

Pacific and Asian Studies (PACS) 302: Contemporary Issues in Oceania through Film

W, H, and O focus.

3 credits

Tuesday, Thursday: 10:30-11:45 AM.

Fall 2023 (Sydney, Australia)

Dr. Nathalie Ségeral



Description:

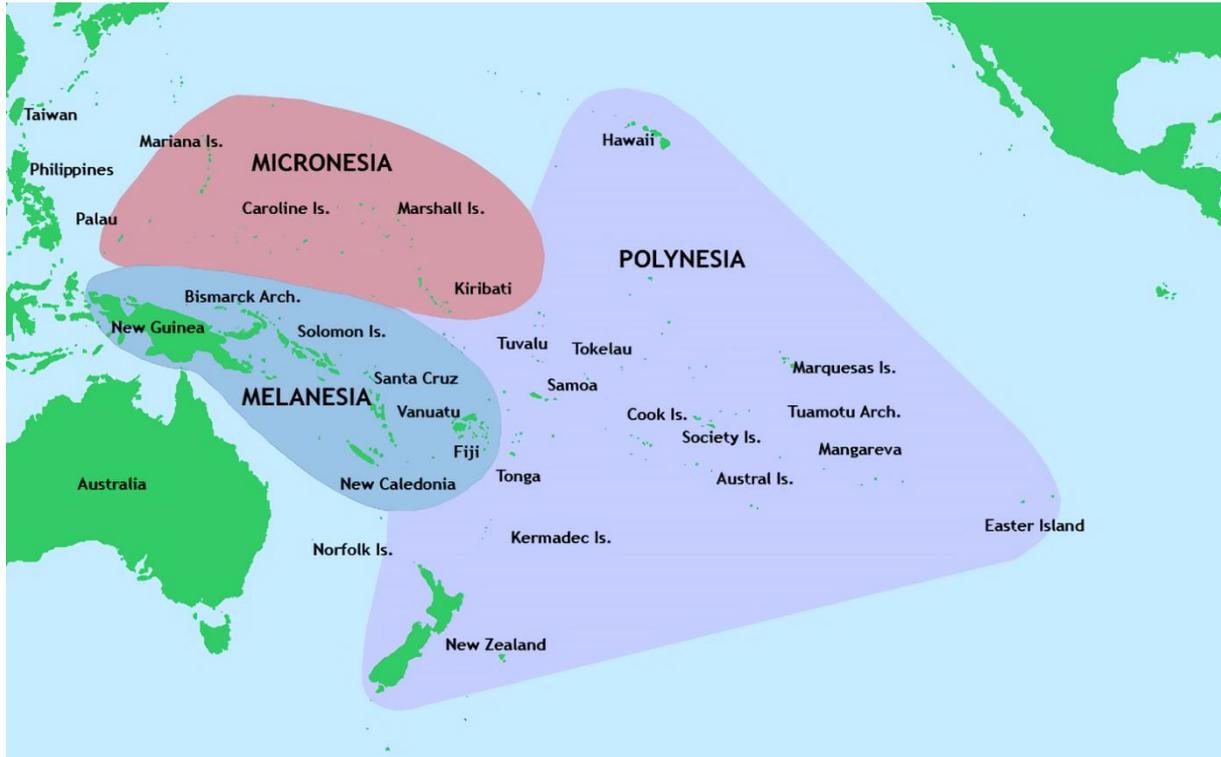
The goal of this course is to introduce students to Oceania as a highly diverse region and to some of the contemporary issues faced by the region: climate change and its consequences, the trauma of the Stolen Generations in Australia, the consequences of the French politic of intensive nuclear testing in Tahiti / Ta Ao Ma'ohi, the fight for independence in New Caledonia, the issues around biculturalism and gender-based violence in New Zealand / Aotearoa. These issues will be introduced through a selection of key films.

In this class, we will work together to learn the distinctive cultures and contemporary issues of people's lives in Oceania—the vast area covering Polynesia (Hawaii, Tahiti, New Zealand...),

Micronesia, Melanesia (New Caledonia / Kanaky), and Australia. Except for Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and Australia, the major area is covered by the largest sea in the world, dotted with tiny islands. Yet, lying between two major continents, Asia and America, Oceania's history has been deeply intertwined with the Europeans' presence since the sixteenth century. Throughout the semester, topics covered in class will range from climate change, transnational migration, indigenous rights, or gender-based violence, minorities, etc. The class's main objective is to help you gain a basic knowledge of the contemporary Pacific cultures, and how everyday life and present-day issues are significantly interwoven with colonialism, urbanization, tourism, or violence against women and ethnic minorities. This class will help you cultivate three basic attitudes when approaching other cultures: reading the texts and watching the films carefully, understanding others empathetically, and reflecting upon the social dilemma critically.

