday 13 July 2015, 12pm.**

This short assignment is an integral requirement of your research essay. It is designed to show:

1. that you have devised a research topic that is coherent and feasible within the given limits (5000word essay);
2. that you have a hypothesis you want to test, or a well-defined research question you want to explore;
3. that you have identified sufficient primary and secondary sources.

Your proposal should include the following:

1. an outline of the proposed essay topic
2. a paragraph engaging directly with the methodology
3. one or two clear and specific research questions; or a hypothesis you want to test
4. an annotated bibliography outlining the main primary and secondary sources you intend to use with a brief note on how they will be helpful. The secondary sources should include journal articles.

The proposal tests the following skills:

1. the ability to identify a coherent research project
2. the ability to develop the idea to proposal stage and assess its originality and feasibility
3. the ability to write synthetically and clearly.

### 2. **One Research Essay: of 5000 words: due Monday 21 September 2015, 12pm.**

The research essay tests your ability to organise your work and develop a medium-sized research project from a rough idea to an accomplished finished package.

In assessing your essay, the marker will be looking for the following:

1. a coherent and well-developed argument, expressed consistently through the essay. Does the essay answer the research question?
2. a fluent, clear and articulate prose; the clear expression of complex ideas
3. a coherent structure, backed by consistent and rational paragraphing
4. an appropriate and reasoned methodology; a sound use of the primary sources
5. a critical engagement with the secondary literature
6. comprehensive referencing: appropriate footnoting and a comprehensive bibliography.

The following are general thoughts about essay-writing, which I hope may be useful in preparing the essay:

#### **Argument:**

- decide what your argument is before you start writing; decide how you wish to express it and articulate it;
- each essay needs an argument. This needs to be expressed with clarity and consistency; within a structure which should help the flow of the argument, by providing a logical link between the different points made in the essay;
- it can be pro-, against or neutral towards the topic; it can disagree with all sources or agree with one or more of them;
- if not many sources exist, that too can/should be part of your argument;
- do not be afraid of discussing/criticising your sources; do not reject a source because it disagrees with you, but at the same time, do not simply accept that it is right and you are wrong;

- your argument/s should be personal while suggesting that you have read and understood the relevant primary and secondary material.

### **Research:**

- you should read as widely as possible;
- If that is true, then anything you consult which is not obviously irrelevant must be referenced in a clear bibliography;
- internet sources can only be referred to/used if they state the name of an author. In general, beware of Internet sources;
- reception of film in particular is a tricky subject and very hard to prove irrefutably; make sure you acknowledge this difficulty and be very wary of sweeping statements or of claiming that your evidence is conclusive;
- **Sometimes the film is your evidence.** Then use it as you would any other text: its images (colour, editing, camera-angles etc.), its words (and silences), soundtrack (or lack of it) are all part of it. Use plenty of examples from the films you are discussing to back your point, but do not disregard examples which seem not disprove your point (films too can be contradictory).

### **Structure:**

- your essay should have a beginning, a middle and an end, preferably in that order;
- your paragraphs should not be too long;
- the style should be personal but clear; your prose concise, to the point and free of mistakes. More than being a problem in themselves, spelling, grammatical and syntactical mistakes slow down your argument and make it difficult for the reader to understand. In short, they make your work appear sloppy, even if it is not.
- present your essay in a way that is 'tidy'. There is a surprisingly accurate link between the readability of an essay and the clarity of its writer's ideas;
- after you've finished your work, read it through to make sure it says what you want to say, and how you want to say it.

**(b) One review essay: of 2500 words, worth 20%;  
Deadline: 2 June 2015.**

The historiographical essay asks the student to choose and analyse a set of readings from a range provided (in week 1), focusing on: memory studies OR history and film OR arguments around the possibility of representing the Holocaust. The student will be expected to evaluate critically and comparatively the relevant historiographical arguments.

In assessing your essay, the marker will be looking for the following:

1. a coherent and well-developed argument, expressed consistently through the essay;
2. a fluent, clear and articulate prose; the clear expression of complex ideas;
3. a coherent structure, backed by consistent and rational paragraphing ;
4. an accurate representation and sophisticated analysis of the authors' arguments;
5. a critical and personal engagement with the literature.

**(c) One oral presentation: worth 10% of the final grade;  
Deadlines vary** (seminar presentation slots will be allocated in week one).

