



# MHIS303

## Screening the Past: History on Film and Television

S2 External 2019

*Dept of Modern History, Politics & International Relations*

### Contents

<u>General Information</u>	2
<u>Learning Outcomes</u>	2
<u>General Assessment Information</u>	3
<u>Assessment Tasks</u>	3
<u>Delivery and Resources</u>	8
<u>Unit Schedule</u>	8
<u>Policies and Procedures</u>	8
<u>Graduate Capabilities</u>	10

#### Disclaimer

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## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor

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Australian Hearing Hub, Level 2

I am available for meetings most days; email for appointments

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

39cp at 100 level or above or (6cp in HIST or MHIS or POL units at 200 level including 3cp in HIST or MHIS units)

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? How might we read historical films and television programs carefully and critically to understand diverse historical interpretations? This unit will develop student's understandings of the critical study of history on film, examining the ways that all historical texts (including films) make arguments about the past. The unit will examine cinematic and televisual representations of Australian, American and British histories.

## 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:

1. Locate historical films and television programs within the context of their production

through primary and secondary research, and understand the ways that films and television programs produce interpretations of the past;

2. Conceptualise and create an original research project about historical film and television by presenting a coherent historical argument, situated in the relevant historiography and supported by properly-referenced, high-quality historical evidence, and communicated clearly in written form;

3. Develop and apply a critical vocabulary for the analysis of film and televisual materials as primary sources;

4. Critically reflect on how historical representations, such as films, are shaped by their contemporary contexts.

## General Assessment Information

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

## Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Weekly Tutorial Quiz</u>	20%	No	weekly
<u>Film Review</u>	15%	No	Friday 23 August 2019 midnight
<u>Research Essay Proposal</u>	25%	No	Friday 13 September 2019, midnight
<u>Research Essay</u>	40%	No	Friday 1 November 2019 midnight

### Weekly Tutorial Quiz

Due: **weekly**

Weighting: **20%**

Every week (except for week 1) you will be required to complete an online quiz consisting of two short answer questions. The quiz will test your comprehension of the weekly lecture and tutorial readings. The quiz will be marked weekly and you will receive either a mark of 0, 1 or 2 for your responses (a total of 4 marks per week). Your final mark will be calculated using your best 10 quiz results, which means that you can miss up to two quizzes across the semester. Absences are only permitted with a medical certificate - if you can provide a certificate, you will receive your average quiz grade for the week you missed.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 1. Locate historical films and television programs within the context of their production through primary and secondary research, and understand the ways that films and television programs produce interpretations of the past;
- 3. Develop and apply a critical vocabulary for the analysis of film and televisual materials as primary sources;
- 4. Critically reflect on how historical representations, such as films, are shaped by their contemporary contexts.

## Film Review

Due: **Friday 23 August 2019 midnight**

Weighting: **15%**

Word Limit: 650 words.

This assessment task evaluates your ability to write clearly and accessibly and your primary research skills.

Write a review of an historical film or television series for a magazine or website, such as *The Guardian*, *The Conversation*, or *Junkee*. The review should be written in a punchy, readable style, but it must address the following questions:

- the context of the film's release - when was it released? What did contemporary reviewers say about the film (you must cite at least 2 contemporary reviews of the film)? How might you relate the film to the time of its release, based on your viewing and the comments of reviewers?
- what is the film's genre and how might this shape the meaning of the narrative it conveys?
- what historical argument does the film make? You will probably need to do some basic research of the event the film depicts.

There are good examples of the kind of writing style you should emulate here (remember to read the articles on historical films only!): <https://www.theguardian.com/film/film+series/rewatching-classic-australian-films>

Your article should be referenced in the normal way, with footnotes and a bibliography, in the style specified in the Modern History Essay Writing Guide.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 1. Locate historical films and television programs within the context of their production through primary and secondary research, and understand the ways that films and television programs produce interpretations of the past;
- 2. Conceptualise and create an original research project about historical film and television by presenting a coherent historical argument, situated in the relevant historiography and supported by properly-referenced, high-quality historical evidence, and communicated clearly in written form;
- 3. Develop and apply a critical vocabulary for the analysis of film and televisual materials as primary sources;
- 4. Critically reflect on how historical representations, such as films, are shaped by their contemporary contexts.

## Research Essay Proposal

Due: **Friday 13 September 2019, midnight**

Weighting: **25%**

This task will assess your ability to develop a research question and approach, as well as your ability to locate and analyse **primary and secondary sources**. It is the first step towards developing your research essay. The proposals will be returned in time for you to work on your research essay after the mid-semester break.

You should proceed as follows:

**Thinking about a topic:** It is best to start this process as early as possible. Look at the weekly lecture and tutorial schedule. What themes in this course do you find most interesting? What questions are you interested in exploring? Are you interested in a particular film? A time period? An historical period depicted in films?