Emphasis will be placed on the ethnic, gender, national (regions), social, religious, and economic diversity of the Oceanian population and how contemporary Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii, Tahiti and New Caledonia have been shaped by colonialism, neocolonialism, and tourism, and immigration.

The semester will be divided into 5 main units of study: Hawaii, Australia, New Zealand / Aotearoa, Tahiti / Ta Ao Ma'ohi, and New Caledonia. You will gain knowledge of major film genres and movements, as well as of some of the most famous directors in the region. The course will be articulated around the following main questions: in which ways can films (and, to a lesser extent, other media) repair the omissions of history (whether these silenced aspects pertain to gender, race, or social class)? How have historical discourses dominated by colonizers contributed to minorities' alienation and lack of visibility and to what extent can films be used by minorities to reclaim agency over their (his)stories? How can films be used as testimonials bearing witness to a traumatic historical event?



Prerequisites:

This course does not have any pre-requisite.

Student Learning Outcomes:

General:

1. Demonstrate awareness of contemporary social, political, economic, cultural, and environmental issues in the Pacific Islands
2. Demonstrate knowledge of themes in the works of Pacific Island artists and film makers.
3. Locate and name the island groups, geographic regions, and political entities of Oceania.

Specific:

1. Analyze orally and in writing selected major films dealing with current issues in Oceania.
2. Demonstrate understanding of significant themes in indigenous, colonial, and post-colonial histories of the Pacific Islands
3. Draw parallels between past and current situations.
4. Compare and contrast various films revolving around similar issues.
5. Identify major issues in twentieth- and twenty-first-century Oceania and relate them to one's own cultural background.
6. Discuss and support film analysis by citing evidence from the works.
7. Express analysis clearly and effectively, orally and in writing.
8. Demonstrate basic understanding of historical, cultural, and political contexts of 20th- and 21st-century Oceania.

9. Demonstrate ability to: a) research appropriate secondary sources in English, using bibliographic research tools; b) read and comprehend secondary sources; c) incorporate secondary source works into analysis through citations, notes, and bibliography following the guidelines established by the Modern Language Association.
10. Work hard while having fun and making the most of your time in Sydney!

Course Materials (8 films, provided by the instructor):

Charlie's Country (Rolf de Heer / David Gulpilil, 2013, Australia)

Louise Michel, la Rebelle (Solveig Anspach, 2010, New Caledonia/France)

Once Were Warriors (Lee Tamahori / Riwia Brown, 1994, New Zealand)

Pacifiction (Albert Serra, 2022, Tahiti)

Rabbit-Proof Fence (Philip Noyce, 2002, Australia)

Radiance (Rachel Perkins, 1998, Australia)

Then There Were None (Elizabeth Kapu'uwailani Lindsey, 2013, Hawaii)

There Once Was an Island: Te Henua e Nnoho (Briar March, 2010)

Field Trips:

- 1) **Australian Museum** (1 William St, CBD): **free of charge.**
- 2) **Chau Chak Wing Museum** (University of Sydney campus): **free of charge.**
- 3) **Hyde Park Barracks Museum:** AUD \$12 (= USD \$7.50)
- 4) **Museum of Sydney** (corner Bridge St and Phillip St): free
- 5) **Carriageworks Interactive Exhibit** : free

Additional cost: \$7.50 (+ Opal card for public transport).

Optional Outings (at the weekend):

Cuckatoo island (quick ferry ride from Barangaroo) to visit a UNESCO World Heritage site and the only island in Sydney Harbor. With ample evidence of Aboriginal inhabitation on the surrounding and opposite shores, the first visitors to the island were the First Nations Peoples of Sydney. In 1839, Cuckatoo became a penal establishment whose barracks have been preserved as such.

Cultural Learning Outcome Evaluation Plan:

- I. **All students will be asked to create and maintain a blog.** I will teach them how to do so on wordpress.com, in case they do not have prior experience with this. The blog will be made up of their journal entries.
 - 1) Keep a blog where you post the five required entries throughout the semester (you are also encouraged to add more entries if you wish to), answering the questions asked in the syllabus.

