

ACM 360: Indigenous Film

Fall 2010 T R 10:30-11:45 a.m.

Saunders 637

Office: CR 204

Prof. Tom Brislin, Ph.D.

Hours: MF 10-11; TWR 1-2

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TEXT: Native Features: Indigenous Films from Around the World by Houston Wood
(Continuum: 2008)

FILMS: Select five from this list to watch on your own (better still, with a group) and write your five required film commentaries. You can check them out from the Wong A/V Center in Sinclair Library, rent them, video stream them, purchase them, etc. The options are many, but the responsibility is yours. Films marked with a * will be screened on Tuesday afternoons at 1:30 pm in the ACM Conference Room, Crawford 202. Screening dates are included in the course schedule.

<u>Title</u>	<u>Wong/Sinclair Call #</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Wong/Sinclair Call #</u>
The Tracker*	DVD 4364	Eagle Vs Shark*	N/A
Ten Canoes	DVD 6080	Whale Rider	DVD 1482
Walkabout	DVD 0419	The Land Has Eyes*	DVD 3202
Beneath Clouds*	DVD 2747	Samoan Wedding*	DVD 6136
Atanarjuat: Fast Runner*	DVD 1595	Shiro's Head*	N/A
Edge of America	DVD 4017	Smoke Signals	DVD 0567
Business of Fancydancing	DVD 2309		

You can also select a film from the 2010 Hawai'i International Film Festival (October 14-24) that meets the criteria of indigenous films.

INTRODUCTION: Aloha. Welcome to ACM 360, the study of Indigenous Film and the unique aesthetic they bring to the world of film. We'll watch a number of films – features, shorts, and documentaries – in class to illustrate the contributions they make to the language of cinema. Textbook readings will supplement the films and form the basis for small- and large-group discussions and in-class writing. You will be responsible for conducting your own outside screenings of additional films, on which you will write five required film commentaries. There will be a mid-term and a final exam based on text readings, in-class film screenings and discussions.

According to the late Merata Mita, who originated this course at ACM, “The indigenous aesthetic is influenced by a sense of the divine in nature, by history, genealogy, by land, colonization, politics, and by survival. The aesthetic is drawn from indigenous narratives underpinned by the gods of creation, the oral tradition, ritual, the collective consciousness, and infused with the dreams, hopes and imaginings of the people.”

She continues: “Land, Loss, Identity, Social Concerns and Politics are topics more likely to underpin the narrative and therefore color the aesthetic, raising the question of Representation.”

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: The Academy for Creative Media embraces Student Learning Outcomes in the areas of Critical Thinking, Writing, History & Aesthetics, Professional Skills & Creativity, and Ethics & Responsibility. At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Constructively critique their own and other's intellectual and creative work.
2. Write a critical piece that applies theoretical principles.
3. Conduct and communicate original research findings.
4. Understand and articulate the role and rights of a responsible artist.

READ THIS TWICE: Attendance and Participation are required.

Critical Note: **ONLY ONE unexcused** absence is allowed. With a second unexcused absence and/or a pattern of late arrivals, points are deducted from the final score that can reduce your grade by an entire level. Obviously one can't participate if one is excessively absent, **or regularly late for class**, so that portion of the grade will fall as well. The rule is: "Below Average" performance in attendance and on-time arrival will result in a "Below Average" Grade. Below Average = C-, D+, or D.

Writing: The major writing for this course will take the form of film commentaries, based on films you select and watch outside of class (see list on page 1). The commentaries will answer five questions:

1. State something you learned from the film (for example the story, setting, characters, etc.). How does it meet the criteria of the indigenous aesthetic?
2. State something you learned from the film/filmmaker's story-telling (narrative) style.
3. State something you learned about the film and director from your research (Hint: For starters, you can make good use of such online sources as Google, the Internet Movie Data Base <www.imdb.com>, and the Movie Review Query Engine <www.mrqe.com>.
4. State something you learned about the cultural values reflected in the film.
5. How would you summarize this film to a friend? Create a one-liner that might be used to promote the film.

