School of Humanities and Languages

ARTS3289, DOCUMENTARY FILM AND HISTORY
Semester 1, 2016

Péter Forgács, MeanwhileSomewhere, 1994, 52 mins.

Course convenor: Ruth Balint.

Lecture 10-12 Pioneer international Theatre
Tutorial 12-1 John Goodsell LG19
1. Course Staff and Contact Details

**Course Convenor and Lecturer**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ruth Balint</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>MB345</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>9385 8278</td>
<td>Email</td>
<td><a href="mailto:r.balint@unsw.edu.au">r.balint@unsw.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation Time</td>
<td>Friday 1 - 2.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. Course Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units of Credit (UoC)</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Description</td>
<td>Documentary film is a dominant form of historical knowledge in today's world. This course explores the ways in which documentary films represent, construct, remember and imagine the past, and their function as &quot;History&quot; in the public sphere. Students will analyse documentary's traditional status as a truth telling device in light of similar debates over the nature of historical authenticity and fictional representations of the past. The possibilities of the audiovisual archive as a source of historical evidence is also examined. Students are encouraged to consider both the limitations and the potential for documentary as a mode of historical production, and what the future holds for history on the screen. Topics addressed in this course include the construction of historical memory; ethnography and race; testimony and the historical witness; television histories; historical re-enactment and ‘reality history”; digital storytelling; the audio-visual archive; home movies; found footage; fictional histories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture:</td>
<td>Friday 10-12, Pioneer International Theatre, AGSM Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial:</td>
<td>Friday 12-1, John Goodsell LG19.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Essentials:**

Make sure that you have access to Moodle. It is where you will find lecture powerpoints, course materials, your weekly readings, assessment submission (Turn It In) and regular news updates.

| Course Aims | This course explores how history is created, understood and used in the public domain. The focus is documentary, but the wider context is the role of history and memory more generally in the twentieth century. Examining documentary allows us to think more critically about the |
questions of myth, representation, authenticity and evidence. The course aims to:

1. provide upper level students with the opportunity to discuss and analyse the ways in which histories are made, represented and constructed on the screen;
2. explore the possibilities of the audiovisual archive as historical evidence
3. develop skills of critical analysis in assessing media representations of history, (such as the types of strategies of persuasion that are used); and
4. think about the future of History as a documentary form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>1.</th>
<th>Think critically about the different ways documentary films have represented, constructed and made history;</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Evaluate documentary films in an intellectually rigorous and historically informed manner;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Recognise the raw material of the audiovisual archive as historical evidence;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Identify and interpret a wide variety of secondary and primary materials in written and oral form;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Analyse historical evidence, scholarship and changing representations of the past.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate Attributes</th>
<th>1.</th>
<th>The skills involved in scholarly enquiry.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The ability to engage in independent and reflective learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Information Literacy - the skills to locate, evaluate and use relevant information.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The capacity for enterprise, initiative and creativity.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.</td>
<td>The skills of effective communication.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6.</td>
<td>A respect for ethical practice and social responsibility.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.</td>
<td>An in-depth engagement with the relevant disciplinary knowledge in its interdisciplinary context.</td>
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</table>
3. Learning and Teaching Rationale

In my own work I am interested in the possibilities of the non-print form for historical research and am particularly fascinated by the audiovisual archives and the documentary film format. This course is structured around a love of documentary and I aim to show as much documentary film as possible, as well as contextualising viewings within the arguments and theories that have accompanied and challenged the historical documentary over the past century. I see this course as a way of engaging students in discussion, debate and argument about the extraordinarily rich field of documentary film and its relationship to history. I encourage group work through online discussion as well as in class, and independent research (and documentary viewing!).

4. Teaching Strategies

This course has a two hour lecture each week, followed by a one hour tutorial. Documentaries under discussion will be screened during the lecture time, but as there is limited time available, students will also be encouraged to watch these documentaries independently. Tutorials will be devoted to discussing the readings set in the course reader each week, as well as some group work in preparation for presentations held at the end of semester and it is hoped that students will develop a sense of familiarity with their fellow colleagues in the course. The tutorial program has been designed to link in with the lecture material, and tutorials are used to elaborate on a specific theme contextualised in the lecture.

