MHIS101

Screening the Past: History on Film and Television

S2 External 2017

Dept of Modern History, Politics & International Relations

Contents

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General Information

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Credit points
3

Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
Recent surveys of popular historical awareness have demonstrated that most people find out about the past from film and television, yet visual histories are often criticised for the ways they present the past. This unit will consider the limitations and possibilities of history on screen. Films like Australia, Schindler's List, Hairspray, and The Help have all provoked tremendous controversy. Do these filmic histories represent a more 'authentic' engagement with the past, or do they peddle false versions of history to a gullible public? This unit will introduce students to the critical study of history on film. Because this unit is concerned with how the past is represented in the present, it will provide a foundation for students to consider the study of history more broadly. The unit will also be of interest to students across the university.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Distinguish between primary and secondary sources;

begin to develop a critical vocabulary for the analysis of film and televisual materials as primary sources;

identify arguments in secondary sources;

communicate in written and verbal forms;

construct an evidence-based interpretation of historical film and television;

critically reflect on how historical representations are shaped by their contemporary contexts;

plan, revise and submit written work according to a schedule;

consider the ethical and professional obligations of historical practitioners in regards to intellectual honesty and acknowledgement;

respectfully and constructively offer and respond to feedback from staff and other students.

General Assessment Information

Late submissions will be penalised 2 marks per day (including weekends). Extensions will only be granted on the grounds of serious misadventure or for medical reasons and you must submit a Disruption of Study request via the student portal.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Weekly Tutorial Discussion	20%	No	weekly
Film Pitch	20%	No	29 August 9AM
Film Review Task	20%	No	12 October, 5PM
Research Essay	40%	No	10 November, 5pm

Weekly Tutorial Discussion

Due: **weekly**
Weighting: **20%**

Each week, you will be required to take an active and engaged part in online class discussions, hosted on the MHIS101 iLearn site. You will be assessed on the quality and regularity of your postings. A few guidelines for online participation:

1. keep your postings relatively brief and to the point - avoid overly digressive and anecdotal postings

2. be prepared: do the weekly readings, watch the film, and come to discussions ready to ask and answer questions

3. Always aim to move the discussion forward - add something that hasn't already been

said (this means reading all the posts before you add your own)

4. try to respond to the postings made by others - the aim is to start and maintain a conversation!

On successful completion you will be able to:
- identify arguments in secondary sources;
- communicate in written and verbal forms;
- plan, revise and submit written work according to a schedule;
- respectfully and constructively offer and respond to feedback from staff and other students.

Film Pitch

Due: **29 August 9AM**
Weighting: **20%**

Maximum length: 800-1000 word film "pitch" + 1 minute "preview"

This assessment task assesses your ability to understand how conventions of genre and narrative shape filmic histories. In this task you are required to produce a "pitch" for a Hollywood style narrative film that engages with one of the histories/historical contexts you will discuss in your research essay; imagine you are a writer/producer and seeking funding for your film. You will also be required to produce a "preview" for your film using archival/documentary images. More information about this assessment can be found on the ilearn site for the unit, including the specific requirement of the "pitch." Please note, your pitch must draw upon at least one scholarly source about your event/episode/context.

You will need to lodge this task on the MHIS101 iLearn site in a widely used file format for your preview (Quicktime, Powerpoint, Prezi, Windows media player).

A workshop will take place in week 3 tutorials (online for external students) and you must bring your draft "pitch" to the tutorial (or submit it online if external). 5 (of the 20) marks for this assessment will be awarded for completion of this workshop, but you must have a draft pitch ready to discuss.

On successful completion you will be able to:
- begin to develop a critical vocabulary for the analysis of film and televisual materials as primary sources;
- communicate in written and verbal forms;
- plan, revise and submit written work according to a schedule;

Film Review Task

Due: **12 October, 5PM**
Weighting: **20%**

Word limit: 800-1000 words

This task assesses your ability to complete a simple research task, your written communication skills, and your comprehension skills.