Each of these questions can be answered in one or two paragraphs. Don't waste your time and space summarizing the plot points of the film. We already know what the filmmaker has said. What we're interested in is your **original** thoughts about the film. Original, of course, is the key word. Plagiarism in any form - the stealing of someone else's original ideas and presenting them as your own – can result in the failure of the assignment, the failure of the course, or disciplinary action from the Office of Student Conduct.

Due dates are noted in the course calendar. We'll practice the format with in-class writing exercises.

Technical Spec: 12pt font such as Times New Roman, double-spaced, 1-inch margins all around. Papers with excessive errors in spelling, grammar & usage will be returned ungraded. NOTE: No assignments by email or attachments. Hard copy only.

Testing: There will be a mid-term Oct. 14 covering Chapters 1-6 and 10-12, Films Screened, and Class Discussions. The final exam will be held on Dec. 14 from 9:45-11:45 (note different starting time from regular class). It will entail watching a short film, followed by a final commentary.

Course Grading:

Film Commentaries	50 Points (5 @ 10 points each)
Mid-Term	15 Points
Final	20 Points
Attendance & Participation	15 Points
Total Possible:	100 Points

A: 93-100 Points B: 83-92 Points C: 70-82 Points D: 61-69 F: 60 and below

The "Open Door Policy:" In addition to office hours, I will be happy to meet with you individually to discuss readings, commentaries, other assignments, or any class matter. Feel free to call me at my office, 956-3788, or e-mail me at tbrisl@hawaii.edu. If it's urgent, you may call me at home, 487-7625, up to 10 pm.

Course Calendar: (Subject to revision to accommodate current events and extended discussions)

Week	Date	Topics/Textbook Readings/Assignments
1	8/24&26	Introduction; Read Ch 1 “Four ‘Indigenous’ Hits” Write and Due Thursday: A Biographical Sketch – What’s Your Lifetime Relationship with Film? (2-3 pp)
2	8/31&9/2	Film: Rabbit Proof Fence; Read Ch 12 “The Indigenous Films of Australia” Research the film and filmmaker: Google film title and director Phillip Noyce, and actor David Gulpilil. Also use Movie Review Query Engine <www.mrqe.com> <i>Tuesday Afternoon Flicks Film: The Tracker (Aus) 1:30 pm CR 202</i>
3	9/7&9	Discussion & Writing; Read Ch 3 “David Gulpilil in Two Worlds” Thursday: 1st Film Commentary Due
4	9/14&16	Film: One Night The Moon; Read Ch 4 “Some Challenges of Indigenous Films” Research the film and filmmaker: Google film title and director Rachel Perkins Also use Movie Review Query Engine <www.mrqe.com> <i>Tuesday Afternoon Flicks Film: Beneath Clouds (Aus) 1:30 pm CR 202</i>
5	9/21&23	Film: Once Were Warriors; Read Ch 10 “Oceania’s Indigenous Films before 2000” Research the film and filmmaker: Google film title and director Lee Tamahori, and actors Rena Owen and Cliff Curtis. Also use mrqe.com
6	9/28&30	Discussion & Writing; Read Ch 5 “Use and Abuses of Indigenous Films” Thursday: 2nd Film Commentary Due <i>Tuesday Afternoon Flicks Film: Eagle vs Shark (NZ) 1:30 pm CR 202</i>
7	10/5&7	Film: Naming No. 2; Read Ch 11 “Oceania’s Indigenous Films after 2000” Research the film and filmmaker: Google film title and director Toa Fraser. Also use mrqe.com
8	10/12&14	Discussion & Writing; Read Ch 6 “Dimensions of Difference in Indigenous Films” Thursday: Mid-term on Chapters 1-6 and 10-12, Films Screened, and Class Discussions <i>Tuesday Afternoon Flicks Film: Shiro’s Head (Guam) 1:30 pm CR 202</i>
9	10/19&21	Hawai’i International Film Festival No classes; screen at least one HIFF indigenous film for your 5-question paper.
10	10/26&28	Films: Mauna Kea Temple Under Siege & And Then There Were None Thursday: 3rd Film Commentary Due <i>Tuesday Afternoon Flicks Film: Samoan Wedding (NZ) 1:30 pm CR 202</i>
11	11/2&4	No Class Tuesday – Election Day Thursday: Discussion & Writing
12	11/9&11	Tuesday: Discussion & Writing No Class Thursday – Veteran’s Day Holiday <i>Tuesday Afternoon Flicks Film: The Land Has Eyes (Fiji) 1:30 pm CR 202</i>

