

**HIST 1301: U.S. History to 1865**  
**Assignment for Paper #1: Film Review, 2-4 pages**  
**Due September 16**

Select a film from the attached list. Many will be available at video stores, though you may also want to check the DMC and CC Public Library for some titles. If you want to choose a film that isn't on the list, please ask me about it in advance.

Begin your paper by briefly summarizing the plot and introducing the film's characters. What is the film about, when and where is it set, and what important historical people or events are depicted? In most cases, this overview should take you no more than a paragraph: single out the most important issues.

Follow this summary with a more detailed discussion of the film's historical content, focusing on a few key events or topics. Does the film attempt to depict history with honesty and complexity, or is it exaggerated or simplified for dramatic effect? Is the film intended to be entertaining, is it a history lesson, or both? What historical details (ie., language, costume, scenery, ideas, individual human behavior) are presented, and are they believable?

Next, how does the film enhance your understanding of the past? What specifically do you learn about the historical events depicted, and does the film offer information you didn't know about before? Does it provide helpful context – that is, information about the causes, background, and importance of historical events? In short, is this film a useful resource for understanding the historical issues it raises?

Finally, express an opinion about the movie. Did you like it? Why or why not? And please remember that you are free to dislike the movie you write about, just be sure to explain why.

*Always support your opinion with specific details.* What actually happens on the screen that leads you to the conclusions you write about? It would be a good idea to quote actual dialogue, describe important scenes in detail, and provide a clear example from the film for every point you make.

Please feel free to ask me about anything that's unclear. This paper should be fun to think about and to write, so enjoy yourselves!

### **Suggested Films for Paper #1**

*1776*. DIR: Peter H. Hunt. CAST: William Daniels, Howard da Silva, Ken Howard, Blythe Danner. 1972 (Second Continental Congress, creation of Declaration of Independence)

*Abe Lincoln in Illinois*. DIR: John Cromwell. CAST: Raymond Massey, Gene Lockhart, Ruth Gordon, Mary Howard, Dorothy Tree, Harvey Stephens. 1940 (Lincoln, abolitionism)

*Across the Wide Missouri*. DIR: William Wellman; CAST: Clark Gable, Ricardo Montalban, John Hodiak, Adolphe Menjou, Maria Elena Marques. 1951 (westward expansion, fur trapping, Native Americans)

*Alamo, The*. DIR: John Wayne. CAST: John Wayne, Richard Widmark, Laurence Harvey, Frankie Avalon, Richard Boone, Chill Wills. 1960 (Texas Independence)

*Alamo, The*. DIR: John Lee Hancock. CAST: Dennis Quaid, Billy Bob Thornton, Jason Patric, Patrick Wilson, Emilio Echevarría, Jordi Mollá. 2004 (Texas Independence)

*Amistad*. DIR: Steven Spielberg. CAST: Djimon Hounsou, Anthony Hopkins, Morgan Freeman, Nigel Hawthorne, Stellan Skarsgard, Matthew McConaughey, Anna Paquin, David Paymer, Pete Postelthwaite. 1997 (slave trade)

*Andersonville*. DIR: John Frankenheimer. CAST: Jarrod Emrick, Frederic Forrest, William H. Macy, Jan Triska, Ted Marcoux. 1996 (Civil War)

*Beautiful Dreamers*. DIR: John Kent Harrison. CAST: Rip Torn, Colm Feore, Sheila McCarthy. 1991 (Walt Whitman, American Romanticism)

*Benedict Arnold: A Question of Honor*. DIR: Mikael Salomon; CAST: Aidan Quinn, Kelsey Grammar, Flora Montgomer, John Light. 2003 (Revolutionary War)

*Black Robe*. DIR: Bruce Beresford. CAST: Lothaire Bluteau, Aden Young, Sandrine Holt, August Schellenberg, Tantoo Cardinal. 1991 (Native Americans, New France, missionaries)