**Developing a question:** Your question needs to be direct and focused, because you will be assessed on how you answer it. You can focus on debate about a particular film or set of films. You could consider how a particular historical event has been depicted in film and television, or compare a pair of films on a similar topic. You could think about the ways a broader historiographical theme or debate has been represented in historical film (reconciliation, combat experiences in war gender and biography, the US civil rights movement) or you could consider the role of genre historical films. Your essay must contain original primary research (investigating film reviews and other commentary from the time of the film's release) and it must contain secondary research as well - both research on the film itself, and research into the events or context depicted in the film.

**Submitting your proposal:** The proposal is due **WEEK 7** via turnitin on iLearn.

Your proposal should be 1500 words and *must* include the following:

1. Your research question, clearly framed as an essay question, rather than simply as an idea.
2. Your *approach to the question*. This section should be around 800 words. In outlining your approach, consider the following questions:
  - What is your topic about? What time and place are you focusing on?
  - What might your main primary sources be? Are they accessible? Why are they useful? List at least three and explain how at least one of your sources relates to your research area and question, explain its key themes, and explain how you might use it as evidence - what components of the source are most useful to you?
  - What do you need to know about the historical background/context of your topic/films?
  - What other themes or issues do you need to understand in order to explore this topic properly?
  - Are there questions about evidence or methodology you need to consider?
3. An annotated bibliography, which must have seven 100 word entries. The works in your annotated bibliography should be the most relevant secondary sources for researching your project. You may use the questions in the 'approach' section above as a guide to thinking about the kinds of readings you need to cover in your annotated bibliography.
4. The proposal enables you to start thinking about your research essay at an early stage and understand where your work will fit within the relevant field of study. If you are unsure what an annotated bibliography looks like, see the following websites:
  - <https://student.unsw.edu.au/annotated-bibliography>
  - <http://guides.library.cornell.edu/annotatedbibliography>
  - <http://www.citewrite.qut.edu.au/write/annotatedbibliography.jsp>

**Grading Criteria:** You will be assessed on the following criteria -

- Understanding and focus on the task of presenting a detailed, relevant research project proposal
- Knowledge of both the historical and historiographical context of the proposed area of research
- Communication: clarity of prose, use of correct grammar and spelling
- Referencing and annotated bibliography: appropriate use of source material and academic honesty/relevant annotations in the bibliography
- Presentation: presence of page numbers and bibliography, double-spacing of text, justification of margins, completion of the entire assessment task

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 1. Locate historical films and television programs within the context of their production through primary and secondary research, and understand the ways that films and television programs produce interpretations of the past;
- 2. Conceptualise and create an original research project about historical film and television by presenting a coherent historical argument, situated in the relevant historiography and supported by properly-referenced, high-quality historical evidence, and communicated clearly in written form;
- 3. Develop and apply a critical vocabulary for the analysis of film and televisual materials as primary sources;
- 4. Critically reflect on how historical representations, such as films, are shaped by their contemporary contexts.

## Research Essay

Due: **Friday 1 November 2019 midnight**

Weighting: **40%**

This assessment task evaluates your ability to construct an argument in response to your own self-devised research question, based on primary and secondary sources. This task is the culmination of your assessment tasks in this unit; all your previous assessments are "scaffolding" this final task. You need to observe the conventions of writing and referencing as outlined in ["Writing Essays in History"](#).

Your final essay should be 3000 words, not including referencing.

This assessment is to be submitted via turnitin on iLearn. **Remember to submit the essay self-assessment (available on iLearn) sheet with your essay.** You must also include a short statement, about one paragraph, on how you have utilised the feedback you have received throughout the semester at the various workshops in completing your final research project.

There is a rubric for this assessment task included as a PDF download in the "Assessments" section on iLearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 1. Locate historical films and television programs within the context of their production through primary and secondary research, and understand the ways that films and television programs produce interpretations of the past;
- 2. Conceptualise and create an original research project about historical film and television by presenting a coherent historical argument, situated in the relevant historiography and supported by properly-referenced, high-quality historical evidence,

and communicated clearly in written form;

- 3. Develop and apply a critical vocabulary for the analysis of film and televisual materials as primary sources;
- 4. Critically reflect on how historical representations, such as films, are shaped by their contemporary contexts.

## Delivery and Resources

Delivery:

this unit is taught through a combination of a lecture, a film screening and a tutorial - you will need to attend the lecture, film screening and the tutorial each week, and if you cannot attend the screening, then you need to catch up with the film on your own time before you come to class. You must also either attend or listen to the lecture before you attend the tutorial.

