Project Title: Screen & Sound Cultures

- Supervisors: Alexia Kannas, Catherine Strong, Patrick Kelly,

Outline: This project investigates various contexts, epistemologies, methods, and methodologies to enrich understandings of the various cultures observed in, around, and through screen and sound. Successful applicants will work within Screen & Sound Cultures, a collaborative research group for scholars and creative practitioners working across the fields of screen studies, popular music, filmmaking, screenwriting, media history, curatorial practice, sound design, online media and a range of other interconnected fields. It foregrounds and fosters cross-disciplinary research, local and international collaborations, industry and community links, and the nexus between teaching and research.

Project Title: Adaptation Studies

- Supervisors: Steve Gaunson, Stayci Taylor, Alexia Kannas

Outline: This project seeks to explore page-to-screen and screen-to-page adaptations of both popular and classic titles. You will examine this kind of adaptation from the perspective of both literary and film studies. The project will survey a range of writers (novelists, dramatists and screenwriters) and also explore a range of genres and themes that have been the subject of adaptation. This project will identify different theoretical frames through which adaptation can be analysed and evaluated. Potential topics could include, prose to screen narratives, multi-sourced adaptations, theatrical adaptations of films and books and historical accuracy in adaptations.

Project Title: Archiving Popular Music History and Heritage

- Supervisors: Catherine Strong, Ian Rogers, Shelley Brunt, Gene Shill

Outline: The history of popular music is increasingly being captured in a variety of ways, from official displays in museums (including the recently opened Australian Music Vault), through to websites and other digital archives created by fans or musicians. This project will take a broad approach to examining the how this past is captured and interpreted, including: through consideration of archives as (potential) economic resources; through examining the relationship of design to music and music subcultures and how this shapes how we think about the past; and through examining the relationship between online and offline representations of artefacts and memories.

Project Title: Augmented Place Narratives

- Supervisors: Olivia Guntarik, Li Ping Thong, Tom Penney, Brian Morris, Hugh Davies

Outline: New technologies are reshaping how we interact with the environment. We are seeing more localised forms of technology-mediated experiences using augmented and virtual reality
applications. Immersive participatory simulations are part of our everyday lives, enabling participants to interact with digital information embedded in physical environments. This project welcomes proposals interested in examining the state of the art in AR and VR. We welcome proposals that explore how our practices can trouble the meanings of place, how the very nature of the local can be challenged socially and politically through community, (dis)connection, indigeneity, ownership, belonging, homelessness, dwelling, memory, walking, ‘play’ and other social practices.

Project Title: Innovation in Journalism

- Supervisors: Chris Hudson, Cathy Greenfield, Philip Dearman, Olivia Guntarik, Chengju Huang, Alexandra Wake, Antonio Castello, Josie Vine, and Leah Li.

Outline: The global news industry has been undergoing a period of innovation and radical change, with major disruption to the economic models that once paid for public interest journalism and questions raised about funding of such journalism, including of journalism outside liberal democracies. With that disruption brings a range of issues to be explored around new funding models, new forms of journalism (mobile journalism, community journalism, hyper local journalism, citizen journalism), and even new ways of thinking about journalism, journalism technologies, and their role within society. At stake is even the question What is Journalism? And who is a Journalist.

Project Title: Australian screen stories

- Supervisors: Stayci Taylor, Peta Murray

Outline: This project responds to the current, ongoing and ‘real world’ issues in the Australian screen industries. Crusades such as the Make it Australian campaign – and the more specifically targeted Gender Matters initiative – suggest significant challenges to creating Australian stories intended for screen production. The project investigates the notion of ‘Australian story’ with a particular interest in marginalised voices. Drawing on RMIT’s international reputation in screenwriting practice research, the project takes a creative practice approach, with the development of a uniquely Australian screenplay informed by, and responding to, the evolving concerns of the industries in which it is theoretically situated.

