

LEWIS & CLARK COLLEGE
AUSTRALIAN STUDIES PROGRAM 2017
Studies of Contemporary Australia

Summary

The *Studies of Contemporary Australia* course introduces students to key aspects of contemporary Australian society and examines some of the social, political and environmental issues faced by Australians in their everyday lives. Topics include Indigenous Australian issues; multiculturalism and race relations; issues for families and young people; gender, sexuality and discrimination; environmental concerns and Australia's place in the world. Students are expected to reflect on these issues in light of historical material covered in the *Australian Area Studies* and *Indigenous Australian Studies* courses and to keep themselves up-to-date with current events in Australia. As part of this course students will also undertake private research projects to investigate a related topic more thoroughly.

Objectives

By the end of this course students should be able to:

- outline key social, political and environmental issues of current importance in Australia;
- discuss the role played by the media in framing these issues;
- outline the demographic make up of Australia and discuss its impact on contemporary society;
- discuss factors influencing the lives of Aboriginal Australians in contemporary Australia;
- discuss the meaning, processes and outcomes of "multiculturalism" in the Australian context;
- analyse attitudes in Australia towards gender relations, sexuality, work, family life, young people, crime and the environment; and
- compare the myths and reality of life in "outback" Australia with life in urban Australia.

List of activities

Sydney

- CA-Ex1** Australian performing arts
(attend a musical or theatre performance in Sydney)
- CA-Ex2** Australian Contemporary Art
(visit the Museum of Contemporary Art)
- CA-L1** Introduction to the Australian cultural milieu
(immigration, national population demographics, ethnic, racial and religious diversity)
- CA-L2** An introduction to the media in Australia
(media institutions, media freedom, government control, media ownership, bias in the media)
- CA-Wsp1** Media analysis and contemporary Australian society
(analysis of social and political issues currently in the media)

Brisbane

- CA-L3** Crime and violence
(nature of crimes, incidence, trends, effects, causes)
- CA-L4** The Australian health care system I
(Relative health of Australians, public health system)
- CA-L5** The Australian health care system II
(Medicare, private health care)
- CA-V1** Film viewing – 'The Castle'
- CA-L6** Work and welfare
(attitudes to work, socio-economic stratification and unemployment, functioning of the Australian welfare state, future of the welfare state)
- CA-L7** Australian families
(marriage, de facto relationships, homosexual partnerships, one parent families, mixed-race families, divorce, family cohesion)
- CA-L8** Questions of gender
(gender roles, gender relations, sexuality, feminism, on-going sexism and discrimination)

Key: CA = Contemporary Australia; L = Lecture; Ex = Excursion; Wsp = workshop / discussion;
V = Video

- CA-L9** Issues for young people
(education, employment, crime, alcohol and drugs, physical abuse, homelessness, mental health issues and suicide)
- CA-L10** Australia's relationship to the world
(bilateral relationships with Great Britain, the United States and Asia, Australia's foreign policy and the reliance on 'powerful friends')
- CA-L11** Australian multiculturalism
(the phenomenon, the process, multiculturalism as a political and social strategy, social and economic outcomes)
- CA-Ex3** Australian performing arts/sports
(attend a theatre or sporting event in Brisbane)
- CA-L12** Mining in Australia
(effects of mining on employment, demographics, environment and economy)
- CA-L13** The future of Australia's environment
(major environmental issues in Australia, levels of public concern, measures for addressing the problems, balancing environmental protection and economic growth)

Carnarvon and Mackay

- CA-Ex4** Life in an isolated 'outback' community
(the people, the work, housing, lifestyles in Central Queensland)
- CA-Ex5** Balancing productivity and land care needs
(visit an Australian cane farm near Mackay)