

# FILM 237: The Cinema of Aotearoa New Zealand

Trimester 2 2009 (13 July-13 November 2009)

22 Points



## TRIMESTER DATES

Teaching dates:	13 July to 16 October 2009
Study week:	19 to 23 October 2009
Last piece of assessment due:	28 October 2009

## STAFF

Course Convenor/Lecturer:	Dr. Neil Bather
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Room:	305, 83FT
Office Hours:	Mondays: 1-3pm

## CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

### Lectures

Monday	10am – 1pm	HMLT105
Wednesday	10am – 1pm	HMLT105

## **Tutorials**

Tutorials will take place on Fridays in 85FT 108, starting at 9am, 10am or 12pm. Full details will be posted on S-Cubed and Blackboard. Students should enrol for tutorials through S-Cubed.

## **COURSE DELIVERY**

This course will consist of two 3-hour lecture/screenings and one 1-hour tutorial per week. The lecture/screening sessions will normally involve a film screening followed by a lecture. The tutorial will involve the discussion of weekly topics, lectures, screenings and assigned readings, as well as information relevant to assessed work. It will be structured around a range of learning activities, such as pair and small group work, and whole class discussions.

## **COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Any additional information concerning the course, including changes, will be posted on Blackboard.

## **COURSE CONTENT**

This course will survey some of the key features of the cinema of Aotearoa New Zealand. The primary concern of the course will be to engage with ideas and themes that identify this cinema as one specifically of, and from, Aotearoa New Zealand. That is, while local films are essentially classical in terms of both narrative and visual style (mirroring both mainstream and independent American filmmaking), they retain, and emphasise, elements that define these films as distinctly New Zealand. Such ideas and themes will include landscape, ethnicity (including indigenous filmmaking), gender, authority, horror, and violence.

The course will also explore, if briefly, the history of film in Aotearoa New Zealand, the economics of production and distribution of local films, and the work of key directors, such as Peter Jackson, Vincent Ward and John O'Shea.

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- To provide students with a broad understanding of some of the key debates within Film Studies about the cinema of Aotearoa New Zealand.
- To give students specific knowledge of the thematic and aesthetic construction and interpretation of the cinema of Aotearoa New Zealand, how this cinema engages with local concerns and ideas in unique ways, the films of John O'Shea, Vincent Ward and Peter Jackson, the New Zealand horror film, and representations of ethnicity and gender.
- To improve the textual analysis and research skills of students.
- To enhance the ability of students to write essays and make oral presentations.

**EXPECTED WORKLOAD**

For a 22-point course at 200 level, the University expects you to be able to devote about 15 hours per week to the course during the teaching period, and about 40 hours outside this time. If you attend seven (7) hours of classes per week, you should expect to spend eight (8) hours per week during the teaching period reading, watching films, preparing for classes and working on assignments.

**READINGS**

There is no set text for this course. Each week you will be expected to have completed a list of assigned readings that will help you prepare for tutorials. A list of these will be distributed early in week 1 and will be posted on Blackboard. Each reading will be available via Electronic Closed Reserve in the Central Library.

**ASSESSMENT**

All assessment for this course will be internal.

It is important that you attend both lectures and tutorials for additional information that will assist you in completing these assignments to a satisfactory standard.

The assessment will consist of the following:

Assignment	Due Date	% of Final Grade
Research Exercise	Monday 10 August	20%
First Essay	Monday 7 September	30%
In-Class Presentation	In tutorials	20%
Second Essay	Tuesday 27 October	30%

Full details of these assignments can be found at the end of this course outline.

**ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEETS**

It is important that all assignments are submitted with a completed cover sheet attached. These, as well as extension forms, can be found on Blackboard or outside the Programme office. Remember to complete all details on the form, including your tutor's name.

Assignments should be placed in the drop box in 85 Fairlie Terrace. Do not submit your assignments to the lecturer or your tutor.

Make sure you keep a copy of your assignment before submitting it.

## **PENALTIES AND EXTENSIONS**

Work submitted late without an extension will be penalised two percent per working day. Except under exceptional circumstances, no work will be accepted more than two weeks after the due date unless specific prior arrangements have been made.

### **Extensions**

If you require an extension, you must complete an extension request form (available on the course Blackboard site) prior to the assignment due date. This must be accompanied by relevant documentation (e.g. a doctor's certificate) where appropriate. Extension requests must be submitted to the Course Co-ordinator. Tutors cannot grant extensions.

### **Important Note**

Extensions are only given in the event of exceptional circumstances, or circumstances that cannot be foreseen. This does not include clashes with assignments that may be due at the same time in other courses you are taking. It is your responsibility to ensure that you manage your time accordingly in order to complete assignments on time. All details of assessed work is contained in this course outline, thus you have all the information you require to begin your work. Therefore, no extensions will be given for this reason.