*Broken Chain, The*. DIR: Lamont Johnson. CAST: Eric Schweig, Wes Studi, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Pierce Brosnan, J.C. White Shirt, Graham Greene. 1993 (Native Americans)

*Cabeza de Vaca*. DIR: Nicolas Echevarria; CAST: Juan Diego, Daniel Gimenez Cacho, Robert Sosa, Carlos Castanon. 1990 (New Spain, Native Americans)

*The Crossing*. DIR: Robert Harmon. CAST: Jeff Daniels, Roger Rees, Sebastian Roché, Steven McCarthy. 2000 (Revolutionary War, George Washington)

*Crucible, The*. DIR: Nicholas Hytner. CAST: Winona Ryder, Daniel Day-Lewis, Joan Allen, Paul Scofield, Bruce Davison. 1996 (Puritanism, Salem Witch Trials)

*Devil and Daniel Webster, The.* DIR: William Dieterle. CAST: Edward Arnold, Walter Huston, James Craig, Anne Shirley, Jane Darwell, Simone Simon, Gene Lockhart. 1941 (national period, Congress)

*Drums Along the Mohawk.* DIR: John Ford. CAST: Claudette Colbert, Henry Fonda, Edna May Oliver, Eddie Collins, John Carradine. 1939 (Revolutionary War)

*Gangs of New York.* DIR: Martin Scorsese. CAST: Leonardo di Caprio, Daniel Day Lewis, Cameron Diaz. 2002 (immigration, urban problems)

*Gettysburg.* DIR: Ronald F. Maxwell. CAST: Tom Berenger, Jeff Daniels, Sam Elliott, Martin Sheen, Richard Jordan, Stephen Lang, C. Thomas Howell, Kevin Conway, Andrew Prine, John Diehl, Richard Anderson, Maxwell Caulfield, Timothy Scott, George Lazenby. 1993 (Civil War)

*Glory.* DIR: Edward Zwick. CAST: Matthew Broderick, Denzel Washington, Cary Elwes, Morgan Freeman. 1989 (Civil War, black regiments)

*Gone with the Wind.* DIR: Victor Fleming. CAST: Clark Gable, Vivien Leigh, Leslie Howard, Olivia de Havilland, Thomas Mitchell, Hattie McDaniel. 1939 (Civil War, slavery)

*Gore Vidal's Lincoln.* DIR: Lamont Johnson. CAST: Sam Waterston, Mary Tyler Moore, Richard Mulligan, Ruby Dee, Steven Culp, Tom Brennan, Gregory Cooke. 1988 (Civil War, Lincoln)

*Jefferson in Paris.* DIR: James Ivory. CAST: Nick Nolte, Greta Scacchi, Thandie Newton, Gwyneth Paltrow, Simon Callow, James Earl Jones, Seth Gilliam, Michael Lonsdale, Lambert Wilson. 1995 (colonial era, slavery, Jefferson)

*Jeremiah Johnson.* DIR: Sydney Pollack. CAST: Robert Redford, Will Geer, Delle Bolton, Josh Albee, Joaquín Martínez, Allyn Ann McLerie. 1972 (mountain men, wild west)

*Last of the Mohicans, The.* DIR: Michael Mann. CAST: Daniel Day-Lewis, Madeleine Stowe, Russell Means, Eric Schweig, Jodhi May, Steven Waddington, Maurice Roeses, Wes Studi, Patrice Chereau. 1992 (French and Indian War)

*New World, The.* DIR: Terrence Malick. CAST: Colin Farrell, Christopher Plummer, Christian Bale, Wes Studi, Q'orianka Kilcher. 2005 (Jamestown colony, Pocahontas)

*Young Mr. Lincoln.* DIR: John Ford. CAST: Henry Fonda, Alice Brady, Marjorie Weaver, Donald Meek, Richard Cromwell, Eddie Quillan, Milburn Stone, Ward Bond (Lincoln, abolitionism)