Week	Date	Topics/Textbook Readings/Assignments
13	11/16&18	Film: Skins; Read Chapter 2 “The Films of Chris Eyre” Research the film and filmmaker. Google film title and director Chris Eyre. Also use mrqe.com. Thursday 4th Film Commentary Due
14	11/23&25	Tuesday: Discussion & Writing; Read Chs 7 & 8 “North American Indigenous Films before 2000,” and “after 2000” No Class Thursday – Thanksgiving Holiday <i>Tuesday Afternoon Flicks Film: Four Sheets to the Wind (NatAm) 1:30 pm CR 202</i>
15	11/30&12/2	Film: Liberty 9500; Read Ch 9 “Indigenous Films of the Arctic” Research the film and filmmaker: Google film title and director Eric Byler <i>Tuesday Afternoon Flicks Film: Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner (Can) 1:30 pm CR 202</i>
16	12/7&9	Wrapup; Read Ch 13 “Future Indigenous Films” Thursday 5th Film Commentary Due
	12/14	FINAL EXAM: 9:45 – 11:45 am

What Does a Grade Mean in Indigenous Film?

ACM instructors never “give” grades. Students earn grades, according to standards set in each course. ACM grades are “additive,” not “subtractive.” That means each student earns and accumulates points or credits throughout the semester that add up to the final grade.

ACM curriculum is “incremental.” Each assignment or lesson is a foundation for the next one, just as each introductory course is a foundation for the intermediate courses, which are in turn foundations for the advanced courses. In that respect, students should expect to receive a final grade based on the consistency of their performance throughout the semester. One shouldn’t expect to miss assignments, deadlines, or otherwise under perform in the first part of the semester and attempt to overcome it in a flurry of activity at the end.

Students should also keep in mind that we are graded not on what we already know, but on what we learn. Even the most accomplished filmmaker or scholar can’t expect an A or B without a consistent and continual growth and improvement in knowledge, skills, and critical thinking.

Here are how grades in ACM are defined:

C The grade of C signifies the level of performance or accomplishment expected of a university student in the state’s premier and nationally ranked institution of higher learning. A grade of C recognizes that the student met the expectations of the course: regular attendance, completion of all assignments, tests and exams, meeting all deadlines, and participation in all class activities. A grade of C rewards the academic behavior and performance expected of a UHM student. The student earning a C has grasped the basic concepts of the course and can apply them with adequate skill to assignments and/or projects. The student is able to accept feedback in the direction and correction of her/his work and incorporate it in her/his learning to demonstrate improvement. In courses involving group projects, the student offered solid and adequate support and contributions to the group’s outcome. A course where the common grade is C carries no negative reflection on either the students or the instructor. It is not a penalty grade – it is the norm. A grade of C (NOT C-) in a pre-requisite course is required to continue in the higher-level course(s).

