

UNIVERSITY
of
OTAGO



Te Whare Wānanga o Otāgo

DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA, FILM AND COMMUNICATION

4th Year Honours and Postgraduate Diploma(Arts)

- Communication Studies
- Film and Media Studies

Course Information
2010

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Information For 4th Year Honours And Postgraduate Diploma(Arts) Students

WELCOME

We would like to welcome you as a fourth year student to the Department of Media, Film and Communication. As a fourth year student you are considered by the Department to be a 'postgraduate' and thus are part of an important component group in the Department's postgraduate community. You will participate in the advanced teaching programme and will be involved in research.

This booklet is to provide the necessary information about the fourth year Honours and Postgraduate Diploma programmes, the fourth year papers, protocols, and use of the Department's facilities, so that you can obtain maximum academic benefit and enjoyment from your postgraduate experience.

INTRODUCTION

It is expected that, as a BA Honours or Postgraduate Diploma student, you will be progressively able to do the following:

- Undertake independent and collaborative research
- Demonstrate relevant expertise
- Effectively present research results in written and oral form to a wider audience
- Assemble, critically evaluate and analyse information from field/library and other sources
- Think clearly and methodically in debate and decision making
- Practise the highest ethical standards in scholarly activity
- Be prepared to respect the beliefs, needs and aspirations of all people
- Respect the right of people to hold even 'extreme' beliefs and views and preserve confidentiality

PRELIMINARY LECTURES AND ORIENTATION

Preliminary lectures will be held for all 400 level papers in Media, Film and Communications will be held on the 26th of February, before the start of semester one lectures. Dates, times, and locations will be announced on the University website and will also be posted in Departmental reception.

An orientation day for all fourth year students will be held early in first semester. During orientation students will have the opportunity to meet with other staff and postgraduate students in the department.

BA (HONS)

If you are already in the Honours programme you do not need to apply for entry to Honours 4, but you should submit your completed registration by 15 January 2010. For further information, see: <http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/enrolment/registration.html>.

POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA (ARTS)

This normally involves one year's full time study in advanced level papers. It is usually undertaken after completion of a BA, and often as a precursor to MA study.

APPLYING FOR 4TH YEAR HONOURS OR POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA

Application forms for admission are available from the Media, Film and Communication Department office or the Humanities Divisional office. Completed forms should reach the Divisional Administrator (Humanities) by 10 December. Late applications will be considered.

Please address your application to:

Humanities Divisional Office
University of Otago
Box 56
Dunedin

or deliver to the 5th floor, Arts (Burns) Building.

REQUIREMENTS FOR 4TH YEAR - COMMUNICATION STUDIES

The same programme of study is undertaken for fourth year Honours as for the Postgraduate Diploma. Students must take MFCO 401 and MFCO 490, and 48 points from MFCO 402, MFCO 405, MFCO 431, MFCO 441 or other papers as approved by the Director of Studies on application by a student.

REQUIREMENTS FOR 4TH YEAR - FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES

The same programme of study is undertaken for fourth year Honours as for the Postgraduate Diploma.

Students must take MFCO403, MFCO490, and two further 400-level MFCO papers.

FLEXIBLE OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT ENROLLED IN A BA HONOURS COURSE

The Department offers a Postgraduate Diploma in Arts programme for students who chose not to enter Honours, who already have a BA degree, or who do not meet the requirements for Honours.

The PGDip (Arts) requires a student to take a course of study that is broadly similar to 400-level Honours, as prescribed in the Calendar, but that does not require entry to Honours in order to proceed. Many PGDip (Arts) students prefer to take a MFCO 490, but in some cases may not necessarily need to include a 490 dissertation in their schedule; **this option needs to be discussed with the Head of Department** and, if approved, would require the student to take 120 points of taught papers (5 papers) including allowable substitutions from other Departments. This is a flexible option for students who prefer to focus on taught papers rather than dissertation work. It should be noted, however, that this option makes entry to Masters level much more difficult.