5. Course Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Task</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes Assessed</th>
<th>Graduate Attributes Assessed</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Essay</td>
<td>3000 words</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7</td>
<td>16 May, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial Essay</td>
<td>1500 words</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>1, 2, 5</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 5, 7</td>
<td>Weeks 3 - 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Presentation and written summary</td>
<td>30 minutes and 500 words</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>1, 2, 4, 5</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7</td>
<td>Weeks 12 and 13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please Note: The Arts and Social Sciences Protocols and Guidelines state:

A student who attends less than 80% of the classes/activities and has not submitted appropriate supporting documentation to the Course Authority to explain their absence may be awarded a grade of UF (Unsatisfactory Fail).

The Attendance Guidelines can be found in full at: https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/Protocols-Guidelines/

1. RESEARCH ESSAY – 50%
DUE: 16 May, 4pm
3000 words.

The essay is designed to allow you to conduct independent research and to critically evaluate scholarly texts. You are expected to develop a theoretical framework for your argument, and should broadly address the relationship between film and history. You are expected to use at least two documentaries as case studies, and importantly, to demonstrate an awareness of the historical issues related to the context and content of your documentary case studies. This is not meant to be a Film Studies essay, but an essay that explores the problems, tensions and opportunities for history and historians in documentary film.
All essays should involve a sophisticated level of analysis and conceptualisation. Students are strongly encouraged to develop a critical argument based on solid reading and analysis of both primary and secondary evidence, and to show how they have come to a particular conclusion from their research. **Essays will be evaluated according to the initiative shown in locating relevant sources as well as on the quality of the argument, grasp of conceptual material and presentation of ideas.**

- All papers must be properly footnoted, and include a SYNOPSIS and a BIBLIOGRAPHY (with a filmography – see below).
- The word length is 3000. This does not include footnotes, bibliography and synopsis, however please avoid using footnotes as an opportunity for extra discussion.
- Essays must be typed and double-spaced.
- A detailed set of marking criteria appears on page 22 of this guide.

You are expected to consult at least five key references, excluding websites. The references listed in this course guide and the readings in the course kit are a good starting point, and you should also consult the online databases available through the UNSW Library website. In general, be very careful about website research – Wikipedia is not a valid source for an academic essay! Sites created by universities, libraries, archives, some government bodies and electronic academic journals are, however, usually reliable. **Reference websites properly, citing author, title, date and place of origin, and the date the site was visited. Do not simply list the website address, this will NOT be accepted.**

If you are using material from the essential readings, please use the original source references.

A filmography is a list of the films you have referred to in your essay. In many cases, depending on the essay question, these films may be counted as primary sources. The correct way to reference films lists the full title of the film, the director, date of release and the screening time in minutes. When citing a film in your essay, use the same principles as you would when citing a published book, i.e. the first footnote should be a full bibliographic citation, and from then on, only a short form of the title is necessary. All film titles must be in italics.

**The Essay Questions**

1. What in your view, distinguishes the historical documentary film from popular or mainstream representations of history?
2. ‘Documentary claims to address the historical world and to possess the capacity to intervene by shaping how we regard it.’ [Bill Nichols]. Discuss, using examples that do or do not conform to this analysis.
3. Has the incorporation of ‘popular memory’ or oral histories into historical documentaries been successful in giving those who have traditionally been absent from dominant historical narratives a voice? Why, or why not?
4. Rather than undercut European myths about race, ethnographic films have reinforced such assumptions. Discuss, using at least two examples.
5. How can home movies and amateur footage be used as evidence in historical analysis?
6. “The absence of the political makes history nostalgic”. Discuss, using at least two examples from reality or reenactment history programs.

You are welcome to create your own essay question, but please make sure you get it approved first.

**2. TUTORIAL PAPER – 30%**

THIS IS DUE ONE WEEK AFTER THE WEEKLY TOPIC YOU HAVE CHOSEN.

1500 words

Please select one of the weekly tutorial topics for weeks 2, 3 or 5. If you choose to investigate the week 2 tutorial topic, you must submit your paper by the following Thursday in week 3.
Answer the set tutorial question from your chosen week. Base your answer on the readings from the Study Kit. You do not need to do extra research, however you are welcome to incorporate an extra reading if you wish to, and this will be noted. The paper should be fully referenced, this includes a bibliography. You should also endeavour to watch and incorporate a relevant documentary film for that weekly topic.

The purpose of this exercise is to practice your skills of comprehension, analysis, writing and synthesis of material. It is also designed so that you get feedback on these skills before the submission of your major essay.