In order to complete this task you need to carefully read the prescribed tutorial readings for Weeks 1 and 7 for *Elizabeth.* You should also read the collection of pieces on historical films by included in the final section of your reader as well as a set reading about key debates between historians about Elizabeth I. Full details about this material will be included in the assessment information on ilearn.

You must then locate two reviews/commentaries on *Elizabeth*: one from a British publication, the other from an Indian publication. The reviews need to have been written around the time of the film's release - ie dated c.1998). Useful databases include Factiva (best because you can isolate your search by country/region), Film Literature Index, Film Index International, and the Film and Television Literature Index (you can find these databases in the library catalogue: click 'Databases' and then 'media' in the list of subject areas).

Once you have located your film reviews, please answer the following questions (200-250 words each):

1. After engaging with the prescribed material about historical films in general, how do you think historians should read reviews and public commentary written at the time of the film's release?

2. What arguments do your reviewers/commentators make about Elizabeth?

3. What historical and historiographical information might you need to know about Queen Elizabeth I in order to understand *Elizabeth's* interpretation of her life? (Use the prescribed material about the written historiography of Queen Elizabeth I to answer this question)

4. What sort of political and cultural concerns and issues from the time of *Elizabeth*'s release might be important in order to understand the contemporary response to the film?

On successful completion you will be able to:
  • Distinguish between primary and secondary sources;
  • begin to develop a critical vocabulary for the analysis of film and televisual materials as primary sources;
  • identify arguments in secondary sources;
  • communicate in written and verbal forms;
  • critically reflect on how historical representations are shaped by their contemporary contexts;
  • plan, revise and submit written work according to a schedule;

- consider the ethical and professional obligations of historical practitioners in regards to intellectual honesty and acknowledgement;

Research Essay

Due: **10 November, 5pm**
Weighting: **40%**

Word limit: 2000 words max

This assessment task assesses your capacity to construct an evidence-based interpretation of the past in written form - in this case, you will be offering an interpretation of a film or films in the context of their production and release. You must choose one of six set questions (which are available in the MHIS101 iLearn site under 'Assessment'): a short reading list is provided for each question but you need to also include at least TWO self-located written sources (indicate these in your bibliography). You must also submit a self-evaluation form with your essay (Available as a download on the MHIS101 iLearn site under 'Assessment').

On successful completion you will be able to:
- Distinguish between primary and secondary sources;
- begin to develop a critical vocabulary for the analysis of film and televisual materials as primary sources;
- identify arguments in secondary sources;
- communicate in written and verbal forms;
- construct an evidence-based interpretation of historical film and television;
- critically reflect on how historical representations are shaped by their contemporary contexts;
- plan, revise and submit written work according to a schedule;
- consider the ethical and professional obligations of historical practitioners in regards to intellectual honesty and acknowledgement;
- respectfully and constructively offer and respond to feedback from staff and other students.

Delivery and Resources

Delivery:

this unit is taught through a combination of lectures, tutorials and film screenings. You will be required to listen to the weekly lectures, participate in online tutorials, and watch the required film each week. If you cannot attend the on-campus film screening, you will need to either watch the film in the library or obtain your own copy outside the university. Many of the films in this unit are now available to stream via the library's streaming service, Kanopy. Some are available to rent or stream online.

Resources:

All the required readings for MHIS101 are available via the MHIS101 iLearn site or directly through the University Library. You do not require any textbooks.

The library holds most of the required films for this unit, as well as a large number of other films you will find useful or relevant. You can also access many films through your local video store (if you still have one!) or streaming services.