On the other hand, a PGDip(Arts) student who includes a 490 dissertation and does well in the year is eligible for consideration for Masters, and, if so desired, subsequent entry into the PhD programme.

DIPLOMA FOR GRADUATES

This is an even more flexible option, in which students who already hold a degree may develop a combination of subjects that follows a coherent academic programme, but across one or more Departments. If desired, it can be endorsed in any major subject area, providing the right papers are taken. Students interested in this option should discuss their interests with the Head of Department and eventually the Programme Director for the Dip. Grad.

AVAILABILITY OF PAPERS

Because a number of potential staff changes are in the pipeline, the range of papers offered may be added to over the next few months. Please be sure to check with the Fourth Year Co-ordinator or Head of Department at course advising in February 2010.

400-LEVEL PAPERS

Please note some details in the descriptions may be subject to change. Updated information will be posted on the Department of Media, Film and Communication notice board, 6st floor, Richardson Building.

Please note that all paper information and assessment schedules are listed for information purposes only and are subject to change.

Students need to be aware that the suite of available papers offered by the Department changes from year to year, and as such not all papers listed may be available in 2010. Please discuss your options regarding available papers with the fourth year coordinator during course advising.

Papers are worth 24 points each with the exception of MFCO 490, which is worth 48 points.

MFCO 401 Advanced Communication Theory Full year 24 points

This paper acquaints students with the research methods, strategies and skills necessary to the pursuit of scholarship in the field of Media and Communication, while offering an introduction to contemporary debates and concerns in this same field. Readings will cover the broad range of perspectives that the contemporary scholar encounters in a field characterized by multi-disciplinary approaches. The topics introduced in the readings are designed to offer an overview. Rather than defining a single perspective, this bibliography suggests a number of different paths that a given scholar might pursue. In 2010, the paper includes four modules: thesis preparation; audience studies; communication theory; and media theory.

Assessments include: a 20-point mid-year test (**held during the semester one final examination period**), a 40-point final examination (**held during the semester two final examination period**) and various small internal assessments totalling a further 40 points.

Readings will be available in central library-reserve at the ISB.

Terms: Attendance at all MFCO 401 meetings (including **four** Departmental Research Seminars in the course of the year) is required. Exceptions will be made only in the case of students furnishing a medical excuse or some other excuse which is acceptable to the HOD.

Coordinator: Professor Geoff Kearsley
Lectures: Friday: 1:00-2:50 (semester one)

MFCO Advanced Film and Media Theory Full year

403

24 points

This paper acquaints students with the research methods, strategies and skills necessary to the pursuit of scholarship in the field of Film and Media Studies, while offering an introduction to contemporary debates and concerns in this same field. Assessment schedule and structure TBC.

Coordinator: Professor Hilary Radner
 Lectures: Friday: 1:00-2:50 (semester one)
 Friday: 10:00-11:50 (semester two)

MFCO**Classical Hollywood Cinema**

Semester One

404

24 points

The classical Hollywood cinema from the 1920s to the 1960s is perhaps **the** central phenomenon of motion picture history; as such, close examination of this subject is crucially important for a film and media studies education. This paper will investigate a broad range of topics centring on the relations between economic, aesthetics, and social/cultural/political contexts. What forms did classical Hollywood cinema take, and why? How did the American motion picture industry develop as an economic institution, and with what effect on their products? Was Hollywood a 'classical' cinema, and if so, what were its defining characteristics? What were the relationships in classical Hollywood cinema between narrative and spectacle, between convention and experimentation, between ideological hegemony and subversion? How did Hollywood adapt to change? What has its impact been on world cinema, and film studies? Finally, how has Hollywood in the classical period continued to affect contemporary cinema?

Coordinator: Dr Paul Ramaeker
 Lectures: Thursday: 2-4.50
 Film Screenings: Wednesday: 5-7.50

MFCO**A topic in cinema, gender and sexuality**

Semester One

408

24 points

The course aims to examine the impact that feminist thinking has had upon film theory and practice.