3. GROUP PRESENTATION – 20%
   To be presented in weeks 12 or 13.
   30 minutes.

In the first seminar, in week 2 of the course, you will be assigned to a group of around 4 people, in preparation for a presentation in week 12 or 13 of the course. Throughout the semester, the group will develop their project in class (weeks 2, 5, 8, 11) and outside of it (ie. over email and/ or through external meetings). Your group will be required to select a documentary film which you will then present to the course in 25 minutes, leaving a few minutes at the end for questions. Your documentary film should address history, either as an historical event, question or debate, or be historical in nature. Things you should think about in preparing your presentation is: How does your documentary film either challenge, interpret or even change our view of, history? How has your documentary been received in the past compared to today? What is the benefit of the long view of history on television? (if your documentary is, for example, a series exploring a national history)? How well can film depict history before the invention of the camera? (if your documentary is about an event or time before the twentieth century)? How are historians dealt with in your documentary?

Each group will have about 25 minutes for their presentation, so there will be time for demonstrating your argument with chosen clips, though you will need to be selective.

Students will receive written feedback from the convenor grading research and presentation. More specifically, the group will be assessed on:

- The presentation itself – a thirty minute presentation is longer than the typical class presentation, but shorter than a lecture. In preparing the presentation, think about how to engage the audience – for instance through the use of film, images, by providing a clear overview and structure. In assessing the presentation, the convenor will also consider how the group responds to questions at the end of the presentation.

- Research and analysis – ideally the history will be a nuanced one that does not merely ‘celebrate’ or recite details of the specific documentary, but rather uses the case study to illuminate wider themes.

- Ability to work as a group – not just during the presentation, but also across the semester. An effective group makes the best use of the diverse talents of the group; these will be discovered through conversations that ideally lead to a productive allocation of tasks.

- Individual contribution: ie. how successfully the student fulfilled her/ his particular brief/ assigned role.

Students will be required to hand in a 500 word summary of the project focussing on the reasons behind why a specific documentary was chosen, the research methods and bibliography of sources used by the student in the preparation of the presentation and an assessment of their role in the group. We will workshop this more in class – every presentation is different and there is flexibility to demonstrate creativity in this assessment. This will enable me to factor in the individual contributions to the overall group.
Grades

All results are reviewed at the end of each semester and may be adjusted to ensure equitable marking across the School.

The proportion of marks lying in each grading range is determined not by any formula or quota system, but by the way that students respond to assessment tasks and how well they meet the objectives of the course. Nevertheless, since higher grades imply performance that is well above average, the number of distinctions and high distinctions awarded in a typical course is relatively small. At the other extreme, on average 6.1% of students do not meet minimum standards and a little more (8.6%) in first year courses. For more information on the grading categories see: https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/academiclife/assessment/GuideToUNSWGrades.html

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Assignments must be submitted electronically through Moodle (http://moodle.telt.unsw.edu.au/). You must use your zID login to submit your assignments in Moodle.

There are two “Learning Activities” in Moodle labelled according to the appropriate assessment. Please electronically submit your assignment to the correct “Learning Activity”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment task to be submitted in Moodle</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial Paper</td>
<td>Friday of Week 4, 5 or 6. See assessment description above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Essay</td>
<td>16 May, 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Please note the deadline to submit an assignment electronically is 4:00 pm on the due date of the assignment.

When you submit your assignment electronically, you agree that:

I have followed the Student Code of Conduct. I certify that I have read and understand the University requirements in respect of student academic misconduct outlined in the Student Code of Conduct and the Student Misconduct Procedure. I declare that this assessment item is my own work, except where acknowledged, and has not been submitted for academic credit previously in whole or in part.

I acknowledge that the assessor of this item may, for assessment purposes:

- provide a copy to another staff member of the University
- communicate a copy of this assessment item to a plagiarism checking service (such as Turnitin) which may retain a copy of the assessment item on its database for the purpose of future plagiarism checking.

Your assignment will be available with feedback in soft copy hard copy within three weeks of the due date.

You are required to put your name (as it appears in University records) and UNSW Student ID on every page of your assignments.

If you encounter a problem when attempting to submit your assignment through Moodle/Turnitin, please telephone External Support on 9385 3331 or email them on externalsupport@unsw.edu.au. Support hours are 8:00am – 10:00pm on weekdays and 9:00am – 5:00pm on weekends (365 days a year).
If you are unable to submit your assignment due to a fault with Turnitin you may apply for an extension, but you must retain your ticket number from External Support (along with any other relevant documents) to include as evidence to support your extension application. If you email External Support you will automatically receive a ticket number, but if you telephone you will need to specifically ask for one. Turnitin also provides updates on its system status on Twitter.