- 2) Participate in productive discussions with your classmates by commenting on their blogs on a regular basis (at least every other week).
- 3) Illustrate your blog with photos and feel free to add anything else that expresses your own journaling style, such as drawings, train tickets, clippings from the local papers or magazines, menus, receipts, poetry...
- 4) Blog entries will reflect students' journeys toward self-discovery through confronting their own cultural biases and backgrounds with information about Australian and other cultures from Oceania that we will cover in class and during class trips.

II. **The final project will be an autobiographical photo-narrative supported by at least five photos (or drawings).** This personal narrative will be built around one or two central episodes of the student's time in Sydney so as to shed light on how these cultural encounters have challenged the perceptions of Australia they used to hold before their visit, forced them to rethink some of their unconscious assumptions, and helped them grow as a person by discovering more about themselves and their personalities.

III. **Longer essay questions** will also aim at having students evaluate and synthesize their cultural learning experience, with essay questions such as:

“Think about your ethnic background. Do you identify with a specific group? Do your mother tongue or your parents' or ancestors' native language contribute to your personal identity? Is your heritage important for you? Do you feel different from your friends or from the other students because of your roots? If so, what makes you different? After reflecting on all these issues, write a well-structured essay discussing the importance of your roots for your current identity. Also use some examples drawn from the films and texts we've studied so far.”

Grades:

Attendance / Class participation and participation in discussions, including preparation of texts and films provided for reading and viewing: 20%	Blog entries (5): 20%	Presentations (4): 20%	Long Essays (3): 15%	Final project: 25%
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Grade Scale

A+: 100-98	B+: 89-87	C+: 79-77	D+: 69-67	F: 59 or lower
A: 98-94	B: 86-84	C: 76-74	D: 66-64	
A-: 93-90	B-: 83-80	C-: 73-70	D-: 63-60	

Given the variety of skill levels likely to be present in class, your grade will reflect your personal engagement in the course and your progress.

Class Preparation and Participation

Careful preparation of the assignments prior to coming to class is required and is instrumental to your learning and your success in this class. Lack of proper preparation is immediately evident in the poor quality of your class participation, which I will observe closely. Preparation includes:

- Watching assigned films and reading assigned texts, including note-taking and the development of questions relating to content and style. **Simply reading the text or watching the film is not sufficient preparation!** A properly prepared student has not only read the texts or watched the movies, but consulted the dictionary for unknown vocabulary words, underlined important passages and main ideas, taken notes on difficulties of comprehension and on the structure, genre, register and context.
- Five blog entries: During this course, you will produce at least five short (1 page each) blog entries, in the form of a journal. The instructor will explain how to create a blog via wordpress.com, in case you are not familiar with the process. You will illustrate your blogs with photos and other supporting materials, and you will be asked to post constructive comments on your classmates' blogs every other week.
- Four in-class presentations: you will give three presentations on the course materials + 1 final presentation on your end-of-the-semester project. Two of these presentations will be historical/cultural ones (15 minutes), with a partner, on one of the topics studied this semester, the other one will be a film analysis (8-10 minutes), on your own.
- Your historical and cultural presentations should raise issues opening up the floor for a debate among your classmates. Please conclude your presentations with a few questions replacing the covered topic among larger ethical issues and ask open-ended questions.
- In your final presentation (about 10-12 minutes), you will present your final project to the class focusing on the photos you will have chosen as a visual support not merely illustrating your narrative but as essential components of it. We will see throughout the semester how to prepare a photo-narrative.

- Three essays: you will write three long essays over the course of the semester (5-6 pages, Times New Roman 12 double-spaced). For each essay, you will write a first and a second draft. In these essays, you will compare and contrast at least two (or more) of the texts or films studied in class, by analyzing them in depth in the light of some of the crucial issues and critical problems to which you will have been introduced.
- **Remember: Learning to write means learning to rewrite – even from scratch!** Your effort will be rewarded, as your work will improve all the more.
- A final project: you will write a final paper (12 pages, Times New Roman 12, double-spaced). This project will be an autobiographical photo-narrative supported by at least five photos (or drawings). This autobiographical narrative will be built around one or two central episodes of your time in Sydney so as to shed light on how these cultural encounters have challenged your perceptions of Australia before your visit, forced you to rethink some of your unconscious assumptions, and helped you grow as a person by discovering more about yourself and your personality.