Assessments	Value	Due Date
Presentation	20%	31 March
Essay	40%	12 May
Research diary	20%	on-going
Exam	20%	End of SI (TBA)

Coordinator: Dr Catherine Fowler
 Lectures: Wednesday: 1-3.50
 Film Screenings: Monday: TBA

MFCO Advanced Media History
409

Semester One

24 points

Developments in the history of broadcasting during the past century and the history of other media. Interactions among media institutions, technological developments, cultural identity, and social context. Different approaches to writing media history.

Coordinator:

Lectures: Tuesday : 1-3:50

MFCO Advanced Environmental Communication Semester Two
431

24 points

This paper explores the ways in which environmental discourses have evolved and how the media have framed environmental agendas. The main contemporary environmental debates are reviewed from the perspective of media framing and in the light of internet-based modes of communication.

In 2010, the principal areas of focus will be climate change, population and resources and transport and energy policy.

Assessment is comprised of two 30 percent essays and a 40 percent examination.

Coordinator: Professor Geoff Kearsley

Lectures: Wednesday: 2-4.50

DISSERTATION: MFCO 490

MFCO 490 (48 points)

The fourth year dissertation is due **by 4:00pm on the University's last day of formal lectures in semester two.**

MFCO 490 is a compulsory paper for students in the final year of their honours degree and for the PGDip(Arts). The paper involves writing a long essay of not more than 18,000 words based on independent and original research.*

Every dissertation involves an individual research project on a topic chosen by the student. The research and writing is carried out under the supervision of one or more members of staff.

Please refer to Guidelines and Summary in this booklet.

* It is important to observe that word limit for dissertations. The "ideal" dissertation tends to be between 14,000 and 16,000 in length. Dissertations that exceed 18,000 words may incur a penalty.

CHOOSING A TOPIC

This is one of the most difficult decisions you will have to make in the whole process. It will depend on the kind of interests you have developed in Communication Studies or Film and Media Studies. If you have developed strengths in particular areas of the subject by the fourth year or become closely involved with certain courses, there would be considerable advantage in continuing with that work for your research essay.

One important consideration, and one reason for discussing it closely with staff, is making sure that you select a topic that is practical to complete within the time available. The challenge here is selecting something which is going to make a satisfying and rewarding piece of research, but which will also be of such size and scope that you will be able to bring it to completion on time.

SUPERVISION

In 2010, students will work with staff in MFCO 401 (COMS) or 403 (FIME) to develop a fully-fledged dissertation proposal during the thesis preparation module. Students are encouraged to arrive at the first day of lectures prepared to discuss their potential topic. In the course of the first module, students will be guided through the process of developing an initial bibliography of works consulted, leading to the preparation of an outline literature review, accompanied by a developed topic and research schedule. The final proposal and research schedule are due **2 April by 12 noon** and will be included in the internal assessment for the relevant thesis preparation module. The proposals will be reviewed by the staff of the Department and students will be assigned a supervisor by the Department. The assignment of supervisors will be announced by 16 April at the latest.

Students are encouraged to discuss their ideas and research topics with the Department staff. Each student will be assigned supervision based on the workloads of individual academic staff members. Every effort is made to match student topic/title to the appropriately qualified academic staff member. However, for reasons of equity and workload, students will not be able to request specific supervisors. Any questions about the assignment of supervisors should be addressed to Dr Devadas, as Head of the Graduate Advisory Committee or to the Head of Department, Professor Kearsley.

RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR

The supervisory relationship is marked by reciprocal obligations and expectations; however, you should expect to meet your supervisor regularly and obtain from them the best advice that they can give you within their experience and expertise. You will be expected to adhere to whatever arrangements are made for regular meetings with the supervisor, and make use of the advice that they give you. Your main obligation will be to do the work required – reading, field research, data processing, writing up, editing – within the time frame that is recommended. Supervisors' obligations do not include correcting style, grammar, spelling, etc. You are encouraged to discuss your overall workload plan with your supervisor to ensure that it is balanced across the year.