Project Title: Metal music, playfulness and humour

- Supervisors: Catherine Strong, Shelley Brunt, Gene Shill, Ian Rogers

Outline: Metal music and its associated cultural environment has become one of the more polarising proponents of popular music studies in recent years. It has potential for both inclusionary and exclusionary practices. This project investigates the role of playfulness through humour and satire in affecting change to these musical and social practices, including aesthetic, authenticity, gender, and identity. The project will use multidisciplinary research techniques, such as close text-based analysis, and ethnographic enquiry, to understand the relationship between metal and humour going forward.
Project Title: The Contemporary Biopic

- Supervisors: Steven Gaunson, Alexia Kannas

Outline: Biographical films, or “biopics”, have enjoyed consistent popularity since the earliest days of cinema despite persistent criticism from film scholars regarding the films’ loose play with ‘facts’ and ‘truth’. This project seeks to address the gap in scholarship concerning the biopic and invites proposals for theoretical and creative practice projects that explore the conventions and complexities of the genre. This could include (but is not limited to) studies relating to genre and genre hybridity; stardom and performance; and the relationship between authenticity and fictionalisation. How might a deeper understanding of the “biopic” enable new creative approaches to this popular genre?

Project Title: The Cult Film

- Supervisors: Alexia Kannas, Steve Gaunson, Ramon Lobato

Outline: “Cult film” is a multifarious term that refers to a broad range of film types, filmmakers, critical practices and reception contexts around which a lively area of academic and scholarly enquiry has surfaced in recent years. This project invites proposals that will make a significant contribution to the development of new approaches or to comprehensive analysis of established subjects in any area of cult film. Possible topics might include (but are not limited to): national or regional manifestations of cult film; politics and cult film; sound and music in cult film; digital technology and cult film; exhibition practices; studies in cult reception and fandom; cult film and nostalgia.

Project Title: Journalism and trauma, suicide and serious mental health issues.

- Supervisors: Alexandra Wake, Josie Vine, Vandra Harris (GUS), Hariz Halilovich (GUS), Leah Li

Outline: Media workers find themselves on the front line of many traumatic news events – and face pressures not only on their own mental health, but also in the awkward position of trying to raise awareness about these sensitive issues without causing further harm. This project looks at how the media works with these issues, and the impact not only on media workers such as journalists and camera operators, but on communities in Australia and abroad (including refugee and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, war zones and states in transition).

Project Title: Digital Storytelling and Screen Production Research Methodologies

- Supervisors: Patrick Kelly, Rebecca Young, Marsha Berry, Stayci Taylor

Outline: How can screen production research be used to create new forms of digital narrative and/or remediate older forms? This project investigates the various contexts, epistemologies, methods, and methodologies to enrich understandings of the production and prototyping of screen-based storytelling projects, including web series, podcasts, interactive documentary/drama, transmedia,
social media content, apps, mobile media, mobile art, 360 VR videos and Augmented Reality experiences. We welcome proposals that utilise media production methodologies, including practice-based research, practice-led research, and research-led practice, in order to contextualise approaches to media content, aesthetics and/or technologies within wider contemporary practices.

**Project Title: Changing Asia, Changing Media: Media and Social Transformation in Asia**

- Supervisors: Chengju Huang, Chris Hudson, and Glen Donnar

Outline: Asia has experienced rapid social changes and media growth since the 1990s. In this project, we explore a wide range of journalism/media-related issues in diverse political, cultural and social contexts in this region: the changing landscape of journalism in the era of digitisation, government media regulation strategies, political campaigns and propaganda, the opportunities and challenges of social media, the rise of citizen journalism, media representation of important/challenging local/regional/global issues.

**Project Title: Digital photography & social media as a tool to improve community protection and policing**

- Supervisors: Jair Garcia, Adrian Dyer

Outline: Usage of digital media such as photography and video, originally posted for social media, has been extended for medical and legal purposes. This usage has begun to be scrutinised by legal, ethics experts and members of the public, who are raising questions about the implications of these practices in relation to the current legal frameworks imposed by National and State Privacy Acts. This project will enrol a student to gauge the awareness of general public about ethical and privacy issues arising from the use of digital media using qualitative and quantitative techniques including mining of Big Data and focalised interviews.