- **NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED**, unless you have an incontrovertible excuse (protracted illness, death of a family member, etc.). As relatively long-term projects towards which you should be working *daily*, losing a day to a virus is generally not a sufficient excuse.
- In preparing homework, compositions, and projects **you may not** use any other form of assistance (including but not limited to assistance from a person, any print or electronic source, an electronic translation, spelling or grammar check). Use of unauthorized sources constitutes cheating and is a serious violation of the UHM Student Conduct Code.

University of Hawaii, excerpt from the Student Conduct Code:

Engaging in, or attempting to engage in any of these behaviors subjects a student to the disciplinary process and sanctions on each campus.

1. Acts of dishonesty, including but not limited to the following:
 - a. Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty.
 - b. Furnishing false information to any UH official, faculty member, or office.
 - c. Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any UH document, record, or form of identification.

The term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to: (1) use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; (2) use of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; (3) the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the UH faculty, staff or student (4) engaging in any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion.

The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

http://studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/policies/conduct_code/proscribed_conduct.php

Attendance and Behavior:

Attendance is compulsory. You start the semester with 100 points. Each unexcused absence will cost you 10 points. If you have to miss class for medical reasons, do try to get a note from a doctor.

Punctuality is mandatory. Students must arrive in class on time: since the class is only 50 minutes long, if you are more than 15 minutes late you will be marked down as absent.

On days when we have scheduled field trips, please arrive at least 5 minutes early at the meeting point. These visits are considered regular classes to all effects. If a student arrives late, the class will not be able to wait for him/her.

Proper behavior and dress code must be observed during visits.

Do not hesitate to contact me or see me after class if you need to talk about any issue whatsoever, be it with the class or in your housing situation / daily life in Sydney.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

WEEK 1: What is Oceania?

Tuesday: Course introduction. Explanation of the assignments and final project. Getting to know each other.

Thursday: Defining Oceania.

Tcherkézoff, Serge (2003). "A Long and Unfortunate Voyage Towards the 'Invention' of the Melanesia/Polynesia Distinction, 1595-1832." *The Journal of Pacific History* 38(2):175-196.

Cultural presentations on the regions: 2 student presentations:

- 1) on Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders
 - 2) on Australia 1606-1788
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WEEK 2: Australia: From Penal Colony to Founding Member of the Commonwealth

Tuesday: Film discussed this week: *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (Philip Noyce, 2002).

Class trip to the Australian Museum

Thursday: Film analysis presentation.

Cultural presentation on Australia's history and politics: 2 students

Blog entry 1 due:

Write a personal response to *Rabbit-Proof Fence*. Were you aware of this issue before coming to Sydney? Can you draw parallels with other historical events or other countries?

WEEK 3: Indigenous Australia: A "White Australia" policy and the Stolen Generations

Tuesday: Historical context.

First draft of essay 1 due. Please bring two copies in class for peer-editing.

Essay 1 topic: Personal Narrative: Reflect on your own ethnic background.

Thursday: "The Stolen Generations of Aboriginal Children Act 2006"

Film analysis presentation.

Students' cultural presentations

Blog entry 2 due:

In the light of the material covered over the last 3 weeks, as an American (or other foreign national) spending a semester in Australia, do you feel reinforced in your Americanness or, on the other hand, do you feel more like part of a global citizenship? Explain and discuss.

WEEK 4: Australia: contemporary issues

Film discussed this week: *Charlie's Country* (Rolf de Heer / David Gulpilil, 2013)

Tuesday:

Second draft of essay 1 due.

Students' presentations: film analysis + cultural presentation.

Thursday: **Class trip to Hyde Park Barracks Museum.**

WEEK 5: Australia

Film discussed this week: *Radiance* (Rachel Perkins, 1998)

Tuesday: In-class film discussion + Film analysis presentation.

Thursday: Students' Cultural Presentations:

1) New Zealand

2) Fiji

WEEK 6: Hawai'i

Tuesday: Film: *Then There Were None* (Elizabeth Kapu'uwailani Lindsey, 2013)

Read excerpt from Noenoe Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism*.

1 culture presentation: Hawaii's historical background. In-class film discussion.

Thursday: Film discussion.

Student's film analysis presentation.

