KNOWLEDGE AND INQUIRY
HIGHER 2
(SYLLABUS 9759)
INDEPENDENT STUDY
PROPOSAL FORM

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<th>Candidate's Name: Soon Jing Min Claire</th>
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<td>Centre Name: Hwa Chong Institution</td>
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If this is the 2nd submission, please tick here [ ]

Research Topic or Area of Study:

The area of study is a comparison of the construction of historical knowledge in historical films with that of historians throughout the ages.

The study hypothesises that this medium, often attacked as a poor representation of historical knowledge, is in fact of comparable standard to an academic approach in terms of knowledge construction.

Rationale for Choice of Topic (e.g. potential contribution of study to existing knowledge / research):

The nature of historical knowledge construction has come under close scrutiny, particularly in the last century. The style of historical writing has evolved greatly through the ages and the nature of history has been constantly questioned throughout these developments.

Film is a relatively new medium, and the phenomenon of historical films has posed fresh questions to historians. Is the historical film to be dismissed for its subjectivity, or valued as a developing form of historical writing?

Though historical films have been examined from several angles, the literature review has shown that an analysis of historical films in light of the development of historical writing has not been conducted before. Fresh insights will hopefully result from this.

Proposed Title of Independent Study:

“History: The Making Of” – The Construction of Knowledge in Historical Films

Synopsis of Independent Study:

[State clearly the objective(s) and scope of your research or area of study, and identify any potential problems or limitations]

**Objectives**

To compare the construction of historical knowledge in historical films with the construction of historical knowledge throughout the ages

To explore how knowledge construction in this medium may bear a surprising resemblance to that in historical writing

**Definitions**

The historical film in question does not refer to documentaries or any film set in the past. The study is restricted to fictional films created with the intention of capturing a specific event in the past.
Scope
- Due to time constraints,
  1. The study will be based on Western historiography.
  2. A small selection of historical films will be examined.
- The study will involve an overview of the major developments in historical writing. Case studies will be taken from certain time periods, for in-depth analysis and comparison.
- The historical film will be examined to answer two main questions:
  1. How is knowledge constructed within a historical film?
  2. How does this differ or bear similarities with the features of historical writing?

Potential problems
Firstly, the project is rather ambitious in terms of scope. Focus is needed to ensure the research stays relevant.

Secondly, reaching a conclusion on this topic may be difficult granted the many debates over the writing of history and the nature of historical films.

Literature Review (i.e. an overview of the current state of research and knowledge in this area of study):
There is extensive literature documenting developments in historical writing. The existing literature on historical films includes studies in books and journal articles, both on the Internet and in print1. These primarily revolve around the nature of historical films; in terms of evaluating how faithful individual films are in reflecting the past and their role in propaganda or culture.

Methodology (if applicable):
[State clearly which, if any, qualitative and/or quantitative methods will be used]
Extensive literature review of work on the nature of and the construction of historical knowledge within historical films will be conducted.

Samples of historical writings throughout the ages and accompanying commentaries will also be read.

This will be accompanied by analysis of historical films where necessary.

A comparison will then be done.

Candidate’s Signature:  Date:

Teacher’s Name:  Signature:  Date:
Mr. Christopher Burge

School Stamp

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1 http://www.latrobe.edu.au/screeningthepast/ Screening the Past. ScreenSound Australia, National Screen and Sound Archives and La Trobe University, 22 December 2007.