For information on how to submit assignments online via Moodle:


**Late Submission of Assignments**

The Arts and Social Sciences late submissions guidelines state the following:

- An assessed task is deemed late if it is submitted after the specified time and date as set out in the course Learning Management System (LMS).
- The late penalty is the **loss of 3%** of the total possible marks for the task for each day or part thereof the work is late.
- Work submitted **14 days after** the due date will be marked and feedback provided but no mark will be recorded. If the work would have received a pass mark but the lateness and the work is a compulsory course component a student will be deemed to have met that requirement. This does not apply to a task that is assessed but no mark is awarded.
- Work submitted **21 days after** the due date will not be accepted for marking or feedback and will receive no mark or grade. If the assessment task is a compulsory component of the course a student will automatically fail the course.

The Late Submissions Guidelines can be found in full at:

https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/Protocols-Guidelines/

The penalty may not apply where students are able to provide documentary evidence of illness or serious misadventure. Time pressure resulting from undertaking assignments for other courses does not constitute an acceptable excuse for lateness.

### 6. Extension of Time for Submission of Assessment Tasks

The Arts and Social Sciences Extension Guidelines apply to all assessed tasks regardless of whether or not a grade is awarded, except the following:

1. any form of test/examination/assessed activity undertaken during regular class contact hours
2. any task specifically identified by the Course Authority (the academic in charge of the course) in the Course Outline or Learning Management System (LMS), for example, Moodle, as not available for extension requests.

A student who missed an assessment activity held within class contact hours should apply for Special Consideration via myUNSW.

The Arts and Social Sciences Extension Guidelines state the following:

- A student seeking an extension should apply through the Faculty’s online extension tool available in LMS.
- A request for an extension should be submitted before the due time/date for the assessment task.
The Course Authority should respond to the request within two working days of the request.

The Course Authority can only approve an extension up to five days. A student requesting an extension greater than five days should complete an application for Special Consideration.

The Course Authority advises their decision through the online extension tool.

If a student is granted an extension, failure to comply will result in a penalty. The penalty will be invoked one minute past the approved extension time.

7. Attendance

The Arts and Social Sciences Attendance Guidelines state the following:

- A student is expected to attend all class contact hours for a face-to-face or blended course and complete all activities for a blended or fully online course.

- If a student is unable to attend all classes for a course due to timetable clashes, the student must complete the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences Permitted Timetable Clash form (see information at Item 8 below). A student unable to attend lectures in a course conducted by the School of Education can apply for “Permission to Participate in Lectures Online”.

- Where practical, a student’s attendance will be recorded. Individual course outlines/LMS will set out the conditions under which attendance will be measured.

- A student who arrives more than 15 minutes late may be penalised for non-attendance. If such a penalty is imposed, the student must be informed verbally at the end of class and advised in writing within 24 hours.

- If a student experiences illness, misadventure or other occurrence that makes absence from a class/activity unavoidable, or expects to be absent from a forthcoming class/activity, they should seek permission from the Course Authority, and where applicable, should be accompanied by an original or certified copy of a medical certificate or other form of appropriate evidence.

- Reserve members of the Australian Defence Force who require absences of more than two weeks due to full-time service may be provided an exemption. The student may also be permitted to discontinue enrolment without academic or financial penalty.

- If a Course Authority rejects a student’s request for absence from a class or activity the student must be advised in writing of the grounds for the rejection.

- A Course Authority may excuse a student from classes or activities for up to one month. However, they may assign additional and/or alternative tasks to ensure compliance.

- A Course Authority considering the granting of absence must be satisfied a student will still be able to meet the course’s learning outcomes and/or volume of learning.

- A student seeking approval to be absent for more than one month must apply in writing to the Dean and provide all original or certified supporting documentation.

- The Dean will only grant such a request after consultation with the Course Authority to ensure that measures can be organised that will allow the student to meet the course’s learning outcomes and volume of learning.

- A student who attends less than 80% of the classes/activities and has not submitted appropriate supporting documentation to the Course Authority to explain their absence may be awarded a final grade of UF (Unsatisfactory Fail).

- A student who has submitted the appropriate documentation but attends less than 66% of the classes/activities will be asked by the Course Authority to apply to discontinue the course.
without failure rather than be awarded a final grade of UF. The final decision as to whether a student can be withdrawn without fail is made by Student Administration and Records.