WEEK 7: Hawaii (continued)

Tuesday: Film discussion

Thursday: 3 students' cultural presentations:

Blog entry 3:

In what ways have the films *Rabbit-Proof Fence* and *Charlie's Country* contributed to changing your perceptions of multiculturalism in Australia, and of Australian society in general? Explain.

WEEK 8: New Zealand / Aotearoa

Film discussed this week: *Once Were Warriors* (Lee Tamahori / Riwia Brown, 1994)

Tuesday: First draft of essay 2 due. Please bring 2 copies to class for peer-editing.

Essay 2 topic: critical essay.

Pick a controversial topic among the issues we have covered so far and that you find of particular importance. Write a well-structured critical essay in which you anticipate counter-arguments and demonstrate the validity of your views so as to convince your reader.

Thursday: **Class trip to the Museum of Sydney**

Students' Cultural Presentations: 1) A bicultural New Zealand?

2) Janet Frame

3) Patricia Grace

WEEK 9: New Zealand

Tuesday: Second draft of essay 2 due.

Thursday: Film analysis.

Class trip to the Carriageworks' Interactive Exhibition.

Blog entry 4:

How has the material recently covered (the situation of Aboriginals and the issue of the Stolen Generations; the issues in the Maori family in *Once Were Warriors*) challenged (or not) the ideas you had about Australia and New Zealand before coming here? Which parallels can you draw between these situations and those in the country where you are from?

WEEK 10: Tahiti / Ta Ao Ma'ohi

Film discussed this week: *Pacifiction* (Albert Serra, 2022)

Excerpts from documentary *Moruroa Files*

Tuesday: In-class discussion.

2 Student presentations: French Polynesia and Vanuatu

Thursday: In-class discussion.

Students' film analysis: 2

Turn in the first draft of your final project. Please schedule an appointment with me over the coming week to discuss feedback on your final project.

WEEK 11: Tahiti (French Polynesia)

Tuesday: Film:

Presentations:

- 1) Chantal Spitz;
- 2) Titaua Peu
- 3) Ari'irau

Thursday:

Class trip to the Chau Chak Wing Museum (focusing on the Polynesian section and on artistic representations of the nuclear tests)

WEEK 12: New Caledonia

Film discussed this week: *Louise Michel, la Rebelle* (Solveig Anspach, 2010)

Tuesday:

First draft of essay 3 due. Please bring 2 copies to class for peer-editing.

Essay 3 topic: Film analysis.

Compare and contrast at least 2 films that we have studied this semester: how do these coming-of-age narratives at once highlight issues anchored in a particular cultural and historical context while also having a universal, timeless reach? What are the narrative techniques used by the directors?

Thursday: Film analysis.

Students' Cultural Presentations:

- 1) New Caledonia's historical and political background;
- 2) The 1980s riots in New Caledonia
- 3) New Caledonia today: towards a common destiny?

Blog entry 5 due:

Reflect on one or two aspects of Australian culture that has surprised you the most during this semester, or that has required the most adaptation skills. Analyze why this has been the case and explain what strategies you have used to overcome it and in what ways it has been a learning experience.

WEEK 13: New Caledonia

Tuesday: Second draft of essay 3 due.

Thursday: Students' Cultural Presentations:

- 1) Déwé Gorodé
- 2) Major political figures of the Kanak Awakening

WEEK 14: Climate Change

Tuesday: Film: *There Once Was an Island: Te Henua e Nnoho* (Briar March, 2010)

Thursday:

Students' Cultural Presentations: 1) Climate change in Australia 2).

WEEK 15: Final Presentations.

Tuesday: Conclusion + Final presentations.

Thursday: Final presentations.

Final projects due one week from the last day of class.

I. Assessment Criteria for Blog/Journal Entries:

Blog entries will be assessed differently from essays, since they do not require the same organizational skills nor the use of a thesis. Students should feel like they can write more freely. A blog entry will receive a grade of 100% if it is turned in on time, is of appropriate length, is in keeping with the topic or answers the question and demonstrates awareness of the diversity issues covered in class and of cultural values that are different from one's own.