**Project Title: The Fourth Estate ain't what it used to be: a new political economy of news**

- Supervisors: Cathy Greenfield, Philip Dearman

Outline: This project investigates changes in news journalism as a key institution in the organization of knowledge and everyday life. These changes have political, economic, socio-cultural, technological and organizational dimensions. Professionalization, automation, digitalization, data-fication, and casualization name some of the recent ways that journalists and their audiences are caught up in new forms of governing digitally networked populations, in terms of how they can know their societies, economies and polities. These new forms of governing have thrown up questions about trust and authority in news production, the effects of global reach, the consequences of algorithmic measurement of audience engagement. Exploring these changes to public knowledge is an important element in making digital society and economy more inclusive.
Project Title: Making Media: Digital Self-representation + New Identities

- Supervisors: Olivia Guntarik, Seth Keen, Patrick Kelly, Marianne Sison, Daniel Binns

Outline: Are you interested in ‘making media’ for advocacy, activist or awareness-raising activities? Do you want to know how processes of self-representation work to dismantle stereotypes of race, class, gender identities or sexualities? We invite proposals from members of First Nations, refugee, migrant, marginalised or LGBT communities seeking to examine the significance of media for their political and cultural needs. We welcome proposals on documentary, film, video, social and news media, digital art, games or interactive media. Topics may include community building/engagement, practices of self-representation/self-determination, transmedia storytelling, interfaith and cross-cultural dialogue, gender and race-based discrimination, anti-violence against women, or human rights.

Project Title: The Matter of Media

- Supervisors: Daniel Binns, Allan Thomas

Outline: In the changing mediascape — where the platforms, formats, and styles du jour can change overnight — what is the stuff of media? What tools and resources do all creators still have access to, control over, in order to craft their narratives or creative experimentations? This project calls for theoretical, philosophical, and practical interventions into the materiality of media including, but not limited to film, television, online or digital platforms, virtual reality, writing, or video games.

Project Title: Music and Film

- Supervisors: Alexia Kannas, Steve Gaunson, Ian Rogers

Outline: It is only relatively recently that film theorists and scholars have begun to challenge the “hegemony of the visual” in film studies by turning their attention to the roles played by music and sound. The School of Media and Communication at RMIT has a number of academics working at the intersection of film and music studies and seeks proposals for projects that will contribute to this dynamic field. Possible topics might relate (but are not limited) to: film music and affect; studies of particular composers; the curated film soundtrack; director and composer creative teams; musical performance on film; music and silent cinema; the film soundtrack album; film music and genre.

Project Title: Music and the City

- Supervisors: Catherine Strong, Ian Rogers, Shelley Brunt, Gene Shill

Outline: In 2018, Melbourne was not only named the world’s most liveable city but also the live music capital of the world. How can music shape a city and also shape the lives of its residents? This project considers the place of music (particularly live popular music performance, although other forms are considered) within the city, investigating such aspects as infrastructure, sustainability, understanding and engaging communities, policy, the music economy, related creative industries, scenes and subcultures, festivals and events, and more. The project will use interdisciplinary
research techniques, such as practice-based enquiry, digital and participant/observation ethnography to understand the urban environment.

Project Title: Care for Social Futures

- Supervisors: Jaz Hee-jeong Choi, Larissa Hjorth

Outline: This project explores how we might embed care in all facets of formal and informal, digital and material context to create new pathways towards inclusive and just futures in this rapidly ageing, socially precarious, and digitally networked era. We are particularly interested in exploring non-disciplinary-bounding, and co-creative ways of doing research and practice focused on care and wellbeing.

Project Title: Music and Youth Identity

- Supervisors: Catherine Strong, Ian Rogers, Shelley Brunt, Gene Shill

Outline: Popular music was once considered a strictly ‘youthful’ form of culture, but over time this connection has become more tenuous. What is the relationship between youth and popular music in contemporary society? This project will investigate how young people understand and use music, in particular as a part of identity-making. How have new forms of interaction with music, such as streaming and the creation of digital subcultures, changed young people’s relationship with music? To what extent do music and music-making provide resources to a group characterised as problematic and ‘at risk’ in a neoliberal economy?

Project Title: Mobile first image communication

- Supervisors: Olivia Guntarik, Seth Keen

Outline: Digital media technologies make it simple to capture and share images using mobile devices and social media services, yet understandings of their impact is less certain. How do organisations manage images for sharing information and knowledge? How is visual content produced, consumed and analysed in media rich and mobile environments? How do organisations utilise ‘mobile first’ developments, everyday media practices and peer production to share image-based information and knowledge? Prospective students will have the option to work with the supervisory team on ‘FireLens’, a Victoria State government partnership project that is focusing on the development of an app and media platform image management system. Candidates are also invited to develop their own topics related to the theme of photographic or audiovisual communication.

