

# Liverpool Film Seminar

2017 – 2018 series

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Every year, Liverpool Film Seminar invites experts to deliver a series of talks. Topics vary greatly and the series does not focus on a specific aspect of film. Instead, a range of genres and approaches are celebrated, from historical reach to the internet's impact on cinematic material.

## Professor Catherine Driscoll (University of Sydney)

### **The Hunger Games: Spectacle, Risk and the Girl Action Hero**

This paper considers the 'Hunger Games' films as a spectacular hybridization of teen film and action film which, in its contemporary media environment, could only have a girl hero. Their particular blend of action film conventions with elements of fantasy, science fiction, horror, and romance genres takes both coherence and force from images of and ideas about adolescence and in particular from the spectacular transformations of narratives about girlhood across the twentieth century. It situates these films as a crescendo in a long trajectory of representing girl heroes on screen.

The paper focuses on three conjunctions of the terms spectacle, risk and girl-heroism.

First: the spectacle of youth-at-risk, particularly as it is filtered through the long history of ideas and images of girlhood vulnerability and a now significant history of reversing that figure for impactful images of girl heroism.

Second: the spectacle of Katniss Everdeen's heroism in the films, as it is self-consciously presented with reference to both the uses and risks of spectacle for politics.

And finally: at a meta-textual level and in the discursive context of the films' reception, the pervasive framing of girls' agency as ambivalently, if not dubiously, tied to spectacular forms of commodity culture.

## Biography:

Catherine Driscoll is Professor of Gender and Cultural Studies at the University of Sydney. She more specifically researches in the areas of youth and girls studies, popular cultural and media studies, and also cultural theory, modernist studies, and rural cultural studies. Her books include *Girls* (Columbia UP 2002), *Modernist Cultural Studies* (UP Florida 2010), *Teen Film* (Berg 2011), *The Australian Country Girl: History, Image, Experience* (Ashgate 2014), and the forthcoming *The Hunger Games: Risk, Spectacle, and the Girl Action Hero* with Alexandra Heatwole (Routledge 2017). She is co-editor, with Meaghan Morris, of *Gender, Media and Modernity in the Asia-Pacific* (Routledge 2014), with Megan Watkins and Greg Noble, of *Cultural Pedagogies and Human Conduct* (Routledge 2015), and, with Kate Darian-Smith and David Nichols, of *Cultural Sustainability in Rural Communities: Rethinking Australian Country Towns* (Routledge 2017). Her central research project right now focuses on media classification systems and minority (with a large international team working across seven countries).