**Students who falsify their attendance or falsify attendance on behalf of another student will be dealt with under the Student Misconduct Policy.**

### 8. Class Clash

Students who are enrolled in an Arts and Social Sciences program (single or dual) and have an unavoidable timetable clash can apply for permissible timetable clash by completing an online application form. Students must meet the rules and conditions in order to apply for permissible clash. The rules and conditions can be accessed online in full at: [https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/media/FASSFile/Permissible_Clash_Rules.pdf](https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/media/FASSFile/Permissible_Clash_Rules.pdf)

For students who are enrolled in a non-Arts and Social Sciences program, they must seek advice from their home faculty on permissible clash approval.

### 9. Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting someone else’s thoughts or work as your own. It can take many forms, from not having appropriate academic referencing to deliberate cheating.

In many cases plagiarism is the result of inexperience about academic conventions. The University has resources and information to assist you to avoid plagiarism.

The Learning Centre assists students with understanding academic integrity and how to not plagiarise. Information is available on their website: [https://student.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism/](https://student.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism/). They also hold workshops and can help students one-on-one.

If plagiarism is found in your work when you are in first year, your lecturer will offer you assistance to improve your academic skills. They may ask you to look at some online resources, attend the Learning Centre, or sometimes resubmit your work with the problem fixed. However, more serious instances in first year, such as stealing another student’s work or paying someone to do your work, may be investigated under the Student Misconduct Procedures.

Repeated plagiarism (even in first year), plagiarism after first year, or serious instances, may also be investigated under the Student Misconduct Procedures. The penalties under the procedures can include a reduction in marks, failing a course or for the most serious matters (like plagiarism in an Honours thesis) or even suspension from the university. The Student Misconduct Procedures are available here: [http://www.gs.unsw.edu.au/policy/documents/studentmisconductprocedures.pdf](http://www.gs.unsw.edu.au/policy/documents/studentmisconductprocedures.pdf)
10. COURSE SCHEDULE

*Please refer to the detailed weekly descriptions of the tutorial program and readings from page 15 of this guide.*

Lectures start in week one on 4 March, our tutorial starts in week two, on 11 March.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Commencing</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Tutorial</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wk 1: 29/2</td>
<td>Defining the Field: Documentary Film as History?</td>
<td>No tutorials this week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Wk 2: 7/2       | Documentary Film, Images and Historical Meaning | Documenting History?  
                 |                     | *Plus, group presentation workshop.* |
| Wk 3: 14/2      | Memory and Historical Knowledge | Witness and Testimony in Documentary |
| Wk 4: 21/2      | Easter and mid-session break | |
| Wk 5: 4/4       | The ‘Emotional Archaeologist’: Ken Burns and the amateur historian | Ken Burns and the Civil War |
| Wk 6: 11/4      | The Television Don: Sinom Schama and historical authority | The Long View of the Past  
                 |                     | *Plus, group presentation preparation* |
| Wk 7: 18/4      | Visual Anthropology | The First Australians |
| Wk 8: 25/4      | The Audiovisual Archive and Historical Evidence | Home Movies and Historical Meaning |
| Wk 9: 2/5       | Environmental History | The Natural History Documentary |
| Wk 10: 9/5      | **Reading and consultation week** | **NB: Essay due 16 May, 5pm** |
| Wk 11: 16/5     | Emergency Cinema | Emergency Cinema and the Possibilities of Interpretation  
                 |                     | *Plus, group presentation preparation* |
| Wk 12: 23/5     | Reality History and the Citizen Historian | Group Presentations 1 and 2 |
| Wk 13: 30/5     | No lectures this week | Group Presentations 3 and 4 |
11. Course Resources

The study kit, available from the UNSW Bookshop, is essential for this course. I will also intermittently add readings on Moodle. Students are also encouraged to read widely. Below is a short list of recommended books for this course and for your essays, but there are many more.

- Michael Renov and Jane M. Gaines (eds), *Collecting Visible Evidence*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1999.
- The journal *Film and History* is devoted to this subject, although heavily weighted towards Film Studies; see also *Screen* and *Vertigo*.