## **MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

To be eligible to pass the course, you must complete all assignments and attend at least seven (7) tutorials. If on a particular week you are unable to be present at your scheduled tutorial you may, with the tutor's permission, attend another on that same week.

Regular attendance is also expected at screenings and lectures, though there will be no roll calls taken.

## **STATEMENT ON LEGIBILITY**

You are expected to present work that meets appropriate standards. Work submitted during the course should be typed or prepared on a computer, and should meet the presentation requirements of the department. Especially important points to note are that all work should be in Times New Roman, at least size 12 font, and double spaced.

## **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.aspx>

## 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.

## GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND STATUTES

You should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

The AVC (Academic) website also provides information in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates. This website can be accessed at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcademic/Publications.aspx>

**COURSE PROGRAMME**

<b>Week 1</b>	13 July	<b><u>Introduction and History</u></b> <b>Monday:</b> Screening – <i>The Bush Cinderella</i> (Rudall Hayward, 1928), <i>Cinema of Unease</i> (Sam Neill, 1995) <b>Wednesday:</b> Screening – <i>Rewi's Last Stand</i> (Rudall Hayward, 1938)
<b>Week 2</b>	20 July	<b><u>History/Colonialism</u></b> <b>Monday:</b> Screening – <i>Utu</i> (Geoff Murphy, 1982) <b>Wednesday:</b> Screening – <i>Illustrious Energy</i> (Leon Narbey, 1988)  <b>Tutorials start this week.</b>
<b>Week 3</b>	27 July	<b><u>Landscape</u></b> <b>Monday:</b> Screening – <i>Vigil</i> (Vincent Ward, 1984) <b>Wednesday:</b> Screening – <i>Rain</i> (Christine Jeffs, 2001)
<b>Week 4</b>	3 Aug.	<b><u>The 'Man Alone'</u></b> <b>Monday:</b> Screening – <i>Runaway</i> (John O'Shea, 1963) <b>Wednesday:</b> Screening – <i>Sleeping Dogs</i> (Roger Donaldson, 1977)
<b>Week 5</b>	10 Aug.	<b><u>Gender</u></b> <b>Monday:</b> Screening – <i>Smash Palace</i> (Roger Donaldson, 1981) <b>Wednesday:</b> Screening – <i>War Stories Our Mothers Never Told Us</i> (Gaylene Preston, 1995) <b>NOTE: ASSIGNMENT ONE (RESEARCH EXERCISE) DUE THIS WEEK – MONDAY PRESENTATIONS BEGIN THIS WEEK IN TUTORIALS</b>
<b>Week 6</b>	17 Aug.	<b><u>Family</u></b>  <b>Monday:</b> Screening – <i>In My Father's Den</i> (Brad McGann, 2004)

Wednesday:

Screening – *No. 2* (Toa Fraser, 2006)

**Mid Trimester Break:** Monday 24 August– Friday 4 September 2009

**Week 7** 7 Sept.

**Comedy**

Monday:

Screening – *Goodbye Pork Pie* (Geoff Murphy, 1980)

Wednesday:

Screening – *Bad Taste* (Peter Jackson, 1987)

**FIRST ESSAY DUE THIS WEEK – MONDAY**

**Week 8** 14 Sept.

**Violence**

Monday:

Screening – *Bad Blood* (Mike Newell, 1982)

Wednesday:

Screening – *Heavenly Creatures* (Peter Jackson, 1994)

**Week 9** 21 Sept.

**Maori on Film**

Monday

To be facilitated by Alice Te Punga Somerville and Ocean Mercier

Screenings – *Tama Tu* (Taika Cohen, 2004), *Ngati* (Barry Barclay, 1987), *Turangawaewae* (Peter Berger, 1996)

Wednesday

Panel Session

Screenings – *Hawaikii* (Mike Jonathan, 2006), *Two Cars One Night* (Taika Cohen, 2003), *The Little Things* (Reina Webster, 2004), *O Tamaiti* (Sima Urale, 1996)

**Week 10** 28 Sept.

**Horror**

Monday:

Screening – *The Scarecrow* (Sam Pillsbury, 1981)

Wednesday:

Screening – *Mr. Wrong* (Gaylene Preston, 1984)

**Week 11** 5 Oct.

**The Blank Canvas**

Monday:

Screening – *The Frighteners* (Peter Jackson, 1996)

Wednesday:

Screening – *Vertical Limit* (Martin Campbell, 2000)

<b>Week 12</b>	<b>12 Oct.</b>	<b><u>Conclusion</u></b>
		<b><u>Monday:</u></b>
		Screening – <i>Rain of the Children</i> (Vincent Ward, 2008)
		<b><u>Wednesday:</u></b>
		Screening – <i>Race for the Yankee Zephyr</i> (David Hemming, 1981)
		<b>SECOND ESSAY DUE 27 OCTOBER</b>