B The grade of B signifies an increased level of effort AND performance by the student. The student earning a B has not only met expectations of student performance (attendance, assignments, etc.), but has exceeded many in significant, measurable ways. The student has consistently improved throughout the semester as demonstrated by increased quality and quantity of work reflected in assignments, projects, tests, exams, participation, etc. The student’s work requires some direction and correction, but she/he can then exercise independence in taking it to higher levels and improved outcomes. In courses requiring group projects, the student was able to assume full responsibility, often assuming multiple roles and duties, to making significant contributions to the group’s success. There is no “B for effort” alone. It is not a reward for simply “trying hard.” The grade of B is NOT “the new C.”

A The grade of A signifies the highest level of performance and accomplishment, exceeding ALL expected course outcomes. The student earning an A has taken responsibility for her/his learning, independently accumulating knowledge and improving skills beyond the classroom. The A student’s work requires minimal direction and correction and results in outcomes that can serve as a model of student achievement for the course. In courses requiring group projects, the student has exercised leadership, often assisting others in realizing their full potential to contribute to the group’s success.

D The student has performed below the expectations of the course. Many factors can contribute to this minimal passing grade including poor attendance, poor performance in assignments, projects, tests and exams, lack of participation and cooperation with others. Any behavior that interferes with the learning of others, including frequent lateness, class disruptions, and lack of contributions to group projects, can result in a grade of D regardless of other levels of individual performance. Any incident of academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, can result in an automatic D or F.

F The student has not completed a sufficient level of quantity or quality of work to earn a passing grade. The student earning an F has not met a significant number of course expectations.

+/- Individual instructors may utilize the plus and minus system to further define or elaborate on these standards.

ACM 360-Fall 2010 - Understanding the Rules of the Course

(NOTE): Check each item. This form must be completed and signed to remain registered in the course)

I understand that attending university involves making many choices. I understand that I am responsible for all the choices I make.

I understand that attendance is mandatory for this course. If I choose not to attend to a class, it will be recorded as an **unexcused** absence. **There will be no possibility to make up a missed Test/Exam/Assignment for an unexcused absence.**

I understand I am only allowed ONE unexcused absence. Beginning with the second unexcused absence, my grade will start to drop by an entire level (for example: from A to B, or B to C, or C to D or D to F).

I understand that in order for an absence to be excused, it must be caused by circumstances beyond my choice and control and that I must provide documentation of those circumstances (for example: a doctor's note; a summons for jury duty; student athlete travel). I will endeavor to inform the instructor before a class I'm unable to attend whenever possible. **I understand that a test missed because of an excused absence must be made up before the next scheduled class.**

I understand the instructor will make the final determination of whether the absence is excused, and that there are no automatically excused absences.

I understand that it is essential that I arrive promptly for class so that I have ample time to prepare myself for learning so that I do not disrupt others and their learning in the class.

I understand that if I arrive too late to be included on the day's attendance roster, I must explain my lateness to the instructor at the end of that class period in order to be counted present.

I understand that repeated late arrivals (starting with the second) will also cause my grade to drop by an entire level.

I understand that participation is an important part of this class. If I choose not to participate, I will not earn those points toward my final score.

I understand that I am responsible for the assigned readings in the syllabus and will be expected to have completed those readings **before** the class for which they are assigned.

I understand that if I have chosen not to complete the assigned readings, I will not be able to engage in serious and thoughtful class discussions, so will put at risk the participation points that make up my final score. I also understand that by not contributing meaningfully to class discussions, I am shortchanging the opportunities for learning by my classmates.

I understand that some in-class discussions require me to work in small groups, and that those groups rely on my participation to be successful. If I choose not to contribute to group efforts, I will not be able to earn the participation points that make up my final score. I also understand that not contributing to the group shortchanges the learning opportunities for others.

I understand that the deadlines for turning in assignments are absolute and that there are no extensions.

I understand that all writing for this course is to be my original work. Any use of ideas or writings or materials that have originated with others will be credited to them. I understand the penalties for plagiarism (claiming the ideas or work of others as your own), or for "dry-labbing" (making up sources, data, or results that do not exist), can include failure on the assignment **and** failure for the course.

PRINT your Name

Signature

Date