Unit Schedule

1. Introduction
2. Genre, Humour and the Holocaust: *Life is Beautiful*
3. 1960s America I: *JFK*
4. 1960s America II: *Mad Men*
5. 1960s America III: *The Help*
6. Early Modern Political Biography I: *Elizabeth*
7. Early Modern Political Biography II: *Elizabeth R*
8. British Empire I: *A Passage to India*
9. British Empire II: *Amazing Grace*
10. Australia at War I: *Gallipoli*
11. Australia at War II: *Paradise Road*
12. Australia at War III: *Australia*
13. Essay Writing Week

Learning and Teaching Activities

tutorial discussions

taking an active and informed role in weekly tutorial discussions and activities

lectures

attendance and active listening to lectures

referencing activity

practicing the correct referencing requirements in Modern History

reading for argument

in-class activities to practice the skills of critical reading for Modern History

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central. Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html

Grade Appeal Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html

Disruption to Studies Policy (in effect until Dec 4th, 2017): http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html

Special Consideration Policy (in effect from Dec 4th, 2017): https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the Learning and Teaching Category of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in eStudent. For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

Modern History Policy on late submission of assignments

We expect you to be able to plan your deadlines in order to complete all your assessment tasks on time: juggling competing deadlines is the reaiity of university study. If your work is submitted after the due date, 2% of your grade will be deducted for every day that the assessment task is late. Work that is more than 2 weeks late may not be accepted (unless you have applied for special consideration) and it may be marked on a pass/fail basis.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit http://students.mq.edu.au/support/

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- Workshops
- StudyWise
- Academic Integrity Module for Students
- Ask a Learning Adviser

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the Disability Service who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy. The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- begin to develop a critical vocabulary for the analysis of film and televisual materials as primary sources;

Assessment tasks

- Film Pitch
- Research Essay

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Distinguish between primary and secondary sources;
- begin to develop a critical vocabulary for the analysis of film and televisual materials as

primary sources;

- identify arguments in secondary sources;

- communicate in written and verbal forms;

- construct an evidence-based interpretation of historical film and television;

- plan, revise and submit written work according to a schedule;

- respectfully and constructively offer and respond to feedback from staff and other students.

Assessment tasks

- Weekly Tutorial Discussion

- Film Pitch

- Film Review Task

- Research Essay

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- critically reflect on how historical representations are shaped by their contemporary contexts;

- plan, revise and submit written work according to a schedule;

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Distinguish between primary and secondary sources;

- begin to develop a critical vocabulary for the analysis of film and televisual materials as

primary sources;

- identify arguments in secondary sources;
- construct an evidence-based interpretation of historical film and television;
- consider the ethical and professional obligations of historical practitioners in regards to intellectual honesty and acknowledgement;

Assessment tasks

- Weekly Tutorial Discussion
- Film Pitch
- Film Review Task
- Research Essay

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Distinguish between primary and secondary sources;
- begin to develop a critical vocabulary for the analysis of film and televisual materials as primary sources;
- identify arguments in secondary sources;
- communicate in written and verbal forms;
- construct an evidence-based interpretation of historical film and television;

Assessment tasks

- Weekly Tutorial Discussion
- Film Pitch
- Film Review Task
- Research Essay

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative

in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Distinguish between primary and secondary sources;
- begin to develop a critical vocabulary for the analysis of film and televisual materials as primary sources;
- identify arguments in secondary sources;
- construct an evidence-based interpretation of historical film and television;
- plan, revise and submit written work according to a schedule;

Assessment tasks

- Film Pitch
- Research Essay

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- communicate in written and verbal forms;
- construct an evidence-based interpretation of historical film and television;
- respectfully and constructively offer and respond to feedback from staff and other students.

Assessment tasks

- Weekly Tutorial Discussion
- Film Pitch
- Film Review Task
- Research Essay

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should

have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- begin to develop a critical vocabulary for the analysis of film and televisual materials as primary sources;
- critically reflect on how historical representations are shaped by their contemporary contexts;
- consider the ethical and professional obligations of historical practitioners in regards to intellectual honesty and acknowledgement;

Assessment task

- Film Pitch

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- begin to develop a critical vocabulary for the analysis of film and televisual materials as primary sources;
- critically reflect on how historical representations are shaped by their contemporary contexts;