

Dr. James Hewitson

Inquiry: History, Memory and Reality in Words and Pictures

Catalogue Description

This course explores how ideas about reality are constructed and understood in different narrative forms. Fiction, memoir, film, documentary, photography and historical record are considered in order to investigate how such information is used as a vehicle for self-examination and rational understanding and, conversely, for manipulation and self-delusion. The capacity of these texts and images to communicate ideas and their facility to provide legitimate knowledge is also considered. Related issues to be addressed include how memory and anecdote are used as evidence; how the selection and omission of different kinds of evidence and information shape historical records; how narratives produced through these means create identities and contribute to ideas about the world in general; and how stories are deliberately manipulated in personal, legal and historical contexts. Students are encouraged to explore topics of specific interest and relevance to themselves within the broader parameters of the course.