SPECIAL TOPICS ON AUSTRALIAN CULTURE
CAPA SYDNEY
Fall Semester 2014

Instructor name : Amy / Lorraine
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Class times : Fridays 9am – 12.30pm
Classroom location :

Course Description
This course is designed to encourage students to engage in a critical analysis of Australian Culture with a focus on the city of Sydney. The course will examine how the forces of colonisation, migration, modernisation and globalisation have affected the city and its inhabitants. Students will gain insights into the changing dynamics and identities of Australian Culture. The course is organised thematically, and will explore the comparative perspectives between culture and society and also analyse the various constructions of Australian identity. The course ultimately intends to help students contextualise their travels and encounters in the city, and will help them develop informed interpretations of Sydney while they are here.

Course Methodology
This course blends lecture based material with experiential learning through field trips, and encourages classroom participation. A specific list of readings is provided. However students are encouraged to read further on the topics listed for each week and come prepared to class for discussion and debate.

Course Aims/Objectives
1. To encourage an analysis of the historical, political, sociological and cultural constructions of Australian identity.
2. To critically engage students in all aspects of Australian society.
3. To enable students to make informed comparisons between Australia and America.
## Course Outline

### Class 1: Australian Art: From Convicts to the Contemporary

**Friday 10 Oct**

This class provides an insight into many of the major movements and accomplishments that have occurred in Australian art since 1788. Significant works of art from each period will be discussed in terms of their aesthetic, historical and sociological value. By exploring different approaches to Australian art and the major themes of “Landscape” and “Identity”, students will gain a greater understanding of Australian society and culture and how it reveals itself through art.


### Class 2: Field trip: The Art Gallery of NSW

**Wed 15 Oct 7pm**

The Art Gallery of NSW has recently reopened its Australian Galleries which have been expanded and revitalised. Students will be guided through a selection of works from the colonial to the contemporary, from the Gallery’s collection of Australian art - one of the finest in the country.

Students will meet lecturer Lorraine Kypiotis on the steps of the AGNSW.

### Class 3: The Colonial Outpost: History, Heritage and Politics

**Field trip - Macquarie St and the Rocks.**

**Friday 17 Oct**

Students will reflect on the past in order to understand how Australian society is underpinned by its colonial heritage through an exploration of historical sites on Macquarie Street, Circular Quay and the Rocks.

These will include buildings designed by the convict architect, Francis Greenway (Hyde Park Barracks; St James Church); the Sydney Hospital (“The Rum Hospital”); State Parliament House; the State Library; the Conservatorium (“Government House Stables”); and Customs House. Students will continue on to the Rocks: the historic on the shores of west Circular Quay.

Students will meet lecturer Lorraine Kypiotis on the steps of St Mary’s Cathedral.

### Class 4: **An American Abroad: Impressions of Sydney**  
**Field Trip – Watson’s Bay and South Head**

**Fri 24 Oct**
- An exploration of American travel writers and a consolidation of students’ experiences from their first few weeks in Australia.
  - *Bryson, Bill* *In a Sunburnt Country / Down Under* (2000)
  - *Twain, Mark* *The Wayward Tourist: Mark Twain’s Adventures in Australia* (Melb. Uni Press)

### Class 5: **The Iconic Landscape: How place and environment has shaped the Australian consciousness**  
**Field trip: Sculpture by the Sea + Bondi to Coogee walk**

**Friday 31 Oct**
- In the examination of a cultural event students will explore how geography defines place, identity and culture.
  
  *Sculpture by the Sea*, is a major annual outdoor sculpture exhibition featuring works made by Australian and international artists. *Sculpture by the Sea* began in 1997 with an exhibition held over one day at Bondi Beach and has grown into an annual three week event. Every year the coastal walk from Bondi Beach to Tamarama is transformed into a seaside art gallery as over 100 sculptures are exhibited in the background of sea and the coastal landscape along the two kilometre coastal walk.
  
  Our walk continues from Tamarama through to Coogee and encompasses not only the geography but also the history of this iconic section of Sydney.

### Class 6: **The Poetic Imagination: Fictional narratives and the Landscape**  
**Field trip: North Head + Quarantine Station**

**Friday 7 Nov**
- An overview and discussion of the literature, and in particular the poetry, that has shaped the Australian consciousness. Through a reading of seminal poetic works students will be introduced to themes within Australian popular consciousness.
  
  *Writers:* Henry Lawson, AB Patterson, Kenneth Slessor, Dorothea Mackellar, Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker), Bruce Dawe.
### Classes 7 & 8: Canberra: A nation’s capital

**Friday 14 Nov**

Field trip to Canberra, the Capital city of Australia. After many years of contentious debate between Melbourne and Sydney it was decided to place Australia’s capital city mid-way between the two (almost!). A planned city, it was designed by Walter Burley Griffin. On this field trip we will visit the National Gallery of Australia, Parliament House, and if time permits, the Australian War Memorial.

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### Class 9: Aboriginal perspectives in Australian Art: From the Dreamtime to Papunya

**Friday 21 Nov**

This class will explore the diversity of Aboriginal cultures and art works from a traditional perspective as well as examine issues of a more contemporary nature. This approach is intended to give students an understanding of art works as an expression of Aboriginal identity with a focus on spirituality, the environment and the effects of Australia’s colonial history. The major ideas and issues regarding Aboriginal art will be introduced, focusing on the themes of tradition, identity and place. There will be a close examination of Papunya, and the issues and debates regarding the commercialisation of Aboriginal art and artists.


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### Week 10: Nefarious geographies: The landscape of the City

**Field trip: Botanical Gardens – Opera house – Circular Quay**

**Friday 28 Nov**

In an exploration of the Architecture, city scape, gardens and harbour students will examine the “branding” of Sydney as a global destination. What does Sydney have to offer? Has the Sydney Brand been sold off well?

Students will meet on the steps of the AGNSW.