Project Title: Music as Global: 21st Century Perspectives

- Supervisors: Catherine Strong, Ian Rogers, Shelley Brunt, Gene Shill

Outline: In this age of digital media and 21st century communication technologies, music can impact industries or communities of people that lie beyond the confines of the geographical borders of
cities, states or countries. This critical and trans-disciplinary project focusses on the globalisation of music (via, for example, genres, bands, musicians and instruments) and the resulting issues (such as multi-culturalism, cross-culturalism, identity), using a chosen method of enquiry (practice-based/ written research) in a region (preferably Australasia, Asia-Pacific or Japan). It may include contemporary examinations of 'world music', marketing non-western musics in western markets or the analysis of local/global music production.

**Project Title: Nostalgia in Contemporary Film and Television**

- **Supervisors:** Alexia Kannas, Adrian Danks, Ramon Lobato, Steve Gaunson

Outline: From the idealized visions of 1950s life offered in television shows like Happy Days (1974 – 1984), to the romanticisation of cinema’s yesteryear in films such as Cinema Paradiso (1988), film and television have always yearned for the past. But many cultural critics see the current “nostalgia boom” as a particular post-internet phenomenon, citing the wave of remakes, reboots and other efforts to revive the past as symptomatic of cultural exhaustion. This project invites proposals for studies that respond to this cultural and critical interest in nostalgia in film and television. Possible topics might include (but are not limited to): studies of particular eras as represented in nostalgic film and television; studies of particular nostalgic films; studies of nostalgic televisions series (e.g. Glow, Mad Men); politics and nostalgia; nostalgia programing and the “reboot”; sound and music in nostalgic film and television; digital technology and the nostalgia boom.

**Project Title: Identity, Migration and American Psychedelic Rock in the 1970s**

- **Supervisors:** Catherine Strong, Ian Rogers, Shelley Brunt, Gene Shill

Outline: Psychedelic rock was dependent on a crisis of modernity in a society where recording technology allowed white suburbanites to appropriate music from both national and international sounds that they wouldn’t have otherwise heard. Through America’s segregation of its white and ‘other’ populations into ghettos and suburbs, white Americans were able to indulge in a romanticisation of African Americans that had little do with reality. They thus created psychedelic rock, a racially hybrid musical form that borrowed from the blues, jazz, soul, folk, and raga records that now had a global mobility. This music, and the ‘freak’ identity they adopted, were a way of attempting to transgress and transcend the experience of white suburban place and identity that they felt forced onto them. Through the migration of members of the American military, these musical forms and concepts of whiteness spread even further into countries like Germany, Japan, and Vietnam. This study will outline the romanticisation that segregation can bring into existence, as well as the way it can lead the separated groups into narrowly defined and unrealistic identities. In doing this study I hope to create awareness of, and lessen the impact of, racial romanticisation while exploring ways in which the spread of culture through migration plays a role in such romanticisation.
Project Title: Popular Music Now

- Supervisors: Catherine Strong, Ian Rogers, Shelley Brunt, Gene Shill

Outline: What is the place of popular music in contemporary society? This project examines specific issues in popular music in the ‘here and now’: intercultural challenges, political issues, or postcolonial identities, among others. It seeks to unpack and analyse the role popular music can play in the everyday life of people via, for example, mediated contexts such as television, the internet or live streaming; performance spaces such as concerts; community engagement such as festivals or street parties; and other music-industry areas. This project can use practiced-based modes of enquiry, such as music-making, or a thesis as its mode of investigation.

Project Title: Television in Transition: Audiences and Industries in a Digital Era

- Supervisors: Ramon Lobato, Tania Lewis

Outline: Post-broadcast television culture is in a state of flux, shaped by the emergence of new technologies, online streaming platforms, devices, institutions, and cultures of viewing. We invite applications for projects in media, communications and cultural studies that explore these changes (and continuities) within national, regional or transnational contexts, or in relation to specific critical debates and issues in the field. Projects focusing on television industries and/or audiences in a digital context, and their intersection, are especially welcomed.