Students seeking resources can also obtain assistance from the UNSW Library. One starting point for assistance is: http://info.library.unsw.edu.au/web/services/services.html

12. Course Evaluation and Development

Courses are periodically reviewed and students’ feedback is used to improve them. Feedback is gathered using various means including UNSW’s Course and Teaching Evaluation and Improvement (CATEI) process.
13. Student Support

The Learning Centre is available for individual consultation and workshops on academic skills. Find out more by visiting the Centre’s website at:
http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au

3. Grievances

All students should be treated fairly in the course of their studies at UNSW. Students who feel they have not been dealt with fairly should, in the first instance, attempt to resolve any issues with their tutor or the course convenors.

If such an approach fails to resolve the matter, the School of Humanities and Languages has an academic member of staff who acts as a Grievance Officer for the School. This staff member is identified on the notice board in the School of Humanities and languages. Further information about UNSW grievance procedures is available at: https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/Complaints.html

4. Other Information

myUNSW

myUNSW is the online access point for UNSW services and information, integrating online services for applicants, commencing and current students and UNSW staff. To visit myUNSW please visit either of the below links:
https://my.unsw.edu.au
https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/ABC.html

OHS

UNSW's Occupational Health and Safety Policy requires each person to work safely and responsibly, in order to avoid personal injury and to protect the safety of others. For all matters relating to Occupational Health, Safety and environment, see http://www.ohs.unsw.edu.au/

Special Consideration

In cases where illness or other circumstances produce repeated or sustained absence, students should apply for Special Consideration as soon as possible.

The application must be made via Online Services in myUNSW. Log into myUNSW and go to My Student Profile tab > My Student Services channel > Online Services > Special Consideration.

Applications on the grounds of illness must be filled in by a medical practitioner. Further information is available at:
https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/SpecialConsideration.html

Student Equity and Disabilities Unit

Students who have a disability that requires some adjustment in their learning and teaching environment are encouraged to discuss their study needs with the course convener prior to or at the commencement of the course, or with the Student Equity Officers (Disability) in the Student Equity and Disabilities Unit (9385 4734). Information for students with disabilities is available at:
http://www.studentequity.unsw.edu.au
Issues that can be discussed may include access to materials, signers or note-takers, the provision of services and additional examination and assessment arrangements. Early notification is essential to enable any necessary adjustments to be made.

LECTURE AND TUTORIAL PROGRAM

WEEK ONE: 4 MARCH

LECTURE: Defining the Field: Documentary film as history?

NO TUTORIALS THIS WEEK. However I have included a general reading for this week as background for the course:


WEEK TWO: 11 MARCH

LECTURE: Documentary Film: Images and meaning.

TUTORIAL: Documenting History.
In this tutorial we will discuss the parameters of the subject for the course, and address any questions you have.
Historians are often uncomfortable with the way history is constructed on screen, and unhappy with the way their own work is used or presented by documentary filmmakers. Some, such as Simon Schama, have argued for a more active role for historians in the making of history on screen. There seems to be more flexibility for this to occur in Europe or the United States than in Australia. In this tutorial we reflect on recent offering in the national media and the ways in which historians are engaged by, and engage with, the medium; and the conflict between and potentials of printed and film history.

Set Reading

Tutorial discussion questions:
- What are some of the issues confronting historians in Australia around the way history is told on television? Can you think of some recent examples?
- How does television construct history differently to academic histories? What are some of the problems?

WEEK THREE: 18 MARCH

LECTURE: Memory and Historical Knowledge

TUTORIAL: Witness and Testimony in Documentary
In this tutorial we will examine the role of the witness in historical interpretation and documentary. We will also explore the way Shoah became a landmark event in representations of the Holocaust.

Set Reading
Tutorial discussion questions:

➢ How does Shoah represent the “unimaginable” and the “unrepresentable”?
➢ What is the role of the witness in Shoah?
➢ How should witness testimony be approached in the interpretation of historical events?

WEEK FOUR: Please note that Week 4 falls on Good Friday and is a public holiday.
Semester break 25 March – 3 April.

WEEK 5: 8 APRIL

LECTURE: The ‘Emotional Archaeologist’: Ken Burns and Popular Memory

TUTORIAL: Ken Burns and the Civil War
In this tutorial we examine the power of historical documentary to challenge or to reinforce accepted national narratives. We explore the concept of “collective memory” and its evolution in historical thought. We examine the way in which contemporary debates about national identity manifest on screen. We also explore how filmmakers take on the role of “amateur historian” who hope to “rescue history from the hands of the historians”. In this tutorial we also discuss the great divide between historians and filmmakers in television.