SUPERVISORY AGREEMENT BETWEEN STUDENT AND SUPERVISOR

A memorandum of understanding is an agreement between individual students and their supervisors. The MOU can be a useful tool in avoiding misunderstandings and can be referred to if difficulties arise. The document can be reviewed regularly in light of changing circumstances. Such agreements would deal with the following:

- frequency of meetings
- progress reports to be provided by the student
- the nature, promptness and limits of feedback on written work
- target dates for various stages of the research
- principles for establishing authorship of any resulting publications.

Templates for this agreement will be available through your supervisor or the departmental office.

GRADUATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Graduate Advisory Committee administers all 4th Year Honours and Postgraduate Diploma studies in the Department of Media, Film and Communication on behalf of the Head of Department. For the duration of your time as a 4th Year Honours or PGDip student in Media, Film and Communication your academic welfare and progress will be reviewed by the committee, which will seek regular reports from your supervisor/s. Your first point of contact is the coordinator for of MFCO 401 and MFCO 403. You are also welcome to contact any member of the committee regarding any concerns or suggestions you may have regarding postgraduate studies in Media, Film and Communication.

Committee Chair: Dr Vijay Devadas

Committee Members: Dr Brett Nicholls, Dr Erika Pearson, Dr Paul Ramaeker

PLAGIARISM

Students should make sure that all submitted work is their own. Plagiarism is a totally unacceptable form of dishonest practice. Plagiarism is defined as copying or paraphrasing another's work, whether intentionally or otherwise, and presenting it as one's own (approved University Council, December 2004). In practice this means plagiarism includes any attempt in any piece of submitted work (e.g. an assignment or test) to present as one's own work the work of another (whether of another student or a published authority). Any student found responsible for plagiarism in any piece of work submitted for assessment shall be subject to the University's dishonest practice regulations which may result in various penalties, including forfeiture of marks for the piece of work submitted, a zero grade for the paper, or in extreme cases exclusion from the University.

Plagiarism includes:

- inexperience of and disregard of the need for referencing;
- inadequate detail in referencing;
- quoting directly or paraphrasing to a moderate extent without acknowledging the source;
- submitting the same work or major portions thereof to satisfy the requirements of more than one course without the permission from the instructor/s;
- using data or interpretative material for a report without acknowledging the sources or the collaborators. All contributors to the preparation of data and/or to writing the report must be named;
- major or essential portion of work plagiarized;
- repeat offences;
- presenting work of another as one's own.

Penalties may include:

- warning;
- rewrite section or work;
- withhold or withdraw the granting of terms in the subject concerned;
- reduced marks for work submitted;
- zero marks for work submitted;
- zero marks for work submitted plus a reduction in final examination marks;
- disqualify the student from an entire paper;
- cancellation of any pass or passes for any other part of the student's course undertaken in the same semester/summer school;
- exclusion from University.

ETHICAL GUIDELINES

All research that involves human subjects (through, for example, their participation in interviews) must comply with the ethical guidelines set down by the University. In most cases ethical approval needs to be obtained from the University Ethics Committee. Your supervisor will assist with this process.

RESEARCH PRESENTATION

A requirement of MFCO 490 is the presentation of your research during a seminar session. Each presentation will be 10 minutes in duration and will be scheduled during the second semester. Students are required to submit their title, abstracts and bibliographies to the department's assignment drop box by the last day of formal lectures in semester one 2010.

SUBMISSION

Four copies of the research essay should be presented to the Department of Media, Film and Communication by 4pm, last formal lectures, semester two. (Friday, 15 October, 2010)

Students may choose ONE of the following options. Whichever option chosen, the deadline of 4pm, last formal lectures in semester two (15 October, 2010) is the same for all. Students may choose to:

- Supply four bound copies of the dissertation.
- Supply one unbound copy of the dissertation and the office will photocopy (black and white only) and bind the dissertations (four copies) for you.
- Supply one unbound copy of the dissertation plus three additional sets of any colour pages, and the office will photocopy (black and white only) and bind the dissertations (four copies) for you.