Project Title: Thinking cinema

- Supervisors: Daniel Binns, Allan Thomas, Adrian Danks

Outline: The histories of film theory and, more recently, of film-philosophy, can be productively read through the lens of the speculative proposition that film ‘thinks’. We seek to approach film in its widest sense, including VR, interactive cinema, online and digital video, as well as cinema more conventionally conceived, in order to explore their conceptual and critical affordances as modes of conceptual and practical engagement with the world, and with human life and social practice. We invite projects that explore this ‘thought of the cinema’, whether from theoretical or philosophical perspectives (film-philosophy, the histories of film theory), or through ‘hands on’ explorations of film form and practice.

Project title: Understanding Changes in Representation in Australian Popular Music

- Supervisors: Catherine Strong, Ian Rogers, Shelley Brunt, Gene Shill

Outline: Recently there has been increasing scrutiny of issues relating to equal representation in the Australian music industries. This has led to a number of initiatives from industry bodies, government, and at more grassroots levels, to try to increase the participation of women-identified, GNC, queer,
CALD, Indigenous, and non-white persons in music, as well as a focus on class and geographic inclusivity. This project will study these attempts to determine how inequality has become entrenched in popular music, what approaches are most successful in addressing this, and ensuring the full participation of all Australians in this important segment of our economy/workforce.

**Project Title: Young people's views of digital advocacy**

- Supervisors: Jenny Robinson, Olivia Guntarik, Adrian Dyer, Jair Garcia

Outline: Young people are actively engaging in digital advocacy alongside leadership development and activism. Children, adolescents and emerging young adults are getting involved in areas as wide-ranging as digital rights, social causes, and healthy use of social media. In this project we’re interested in exploring the views of young people themselves about digital advocacy, what entices them to engage, and to go deeper into understanding the social and personal motivations for youth digital advocacy. We encourage HDR projects from a variety of methodological approaches, and particularly welcome proposals that might be interested in including eye-tracking/multi-sensory perception as ways of understanding young people’s views. For example, can eye-tracking technology provide insights into how young people experience co-design or development of digital advocacy content? What kinds of digital/social content engages them in advocacy, and can eye-tracking and psychophysiology tell us what draws their attention and/or their emotional response to content & comments.

**Project Title: Screening Gender: creative practice approaches to interrogating gender in screen works and screenwriting**

- Supervisors: Daniel Binns, Glen Donnar, Alexia Kannas, Peta Murray, Stayci Taylor, Lisa French

Outline: This project examines gendered screen representations and perspectives. Through playful approaches to writing and making, we seek new understandings of gender in narrative structure and visual storytelling. The project is interested in intersections of professional practice and gendered perceptions in society and popular culture through various critical frameworks (feminism/s, masculinities, queer theory), applied to genre (such as romantic comedy, action) and thematic concerns (e.g. gender fluidity, female friendship, bromance).

**Project Title: Social Inclusion and Exclusion within Consumer Fan Cultures and Civic Engagement Spaces**

- Supervisors - Catherine Strong, Ramon Lobato

Marginalised groups must regularly manage their participation in social spaces that are hegemonically exclusionary by nature, often by creating spaces and communities of their own that, in turn, exclude individuals who threaten or do not ‘belong’ in those spaces. Both these processes of gatekeeping can be problematic: the protocols and rules of communities that manage their safety
through gatekeeping may not be well thought-out and lead to intersectional exclusions. This project will investigate the structural processes of inclusion and exclusion in Australian spaces and communities, such as gendered fan cultures and activist spaces, and the social, economic and cultural consequences of these exclusions. It seeks to examine barriers (whether policy-based or algorithmic) that marginalised people face for inclusion to various groups, and how those barriers shape the groups that create and enforce them. It will also attempt to understand the digital, mediated strategies marginalised people utilise for creating new communities and overcoming barriers for inclusion into hegemonic spaces.

**Project Title: Mediations of Queer and Trans Thinking**

- **Supervisors -** [Rebecca Hill](#), [Patrick Kelly](#), [Ronnie Scott](#)

This project articulates queer thinking and/or trans thinking as a constructive practice that enables social change for queer and trans people and others effected by heteronormativity and cis-sexism. The study can be either a project or a thesis. The candidate will produce a queer or trans work; for instance, through the medium of film or animation, poetry or a novel or as a thesis that articulates queer and/or trans ideas. The project/thesis will be a significant work that embodies queer and/or trans mediation as a constructive practice. If the student creates a project, the exegesis will define the theoretical basis for the creative practice, drawing on examples from relevant literature.