

## FILM 480 Special Topic: Altered States: Cinema, Identity, and Contemporary Culture

**Trimester 2 2015**

13 July to 15 November 2015

**30 Points**



*The Scream* by Edvard Munch

### IMPORTANT DATES

Teaching dates: 13 July to 16 October 2015  
Easter/Mid-Trimester break: 24 August to 6 September 2015  
Last assessment item due: 27 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

**Seminars:** Monday, 12-4pm Room Number 85FT 108

### NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Staff: Tim Groves (Course coordinator)  
Email: [tim.groves@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:tim.groves@vuw.ac.nz)  
Phone: 4635410  
Room: 83FT 303  
Office Hours: TBA

## COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information will be provided in class and posted on Blackboard. If you are not going to use the Victoria email address set up for you, we strongly encourage you to set a forward from the Victoria email system to the email address you do use.

## PRESCRIPTION

This course explores how real and imagined crises, epidemics, and plagues in American society over the last 25 years 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. Case studies will include alien abductions, hypnosis, serial killers, telepathy, and zombies. The course draws on theoretical material from philosophy, psychoanalysis, and cultural studies.

## COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES (CLOS)

Students who pass this course should be able to:

1. Analyse relevant theoretical approaches to trauma and identity
2. Critically examine these approaches in the context of American cinema and television
3. Conduct independent scholarly research
4. Interpret audio-visual material at an advanced level
5. Present persuasive, rigorous, research-based arguments about course issues in written and oral form

## TEACHING FORMAT

This course will be taught through a combination of weekly screenings and seminars. Students will be encouraged to participate regularly in seminars, which may contain short lectures.

## MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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

- Submit the essays and assignments, on or by the specified dates (subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of work), in order to demonstrate their acquisition of the relevant CLOs (see below).
- Attend at least nine (9) out of twelve (12) seminars in order to enhance their analytical, critical and oral expression (CLOs 1, 2, 4)

Any student who is concerned that they have been (or might be) unable to meet any of the mandatory course requirements *because of exceptional personal circumstances* should contact the course coordinator as soon as possible.

## WORKLOAD

The expected workload for a 30-point course is 300 hours over the trimester or 20 hours per teaching week.

## ASSESSMENT

There will be four assignments in this course. Further details will be posted.

Assessment items and workload per item	%	CLO(s)	Due Date
1 In-class presentation (20-25 minutes)	20%	1, 2, 3, 5	Week 3-10
2 Critical Essay (2800-3000 words)	30%	1, 2, 4, 5	Monday, 7 September
3 Research Proposal (1000 words)	10%	1, 2, 4, 5	Wednesday, 14 October
4 Independent Research Essay (3500-4000 words)	40%	1-5	Tuesday, 27 October

### Assignment One: Seminar Presentation (20%)

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

#### Description:

This assignment requires you to 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 (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 480
- The originality and quality of your presentation. This will include your ability to conduct independent research from reputable academic sources, synthesise research materials, and develop and express your ideas
- Coherency, structure, and argumentation of your seminar
- Quality and fluency of your oral and written expression
- Ability to lead the ensuing class discussion
- Understanding and correct application of terms and concepts used in film analysis (where appropriate)
- 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 should enhance your understanding of approaches to trauma and identity in the context of American culture, as well as your critical, analytical, research, argumentation, and oral presentation skills.

### Assignment Two: Essay (30%)

**Length: 2800-3000 words**

**Due Date: Monday, September 7**

#### 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 480
- 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 Three: Research Proposal (10%)**

**Length: 1000 words**

**Due Date: Wednesday, October 14**

Description:

This assignment requires you to develop a research proposal that explains how you will approach the final essay. You will formulate a research question, outline the theoretical material you will use, and annotate some of your prospective research items.

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 480
- The originality and quality of your findings. This will include your ability to conduct independent research from reputable academic sources, synthesise research materials, and develop and express your ideas
- Coherency, structure and argumentation of your proposal
- Quality and fluency of written expression
- Accurate and complete referencing of all sources, including a bibliography and filmography

Relationship to Learning Objectives:

This assignment will improve your research, critical, analytical, argumentation, and written expression skills.

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

**Length: 3500-4000 words**

**Due Date: Tuesday, October 27**

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 480
- 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

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

### SUBMISSION AND RETURN OF WORK

Work provided for assessment in this course will be checked for academic integrity by Turnitin. Follow the instructions provided in the "Assignments and Turnitin" section of Blackboard.

Each assignment should be submitted in two formats:

- A hardcopy in the drop slot outside the administration office in 83 Fairlie Terrace
- Attach an assignment cover sheet or extension form to your assignment, found on Blackboard or outside the administration office.
- Email your assignment as a MS Word file to [film@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:film@vuw.ac.nz)

Your assignments will normally be marked within three weeks of submission. Your assignment will be returned during seminars or during the course coordinator's 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

In exceptional and unforeseen circumstances an extension may be granted. To apply for an extension, email your Course Coordinator before the assignment is due. If granted, your Course Coordinator will inform you of the new due date. **No assignment with or without an extension will be accepted after Friday 13 November 2015.**

#### Penalties

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.

## SET TEXTS

There is no textbook for this course. A list of required weekly readings will be posted, and the material will be available in digital form via 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:

## STUDENT FEEDBACK

This course has not been offered previously. 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).

In week six or seven of the trimester your class representative will be invited to a meeting with the Programme staff. In week five your class representative will ask the class for any feedback on this course to discuss at this meeting.

## 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)
- School website: [www.victoria.ac.nz/seftms](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/seftms)

**COURSE PROGRAMME**

Week 1      13/7      Introduction to the course; encountering trauma

Week 2      Date      America's wound culture

Week 3      Date      The pathological gaze

Week 4      Date      Talk show hysteria

Week 5      Date      Alien abductions

Week 6      Date      Dissociative Identity Disorder

**Mid Trimester Break:**      Monday 24 August to Sunday 6 September 2015

Week 7      Date      Prosthetic memory

Week 8      Date      Serial killers

Week 9      Date      Zombies and collective identity

Week 10      Date      'Hypnotic' crime

Week 11      Date      Conspiracy culture

Week 12      Date      Conclusion; research proposals

**Last Assignment Due:**      Tuesday, 27 October, 2015