One of the copies will be returned to you and the others will be housed in the Media, Film and Communication library.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Students enrolled in a 490 have access to a \$30 grant to use to pay for research related costs. Such costs may include photocopying, printing, or interlibrary loans. For access to these funds please contact the Departmental Administrator. Unused funds expire on 31 October each year.

In addition, students enrolled in a 490 have access to a further \$30 grant to use towards the cost of printing and binding their thesis through the University Print Shop. If you choose this option, you will need to collect a purchase order from the Departmental Administrator and take this to the University Print Shop. You will need to liaise with the University Print Shop in advance to determine the deadline for submitting your thesis to them in order for the job to be completed in time for you to submit your theses (four copies) to the Department by 4pm, last formal lectures, semester two. (15 October 2010)

EXAMINATION OF THE DISSERTATION & EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

The dissertation is read by two internal examiners, one of whom is usually your supervisor. The examiners write reports on the dissertation and in consultation with the Head of Department, decide on an appropriate mark.

Most examiners permit a copy of their report to be given to the student. If, however, the report is confidential, then the Head of Department will provide you with an oral summary.

The Division of Humanities requires the Department to send dissertations to an external examiner/assessor, whose report will be taken into account when your results are finalised.

In cases of significant disagreement between the Examiners the External Assessor shall act as a third examiner and recommend a mark to the Head of Department.

All marks received in the course of a 4th year in any paper counting towards a BA Honours or a PGDip (Arts) are provisional until reviewed by the examiners' committee and by the external assessor at the end of the year.

FACILITIES PROVIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT

The Department has a range of media equipment. Those students who require the use of such equipment should consult their supervisor.

SEMINAR SERIES AND PUBLIC LECTURES

All Honours/PGDip(Arts) students are strongly encouraged to attend all seminars as part of our series. The programme will be emailed to students.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON THESIS PREPARATION

The Student Learning Centre offers Thesis and Dissertation Writing workshops for Honours and Postgraduate students at various times in the year.

For dates and times see <http://slc.otago.ac.nz/hedc/sld.html>.

Further Reading

Anderson, J. & Poole, M. (1994) *Thesis and Assignment Writing* (2nd ed). Brisbane: John Wiley and Sons

Bouma, G. (1996) *The Research Process*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press

Rountree, K. (1991) *Writing for Success: a practical guide for New Zealand students*. Auckland: Longman Paul

Rountree, K. and Laing, T. (1996) *Writing by Degrees: A Practical Guide to Writing Theses and Research Papers*. Auckland: Longman Paul

RECENT DISSERTATIONS

2008

MEDIA, FILM AND COMMUNICATION

Chai, Petrina. "Mapping the Malaysian-Chinese Student Diaspora in Dunedin."

Dunn, Jamie. "The Time Travel Film: Science fiction and the temporal narrative."

Fordyce, Robbie. "Prodigal Daughter: Examining the female avatar through Silent Hill 3."

Francis, Andy. "Structuralism, Post-Structuralism and the Deconstruction and New Meaning in The Exorcist and the Exorcism of Emily Rose: The audience and the collapse of binary structure."

Grady, Maddie. "Going to the Pictures: Exploring still and moving images in cinema and photography."

McGrath, Nick. "Cannibalizing the Past: The PM cultural logic behind the Kill Bill films."

McLachlan, Scott. "Castles in the Sky: Representations of technology and nature in the films of Hayaa Miyazaki."

Orchard, Sarah. "Queer Women and Violence in Monster."

Scott, Carey. "Wild Weekends: Performative documentary and the spectator."

Wang, YanHan (Phillip). "A Study of Internet Privacy in China."

Ward, Matthew. "The Coen Brothers' revisionist use of Film Noir and classical Hollywood genre conventions."

