



Melrose High School
History Through Film
Course Syllabus

CITY OF MELROSE



1900

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Course Expectations: Curriculum for this course will involve the viewing and analysis of a number of films, which are meant to represent significant events in history. Film can be a method for the study of history, and that is the goal of this course. Students will view films and participate in related research and study that will allow them to analyze and evaluate the historical accuracy, and in some cases the inaccuracy, portrayed in film. During the course the primary focus will be on three connections between film and history: films as a reflection of the time during which the film was made, film as a philosophical or historical essay from the film maker's perspective, and film as "window on the past", a recreation of past events and the methods used to create historical films. Participating in this course will afford students a unique opportunity to use critical thinking skills to enrich their study of history. Examples of the types of films that may be covered include *Gladiator*, *Braveheart*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *Mississippi Burning*, etc. Students will be expected to complete 1-2 hours per week of independent practice such as homework, reading, and projects.

Essential Questions:

- What role does film play in shaping our understanding of history?
- To what extent does film serve as an artifact of the society that produced it?
- Is film a valid historical source?
- What determines the value of film as a tool for studying the past?
- How is film evidence different than other more traditional historical sources?
- Can/should films be used to teach history?

Primary Course Materials: There is no textbook for the course but students will be expected to read multiple reviews and texts related to each film shown in class. The films for the course will be shown during class time and there is no expectation that students will need to purchase or rent films on their own. However, students should be aware that they are responsible for seeing any video footage shown in class, even if they are absent. Please see Film Viewing Policy below for more details.

Student Materials: History Through Film notebook and folder OR binder with space for handouts.

Note: All students should have materials dedicated solely to History Through Film. Keeping organized notes, having space to write during in-class activities, and a place to put the handouts students will use during the year are important tools for success.

Student Expectations:

- Students will be on time for class
- Students will be prepared for class
- Students will be on task throughout class
- Students will contribute meaningfully & respectfully to each class

Grade Determination: The grades for each term will be determined using a weighted point system. A typical weighting is usually 60% based on major assignments (movie reviews, projects, etc.), 25% based on homework, and 15% based on class participation. The weighting is subject to adjustment from term to term, however, based on the distribution of assignments.

Homework: Students will generally receive 1 to 2 hours of homework and independent practice per week for this course. If you are absent from class please contact me or another student to get the work as soon as you can. Students with excused absences will have the same amount of time they were out to make up the work. (Example...you are out sick three days in a row...you have three days to make up the work). All late work will be penalized but I encourage students to make up work for partial credit.

Extra Help: I am generally in school every day from 7:00-3:00 and available to meet before or after school. It will be appreciated if you can give me a day's notice if you would like to schedule a meeting to make sure I do not have a conflict.

Plagiarism: Consistent with Melrose High School policy, all work on individual writing assignments, projects, and tests must be written in your own words. Plagiarism is never tolerated at MHS but is a particular concern because of the nature of the curriculum in History Through Film. Students may be tempted to search for someone else's review of a film but should never, under any circumstances, submit the thoughts/work of someone else as their own.

Film Viewing Policy: All films will be viewed during class time and so attendance is extremely important. If a student is absent on a day when we are viewing a film, he/she must make his/her best effort to make up the section missed. Make-up sessions can be scheduled with the teacher for before or after school based on availability. If possible, students may also make up missed sections by watching films independently with the teacher's consent.

Parental Consent: Some of the films that are shown in History Through Film are rated R. Under student that is under 18 years old must obtain a signed Parental Consent Form (to be passed out in class) and return to the teacher in order to watch R rated film in class.