The oral presentation is designed to encourage class contribution and ensure that your oral communication skills are developed alongside your written ones. This is a space to give you the confidence to put forward your ideas and consider them in the light of your peers' responses. The format (Powerpoint; direct engagement with specific segments of a film etc.) and the style (handouts; standing or sitting) of your presentation are entirely up to you, but I would strongly recommend that you **do not read a pre-prepared speech**, as this often makes it very hard for your audience to follow you and interact with you.

The presentation will consist of a 15-20 minutes exposition devised by you (or you and your partner in case of a group presentation) to address the main points of the week's tutorial topic as **you** see them. The presentation should **NOT** simply sum up the argument of secondary sources or the plot of given films.

Your presentation should:

1. be engaging and personal;
2. set out your ideas clearly, at an appropriate pace and volume;
3. highlight the main issues as you see them;
4. encourage and attempt to lead the class towards a wider conversation around these issues;

**(e) One in-class test: worth 20% of the final grade (2 hours);**

**Deadline: 14 October 2015, 14.00-16.00 OK406.**

The test is designed to assess a different set of skills, such as:

1. a good grasp of Film and History, its theoretical and methodological challenges;
2. a good understanding of the key issues in the filmic representation of the Shoah;
3. the ability to think laterally and make links between different yet related topics;
4. the ability to think critically, using your knowledge to devise a personal answer to a set question;
5. the ability to think quickly and write a coherent and concise answer in a given time;
6. the ability to draw examples from films and employ them as evidence in the exposition of your argument;

To give you a chance to prove these skills, the test will be in essay form, asking you to answer two questions: one, chosen from broad thematic questions (first hour); the other, to interpret a specific example of Holocaust cinema (second hour).

## **Submission and return of work**

**All assignments are due before 12 noon on the due date.**

All work submitted for assessment must be dropped off in **HARD COPY** at the History Office, Old Kirk room 405, in the slots provided, and with an essay cover sheet. You must **ADD** the name of the course coordinator and the course code. You will also be asked to send an **ELECTRONIC COPY** of the essay, attached to an email, to the course coordinator.

In the first instance, graded essays will be returned in seminars. Thereafter, students will be able to collect their essays through the History Office, OK 405, between the hours of 1.00-2.00 pm, Monday to Friday. Students will be notified by email when graded essays are available (generally between 2-3 weeks after the date submitted).

**Please remember to keep a back up and/or hard copy of all your assignments.**

**As with all Honours courses, grades for assignments are provisional until the final examiners' meeting and subject to external assessment.**

## **Extensions and penalties**

### **Extensions**

Extensions may only be granted in exceptional circumstances, but **all extensions require the student to provide documentation**. If granted an extension, students must agree to a new due date. Contact your course coordinator or the Honours coordinator as soon as a problem emerges. Extension forms are available from the History Programme office.

## Penalties

Honours students are expected to manage their workloads sufficiently to submit assignments on time. If you have any problems please see your course coordinator, the Honours Coordinator, or the Head of Programme, as soon as possible.

History Programme policy stipulates that late submission of essays is penalised. Students lose 5% for the first day late and 2% thereafter for a maximum of 10 working days. After 10 days, work can be accepted for mandatory course requirements but will not be marked.

## Materials and equipment and/or additional expenses

There is an Honours Lab, Old Kirk room 401, which contains a small number of desks and computers. However, the number of students enrolled in the Honours programme exceeds the capacity of this room, and therefore it is strongly advised that students acquire their own laptop.

## Set text

There is no set text for this course. A full reading list and copies of required readings will be circulated at the first meeting and provided on Blackboard.

## Class representative

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course. Students may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in this box:

Class Rep name and contact details:
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## Student feedback

Enhancements made to this course, based on the feedback of previous students, will be discussed at the beginning of the course.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback\\_display.php](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php).

## Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism)
- Aegrotats: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats)
- Academic Progress: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress) (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates)
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: [www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin)
- Grades: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades)
- Resolving academic issues: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications)
- Special passes: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications)
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy)
- Student support: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support)
- Students with disabilities: [www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/disability](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability)
- Student Charter: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter)
- Student Contract: [www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract)

- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Turnitin: [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin)
- University structure: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure)
- Victoria graduate profile: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile)
- VUWSA: [www.vuwsa.org.nz](http://www.vuwsa.org.nz)