**Study Period:** Monday 19 to Friday 23 October 2009

**Examination Period:** Tuesday 27 October – Sunday 15 November 2009

### ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

#### Assignment One:

**Research Exercise: Due 10 August (20% of final grade)**

This assignment is the first in a three-tier exercise in which you explore one film in the ways that it is uniquely 'New Zealand'. There are many ways that a film could be identifiable as originating in a certain country and culture, such as locations, settings and landscapes, specific narratives and characters, thematic concerns and types of humour, as well as filmmaking personnel and sources of finance. Your task is to choose one film that you think is, in one or several ways, distinctly New Zealand in origin and to provide an analysis, across the three assignments, of why you believe this to be the case.

**The film you choose to analyse cannot be a film screened in lectures, and cannot be the same as anybody else's in your tutorial group. Full details of how films will be assigned will be introduced in the first lecture and fully explained in the first tutorial.**

For this first part of the assignment, you will be required to submit a reference list of ten sources that will be useful for your analysis of your chosen film. It is important that the sources you find are relevant to either the specific film you have chosen or the themes and ideas in the film that are significant (such as, say, the issue of violence in New Zealand culture in regards to a film that explores such issues).

For five of these sources, you will provide a 250-word annotation (that is, 1250 words total) explaining why you think these sources are relevant and why they will be helpful to you. The ten sources must include the following:

1. Four academic books – two of which must be annotated.
2. Three academic journal articles – one of which must be annotated.
3. Two critical reviews of your film – one of which must be annotated.
4. A relevant website – which must be annotated.

These sources must be correctly referenced.

You may, of course, find and list more than ten sources! Indeed, as you progress through the trimester, it is probable that you will find other pertinent sources such that your final essay will include a bibliography that is larger than you provided here.



## **Assignment Two**

### **Individual Presentation: In tutorials from week four (20% of final grade)**

Based on the film that you have chosen/have been allocated from Assignment One, you are required to present your initial findings on why that film is distinctly New Zealand in origin. To do this, you will show a sequence that is no more than two minutes long, and then, for no longer than five minutes, engage specifically with the ideas and themes that are contained within that sequence.

You are encouraged to use visual material to supplement your presentation, such as powerpoints, still images, etc.

Assessment criteria includes the following:

1. Selection of clip, and its relevance to your presentation.
2. Your engagement with the issues you believe are important in terms of why the clip is representative of a New Zealand film.
3. Clear evidence of well-directed research, including, at the least, name-checking your sources.
4. Your presentation skills, including how you get your ideas across, how you use supplementary materials, and how you engage with the audience.
5. The coherency and structure of your presentation.
6. Keeping within proscribed time limits.

## **Assignment Three**

### **First Essay – 2,500 words**

#### **Due Monday 7 September by 2pm (30% of final grade)**

Choosing a theme that has been covered in the first half of the trimester (that is, colonialism, landscape, the 'man alone', gender, or family), you will analyse how films made in Aotearoa New Zealand explore these themes in ways that are specific to this culture. You should draw on at least five films to explain your argument (one of which may be your film from the other assignments, and at least two others must be films that are not screened in lectures).

Assessment criteria includes the following:

1. Essay structure, including defined introduction and conclusion.
2. Evidence of set reading and wider research. Essays need to be correctly referenced, supportive quotations supplied, and completed with a bibliography of sources used.
3. Avoidance of description.
4. The 'language of film studies should find its way into the essay – the key terms, concepts and critical ideas should be drawn upon to flesh out the readings of the films.
5. Critical autonomy is important; original ideas and argument are important factors in the success of a film-based essay.
6. Repetition should be avoided. The word count should be kept to. Essays should be double-spaced with a wide margin on both sides of the paper. It should be completed in size 12, Times New Roman font. A cover sheet with essay title, course title, student name and tutor name must be included. The essay must also be submitted on Turnitin (details to be provided in class).

## **Assignment Four**

### **Second Essay – 2,500 words**

#### **Due Tuesday 27 October by 2pm (30% of final grade)**

In this essay you will complete the analysis of your chosen film from assignments 1 and 2. Without repeating material from your presentation, you can expand on these ideas and draw on new ones not yet covered, in order to fully engage with what you think makes this film distinctly from Aotearoa New Zealand. In other words, you need to provide a definition of what you think makes a film a New Zealand film, and, utilising specific ideas, themes, aesthetic and narrative choices, etc evident in your text, how it fits into your definition.

It is important to note that there is no one specific definition of what makes a film 'Aotearoa New Zealand', so you are able to explore the notion in, hopefully, fresh and exciting ways.