2007

MEDIA, FILM AND COMMUNICATION

Choi, Jane. "In google we trust."

Fletcher, Kevin. "Film acting: James Woods in Videodrome."

Gan, Juan Jim. "The social dynamics of p2p culture."

Gwynne, Owain. "A survival guide to the Xena-verse: A re-evaluation of the fan."

Heinzen, Mirle. "Tim Burton: Modern perpetuator of fairytales."

Holder, Max. "When is a documentary not a documentary? Fahrenheit 9/11 and the politics of representation"

Mulder, Fiona. "'Here's how I see it': Subjective and reflexive story-telling in contemporary Hollywood cinema."

Rubin, Michel. "Existence and absurdity: An exploration of existentialist themes in *Vivre sa Vie*"

Windle, Patricia. "Abbas Kiarostami: Spiritual cinema and the journey narrative."

2006

MEDIA, FILM AND COMMUNICATION

Bania, Max. "Myth reality and coming of age: The Vietnam War in American film."

Dean, Stephen. "The TVNZ Charter: Balancing act or mission impossible?"

Higgins, Robert. "Changes in documentaries of the digital age: *Loose Change: Second Edition* and *Fahrenheit 9/11*."

Higgins, Teri. "'We all go a little mad sometimes': The psychoanalytic failure of Gus Van Sant's remake of *Psycho*."

Hine, Gabrielle. "Exploitation of the innocent: Gender, identity and consumer culture in children's magazines."

Joseph, Amy. "Negotiating Masculinity in Jim Jarmusch's America."

Lenihan, Petra. "Trauma and the Zeitgeist: The impact of modernity on the German male psyche."

MacMurdo-Reading, Margi. "Social and theoretical implications of the proliferation digital cameras and digital photography."

Naylor, Benjamin. "Comic book cinema."

Scott, Katie. "Technologies of the 'New Flesh' in the films of David Cronenberg."

Todd, Erica. "'Big mistake' or a new classic: The response to *Pretty Woman* from its release to the present."

Watson, Sophie. "Wrinkled Woman or Wise Wahine?"

2005

FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES

Boyd, Jessica. "Documentary as a site for and a sign of media activism."

Burgess, Jeremy. "Flash cartoons and simulation: The importance of production."

Cherrie, James. "Scared stiff: An exploration of gameplay, narrative and horror in *Project Zero*."

Fossen, Pamela. "The fog of documentary: Morris and mutating expectation."

Hoskins, David. "Radical spaces, revolutionary screens: Third Cinema to Third Screen: A genealogical interrogation."

Kaiser, Kilian. "*Fight Club's* critique of consumer society: The question of whether people buy it."

Kastl, Matthias. "Mexican films for the new millennium: A new wave that conquers the world?"

McSweeney, Katie. "Re-negotiating New Zealand national identity for the 21st Century: Linking imagined communities through Maori mythology in the film *Whale Rider*."

Morris, Kate. "Berry Pie Eyes (\$0.50): Religion, capitalism and the instant messaging avatar."

Pullar, Ellen. "Preliminary thoughts: A re-evaluation of Hitchcock, Mulvey and *To Catch a Thief*."

Yung, Carol. "Subverting the modernist dream: Cinematic representations of modernist architecture."

Copies of these essays are available for short-term loan. Please see the Departmental Administrator.
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ACADEMIC STAFF AND RESEARCH INTERESTS

Professor Geoff Kearsley, Head of Department

Richardson Building 6C16

E-mail geoff.kearsley@otago.ac.nz

Tel: 479.4112 or 479.8519

The media and urban society, human geography, cinema and the city, the diffusion of broadband.

Dr Michael Bourk Lecturer

Richardson Building 6C19

E-mail michael.bourk@otago.ac.nz

Tel: 479.5751

Communication studies, framing and discourse analysis, policy studies, media content analysis, qualitative research theory and method.