Resources:

All the required readings for MHIS303 are available via the MHIS303 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. Fabrications, Inventions and historical 'truth': *JFK*
4. Slavery and Abolition I: *Amazing Grace*
5. Slavery and Abolition II: *Django Unchained*
6. Early Modern Political Biography I: *Elizabeth*
7. Early Modern Political Biography II: *Elizabeth R*
8. Australia at War I: *Paradise Road*
9. Australia at War II: *Gallipoli*
10. WWII I: *Saving Private Ryan*
11. WWII II: *Dunkirk*
12. Women's Liberation and the Sixties I: *Mad Men*
13. Women's Liberation and the Sixties II: *Paper Giants: The Birth of Cleo*

## Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-centr) (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-centr>)



al). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central](http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/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/study/getting-started/student-conduct>

## Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) 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](http://ask.mq.edu.au) or if you are a Global MBA student contact [globalmba.support@mq.edu.au](mailto:globalmba.support@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 reality 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](http://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](http://ask.mq.edu.au)

If you are a Global MBA student contact [globalmba.support@mq.edu.au](mailto:globalmba.support@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/](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 outcomes

- 2. Conceptualise and create an original research project about historical film and television by presenting a coherent historical argument, situated in the relevant historiography and supported by properly-referenced, high-quality historical evidence, and communicated clearly in written form;
- 3. Develop and apply a critical vocabulary for the analysis of film and televisual materials as primary sources;

## Assessment tasks

- Film Review
- 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

- 1. Locate historical films and television programs within the context of their production through primary and secondary research, and understand the ways that films and television programs produce interpretations of the past;
- 2. Conceptualise and create an original research project about historical film and television by presenting a coherent historical argument, situated in the relevant historiography and supported by properly-referenced, high-quality historical evidence, and communicated clearly in written form;
- 3. Develop and apply a critical vocabulary for the analysis of film and televisual materials as primary sources;
- 4. Critically reflect on how historical representations, such as films, are shaped by their contemporary contexts.

## Assessment tasks

- Weekly Tutorial Quiz
- Film Review
- Research Essay Proposal
- Research Essay

## 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**

- 1. Locate historical films and television programs within the context of their production through primary and secondary research, and understand the ways that films and television programs produce interpretations of the past;
- 2. Conceptualise and create an original research project about historical film and television by presenting a coherent historical argument, situated in the relevant historiography and supported by properly-referenced, high-quality historical evidence, and communicated clearly in written form;
- 3. Develop and apply a critical vocabulary for the analysis of film and televisual materials as primary sources;
- 4. Critically reflect on how historical representations, such as films, are shaped by their contemporary contexts.

## **Assessment tasks**

- Weekly Tutorial Quiz
- Film Review
- Research Essay Proposal
- 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**

- 1. Locate historical films and television programs within the context of their production through primary and secondary research, and understand the ways that films and television programs produce interpretations of the past;
- 2. Conceptualise and create an original research project about historical film and television by presenting a coherent historical argument, situated in the relevant historiography and supported by properly-referenced, high-quality historical evidence, and communicated clearly in written form;
- 3. Develop and apply a critical vocabulary for the analysis of film and televisual materials

as primary sources;

- 4. Critically reflect on how historical representations, such as films, are shaped by their contemporary contexts.

## **Assessment tasks**

- Weekly Tutorial Quiz
- Film Review
- Research Essay Proposal
- 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**

- 1. Locate historical films and television programs within the context of their production through primary and secondary research, and understand the ways that films and television programs produce interpretations of the past;
- 2. Conceptualise and create an original research project about historical film and television by presenting a coherent historical argument, situated in the relevant historiography and supported by properly-referenced, high-quality historical evidence, and communicated clearly in written form;
- 3. Develop and apply a critical vocabulary for the analysis of film and televisual materials as primary sources;
- 4. Critically reflect on how historical representations, such as films, are shaped by their contemporary contexts.

## **Assessment tasks**

- Film Review
- 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**

- 2. Conceptualise and create an original research project about historical film and television by presenting a coherent historical argument, situated in the relevant historiography and supported by properly-referenced, high-quality historical evidence, and communicated clearly in written form;
- 3. Develop and apply a critical vocabulary for the analysis of film and televisual materials as primary sources;
- 4. Critically reflect on how historical representations, such as films, are shaped by their contemporary contexts.

## **Assessment tasks**

- Weekly Tutorial Quiz
- Film Review
- Research Essay Proposal
- 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**

- 2. Conceptualise and create an original research project about historical film and television by presenting a coherent historical argument, situated in the relevant historiography and supported by properly-referenced, high-quality historical evidence, and communicated clearly in written form;
- 3. Develop and apply a critical vocabulary for the analysis of film and televisual materials as primary sources;
- 4. Critically reflect on how historical representations, such as films, are shaped by their contemporary contexts.

## **Assessment task**

- Film Review

## **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 outcome**

- 2. Conceptualise and create an original research project about historical film and television by presenting a coherent historical argument, situated in the relevant historiography and supported by properly-referenced, high-quality historical evidence, and communicated clearly in written form;