Sample of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Rubric for Blog Entries and Cultural Learning Experience:

Learning Outcomes	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Demonstrate increased awareness of one's own cultural values and biases and how these affect your perception of the target culture.	Fails to submit blog entries on time, or entries lack meaningful reflection and self-awareness.	Blog entries are posted on time and include genuine attempts at self-reflection on cultural learning experience through specific examples.	Blog entries demonstrate rare insights and in-depth analysis of personal biases hindering meaningful cultural learning experience.
Demonstrate knowledge of the	Blog entries seem rushed, lacking in-	Blog entries take into account issues	Blog entries provide in-depth analysis of

diversity of France with a focus on one of the topics covered in class or of particular interest to the student.	depth reflections on local experiences or observations of the surrounding society and culture.	and questions arising from daily interactions with Sydneysiders or Australian social life.	new cultural situations and observations encountered in daily interactions with Australians.
Demonstrate the ability to communicate appropriately and interact with diverse individuals.	Student misses classes or does not show up at class visits. Avoids spending time with fellow Australian students.	Student meets instructor's expectations, attends class on a regular basis, shows up on time at class trips, and demonstrates a genuine interest and attempts at interacting with Australian fellow students (or other Australians). Student reports these interactions in diary.	Student report in their blog entries their cultural journey through social and intellectual engagements with their Australian peers, professors, or even people encountered in their daily activities (on the street, at the store or on the subway...).
Demonstrate increased awareness of multiculturalism and viewpoints radically different from the student's own.	Student fails to comment on his classmates' blogs or to respond to comments.	Student comments productively on his classmates' blog entries and is active in online discussions.	Student comments on his classmates' blog entries with enriching and productive questions and initiates meaningful discussions on a regular basis.

II. Assessment Criteria for Essays:

The overall grade for essays will be divided into 5 components: **production of a first draft and participation in peer-editing (10%), content (30%), grammar (20%), style (20%), and structure (20%).**

Structure includes the break-down of the essay into an introduction, several paragraphs with one argument per paragraph + supporting evidence, transitions, and a proper conclusion. It also assesses the overall logical organization of the paper and its success in convincing the reader.

Content includes the statement of a clear thesis, the development of understandable arguments, clarity, precision, and the ability to consider potential objections and counter-arguments and to anticipate responses to those.

Grammar includes the use of adequate punctuation, spelling, conjugations, word order.

Style includes the use of standard language appropriate for an essay, avoiding colloquialisms or other phrases inadequate for written expression.

Peer-editing: As many studies on intensive-writing classes have shown that students learn as much from editing their peers as they do from writing their own essays and from the instructor's feedback, peer-editing is an essential component of this class. Every time a first essay draft is due, students are asked to bring two copies to class, so that the class will be broken into groups of three in which each student will get to edit two papers. Editing means highlighting problems and pointing to errors but not suggesting an answer or a solution.

Sample of a peer-editing guiding sheet:

- Please read each essay twice.
- 1) Read for form:
 - a) Style: Are sentences specific and concise? Is the sentence structure and length varied? Does the student use relative pronouns, complex sentences, and adequate connecting words?
 - b) Check spelling and grammar.
 - c) Punctuation.
- 2) Read for content:
 - a) Is the essay well-structured, with a clear introduction, paragraphs and a conclusion?
 - b) Does the introduction make you want to read the essay?
 - c) Is there a logical progression from one argument to the next?
 - d) Is the thesis clearly stated?
 - e) Is there too much plot summary and not enough analysis?
 - f) Are counter-arguments taken into account?
 - g) Does each paragraph contain one argument?
 - h) Is supporting evidence drawn from the text or film?
 - i) Is the overall tone objective and moderate?
 - j) Does the author avoid being judgmental?
 - k) Does the conclusion answer the question asked in the thesis?
 - l) Does the conclusion open up on a larger issue?

III. Assessment Criteria for the Two Cultural/Historical Oral Presentations:

Evaluation Elements	Maximum Number of Points	Student Results
Message (clarity and accuracy)	10	8
Communicative strategy (visual cues, clear organization)	10	7
	10	9

Vocabulary (appropriate language register)		
Grammar and syntax	10	8
Opens up the presentation on class discussion and a productive cultural debate.	10	9
Student points	50	41
Conversion to 100%	100%	82%
Student Grade		B -

IV. Assessment Criteria for the Final Presentation and the Film or Literary Analysis:

- F** Student fails to appear for scheduled presentation.
- D** Student fails to complete the task (does not say enough or cannot be understood clearly).
- C** Student successfully completes the task as presented (without anything extra).
- B** Student successfully completes the task and stands out either by extra material added to the basic situation or by the efforts to
- A** Student stands out both by the extra research conducted for the presentation and by the accuracy and relevance of the analysis.