Dr Vijay Devadas, Senior Lecturer

Richardson Building 6C11

E-mail vijay.devadas@otago.ac.nz

Tel: 479.4374

Postcolonial-theory and literature, critical and cultural theory, diaspora studies and identity politics, cultural studies, and media studies.

Dr Kevin Fisher, Lecturer

Richardson Building 6C24

E-mail kevin.fisher@otago.ac.nz

Tel: 479.8472

Cinematic representation from historical and phenomenological perspectives, digital culture, film spectatorship, and film violence.

Dr Catherine Fowler, Senior Lecturer

Richardson Building 6C13

E-mail catherine.fowler@otago.ac.nz

Tel: 479.8615

National identity and European cinemas, the film/art axis of influence, political modernism and experimental practice, theories of (female) authorship and women filmmakers, film analysis.

Dr Brett Nicholls, Lecturer

Richardson Building 6C18

E-mail brett.nicholls@otago.ac.nz

Tel: 479.8819

Postcolonial theory, political economy of the media, Australian screen studies, computer game studies, and the impact of modern technologies upon social and cultural life.

Dr Erika Pearson, Lecturer

Richardson Building 6C23

E-mail erika.pearson@otago.ac.nz

Tel: 479.8680

Internet culture, trust networks, online identity, digital technologies, remix, digital nomads.

Professor Hilary Radner

Richardson Building 6C21

E-mail hilary.radner@otago.ac.nz

Tel: 479.3987

Film and media theory, film and television genres, feminist theory, Hollywood cinema, French cinemas and cultures, visual culture, cultural studies, film and television fiction narrative, feminine consumer culture, fashion studies, magazine cultures, women's fiction.

Dr Paul Ramaeker, Lecturer

Richardson Building 6C12

E-mail paul.ramaeker@otago.ac.nz

Tel: 479.8646

American film history, international cinemas, film analysis, narratology, and television aesthetics

Dr Hugh Slotten, Senior Lecturer

Richardson Building 6C22

E-mail hugh.slotten@otago.ac.nz

Tel: 479.6546

History of communications, communication policy studies, satellite communications, radio and television, and technology.

Dr Davinia Thornley, Senior Lecturer

Richardson Building 6C14

E-mail davinia.thornley@otago.ac.nz

Tel: 479.4182

Audience/reception studies, cultural theory, indigenous media, national media; postcolonial theory, race and place in film and New Zealand cinema.

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Paulette Milnes

Administrative Assistant

Richardson 6C25

E-mail paulette.milnes@otago.ac.nz

Tel: 479.3724

Melissa Cirinna

Departmental Administrator

Richardson 6C15

E-mail melissa.cirinna@otago.ac.nz

Tel: 479.8371

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO GRADING SCALE

Percentage Range	Grade	Honours Class/Postgraduate Diploma Class
90 - 100	A+	First Class/Distinction
85 - 89	A	First Class/Distinction
80 - 84	A-	First Class/Distinction
75 - 79	B+	Second Class Div. 1/Credit
73 - 74	B	Second Class Div. 1/Credit
70 - 72	B	Second Class Div. 2
65 - 69	B-	Second Class Div. 2
60 - 64	C+	Third Class
55 - 59	C	Third Class
50 - 54	C-	Third Class
40 - 49	Fail D	
Below 40	Fail E	

GUIDELINES AND SUMMARY: 2010

I. Beginning Your Research

The researching and writing of a 490 Dissertation marks the moment at which the student begins his or her journey in becoming an autonomous and effective researcher. The 490 Dissertation is generated by your own interests (rather than written on a prescribed topic). The supervisor serves as a guide in that process. It is important to clarify the steps (such as a literature review, an extended abstract and bibliography, a proposed chapter break-down and outline, etc.) that your supervisor expects you to take in terms of gathering material, documenting that material and, finally, crafting a polished thesis. These steps will vary depending on your discipline, topic and approach.

The dissertation itself is the culmination of a sustained research programme in which you will engage with the help of your supervisor. The best way of acquiring a sense of what a dissertation requires is to look through several examples. Both the ISB and the Department have copies of previous dissertations available for you to read.

