**History through Film**

**Syllabus**

**Course Description:**

One way to learn about the past is to study movies with historical themes. In this course we will examine historical events by watching, discussing, and writing about movies. We will focus on 20th Century American history. Movies can provide some factual information about a historical figure, event, or time period; they can also distort the past.  A major part of the course will be discussion of how movies accurately and inaccurately portray history.  Movies with a historical focus also tell us about the times in which they were produced, so for every film we watch we will ask two questions:

1. What does this movie tell a modern viewer about a particular time period?
2. What is the underlying theme of the movie?

**Course Requirements:**

Discussion (25%)

I expect you to pay attention to the films and to be able to discuss their themes, strengths and weaknesses, and historical accuracy. Included in this grade will be the handouts that must be completed for each film.

Quizzes (25%)

We will have periodic quizzes to ensure that you are paying close attention to the films.  I will most likely quiz you on major plot points and characters.

Essays (50%)

At the end of each unit, you will write a 500-word typed essay on one of the films we have watched in class.  In your essays you need to address the following issues:

1. How does the film portray the past: does it romanticize or demonize the period; does it accurately portray the past?
2. Do the filmmakers seem to have an agenda (*other than to make money or to entertain*)?
3. What are the film’s major themes or ideas?

**20th Century American History Through Film**

**Potential Film Permission List**

America’s history is full of stories of innovation, triumph, leadership, and courage. However, it is also marred with stories of war, slavery, deceit, and overall treachery. Thus, some of the films that will be shown in this course may contain violent scenes in order to portray an accurate picture of an historical event. Please look over the potential films that could be shown during this course, and sign the permission-to-view form on the class syllabus. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email me at [afitzgerald@dunklin.k12.mo.us](mailto:afitzgerald@dunklin.k12.mo.us).

Below is the list of the potential movies that will be shown in this course. Please note that the ratings for each movie are listed along with the movie title.

**Boom and Bust**

* Of Mice and Men (PG-13)
* Cinderella Man (PG-13)
* The Great Gatsby (PG-13)
* Public Enemy (R)

**WWII**

* Saving Private Ryan (R)
* Flags of Our Fathers (R)
* Letters from Iwo Jima (R)
* A League of Their Own (PG)

**The Cold War**

* Good Night and Good Luck (PG)
* Malcolm X (PG-13)
* We Were Soldiers (R)
* Apollo 13 (PG)
* Thirteen Days (PG-13)
* Forrest Gump (PG-13)
* The Help (PG-13)

**Recent US History**

* Live from Baghdad (Unrated)
* Courage Under Fire (R)
* Flight 93 (TV-PG)

**America’s Future?**

* V for Vendetta (R)
* The Hunger Games (PG-13)

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**Please return to the teacher:**

*As the parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I have read and understand the syllabus, and the requirements for this class. I have looked over the “Potential Film Permission List”, and give permission to my child to view any of the listed movies.*

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_