Set Reading

Tutorial discussion questions:

➢ What is the power of documentary film to shape or challenge our understanding of the past?
➢ What can a study of seminal documentary films tell us about the times in which they were created? I.e., why do documentaries get made when they get made?
➢ Is it possible to make good television and good history?

WEEK SIX: 15 APRIL

LECTURE: The ‘Telly Don’ of Television History: Simon Schama and the Long View of Public History

TUTORIAL: Long histories and Short Attention Spans?
Simon Schama’s History of Britain was a landmark event in television history documentary, revealing a hunger among Britain’s public for national narratives of their history. In this tutorial we explore why the series attracted such a large audience and the contemporary demand for public history. We also examine the ‘long view’ of national history.

Set reading:

Tutorial discussion questions
What is the benefit of the long view of history on television?
How well can film depict history before the invention of the camera?
Is there a role for the historian beyond the “expert” or the celebrity in public history documentaries?

WEEK SEVEN: 22 APRIL

LECTURE: Visual Anthropology

TUTORIAL: The First Australians
In this tutorial we discuss the series The First Australians, as a landmark event in the creation of Indigenous history on screen. We also look more generally at the representation of Indigenous peoples in documentary cinema and ask whether the documentary film has tended to reinforce rather than question ideas of “the primitive” in western thought. How does this change when Indigenous people are behind the camera?

Set Reading

Tutorial discussion questions
- How have documentary films traditionally represented Aboriginal people and Aboriginal history in Australia? Why is The First Australians so important in this regard?
- How does The First Australians treat visual evidence?
- What are the cultural and political implications of this series for future nationally funded narratives of the past?

WEEK EIGHT: 29 APRIL

LECTURE: The Audiovisual Archive and Historical Evidence: I

TUTORIAL: Home movies and Historical Meaning.
In this tutorial we explore the possibilities of using non-official sources such as amateur films and home movies as historical evidence. We discuss the notion of private memory and its relationship to social history. We look at the method of filmmaker Péter Forgács for constructing historical meaning out of unedited home movie takes, the “bits and pieces” of people’s private lives, and historicising individual experience.

Set reading:

Tutorial discussion questions
- What is unique about amateur film and home movies as evidence for social history?
- Can home movies and amateur footage challenge elite histories, and contribute to “histories from below”? How and why?
How does Péter Forgács use home movies to represent the history of Hungary in the twentieth century?

WEEK NINE: 6 MAY

LECTURE: Environmental Histories

TUTORIAL: The “Natural” History Documentary
Natural history documentaries are an extremely popular form of history documentary, and are generally seen as unproblematic in the way they construct histories of the natural world. In this tutorial we will discuss whether this is in fact the case, and also begin to think about how it might be possible to critically analyse nature documentaries for their approaches to history and to landscape.

Set readings
1. Charles Siebert, ‘The Artifice of the Natural: how TV’s nature shows make all the earth a stage’, Harpers, Vol. 286, no. 1713, Feb 1993, pp. 43-51

Tutorial discussion questions
- History is often assumed to be an unproblematic given in natural history documentaries. Is this the case? How is history treated in natural history documentaries?
- Can productions of landscape in natural history documentaries reinforce or challenge orthodoxies that silence counter-histories of place?

WEEK TEN: 13 MAY

Please note that there is no lecture or seminar this week. Instead you are encouraged to focus on your research essay. Contact Ruth by email for any additional help you may require or to set up a consultation meeting.

WEEK ELEVEN: 20 MAY

LECTURE: Emergency Cinema

TUTORIAL: Emergency cinema and the Possibilities of Interpretation
In this tutorial we will discuss the rise of emergency cinema with the development of mobile technologies, and the use of the image as a weapon in war zones. What are the possibilities for the construction of counter-histories in emergency cinema? You will be asked to access two websites via moodle for your readings, and to watch a film from the Syrian collective Abounadara.

Set Readings
These links may need to be copied and pasted.

Tutorial discussion questions
- What is the value of archival footage for historical argument in the contemporary world?
- What is “emergency” cinema?
- How do the types of films under discussion this week yield new forms of historical knowledge?
WEEK TWELVE: 28 MAY

LECTURE: Reality Histories and the Citizen-Historian.

TUTORIAL- GROUP PRESENTATIONS.

WEEK THIRTEEN: 4 JUNE.

NO LECTURES THIS WEEK.

TUTORIAL- GROUP PRESENTATIONS.