In 2010, MFCO 401 (COMS) or MFCO 403 (FIME) will assist you in the process of defining a topic and establishing a preliminary bibliography. The first few weeks of this paper will focus on equipping you with the tools that will enable you to write a dissertation under the guidance of your supervisor.

2. The Dissertation

The MA and PHD both require a thesis; the thesis of a successful candidate is housed in the ISB (the Central Library). Reviewing examples of a thesis in your field might also prove helpful. The 490 Dissertation is similar to a thesis but the scope and depth of the research is significantly reduced. The 490 Dissertation is usually also considerably shorter. A longer dissertation is not necessarily a better dissertation. It is rare that a 490 Dissertation is shorter than 14,000 words; however, a 490 Dissertation that is over 16,000 words is usually (but not always) too long. Style and coherence are significant factors in determining exactly how long the dissertation will be in its final form. In the process of revising your material, be prepared to cut extraneous passages in some sections while adding material in other sections, at the direction of your supervisor.

3. The Question

Your supervisor will help craft and organize your material into a compelling argument. Many scholars feel that it is helpful to begin with something unresolved, some question within the area of Film and Media Studies that stimulates your curiosity. This “question” can serve as a guide in terms of determining the direction, shape and organization of your research. Be prepared to surprise yourself in terms of allowing your research (the pursuit of the question) to lead you into new areas and new unanticipated “answers” to your original “governing” question.

4. Goals

In a completed dissertation, the student should demonstrate the following:

- **a familiarity and an understanding of previous scholarship on the topic**
- **the capacity to undertake research and present the results of that research in a coherent and convincing manner**
- **a critical sense of his or her work relative to the work of other scholars on the topic.**

The dissertation will also be evaluated on whether or not it presents its material in a way that meets the standards for publication in the relevant discipline.

5. Format

Preparation of the Manuscript: follow the guidelines posted on the University of Otago Library website, "NOTES ON THE PREPARATION OF OTAGO THESES." Determine a citation style with your supervisor and use it consistently throughout the manuscript. The library offers examples of widely accepted citation styles.

<http://www.library.otago.ac.nz/research/theses.html>

6. Feedback

You should meet with your supervisor regularly at a mutually agreed upon time. It is helpful to bring questions to the meeting to which your supervisor can supply immediate and detailed feedback. During your meeting, your supervisor will check your progress, help you establish and keep to a schedule and advise you on your strategies and methods.

In terms of written materials, it is important that you and your supervisor agree about when these materials will be returned to you at the time at which you submit them. Your supervisor has many other responsibilities and the time that he or she has available to you outside your scheduled supervisory meetings will vary through the semester.

Be aware that if you submit a completed draft of your Dissertation after **mid-September** (without prior arrangement with your supervisor), it is unlikely that your supervisor will be able to return it to you with comments in time for you to make substantial revisions before submitting the final version on the last day of lectures, semester two (15 October 2010). It is very important that you and your supervisor agree about when you will submit the final draft and when he or she will return it early on in the supervisory process. Many supervisors and students find it useful to establish a formal memorandum of agreement about these matters.

7. Dates

2 April, 2010, 12 noon: Submit extended proposal for supervisor assignment.

16 April, 2010, 12 noon: Supervisors announced.

4 June 2010, 4:00 pm: Submission of the Dissertation Titles, Abstracts and Bibliographies to the Departmental Office

13 August, 2010: Research Presentations (on Dissertation topics)

17 September 2010: Last day to submit draft to your supervisor for comments.

15 October 2010, by 4pm: Submission of the completed Dissertation.

Note: Failure to submit the Dissertation before 4 pm 15 October will have serious consequences. In the absence of extenuating circumstances, the HOD may refuse to accept the Dissertation once the submission date has passed. If you anticipate encountering difficulties in meeting the 15 October deadline, it is in your interests to consult the HOD as soon as possible.