

**HIST 1302: U.S. History 1865 to the Present**  
**Assignment for Paper #1: Film Review, 2-4 pages**  
**Due September 10**

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Follow this summary with a more detailed discussion of the film's historical content, focusing on a few key events or topics.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!

**Film List: Assignment #1 (Film Review)**

*All the President's Men*. DIR: Alan J. Pakula. CAST: Dustin Hoffman, Robert Redford, Jason Robards, Jr., Jane Alexander, Jack Warden, Martin Balsam. 1976 (Watergate investigation)

*Age of Innocence, The*. DIR: Martin Scorsese. CAST: Daniel Day-Lewis, Michelle Pfeiffer, Winona Ryder. 1993 (New York high society in the Gilded Age)

*Apocalypse Now*. DIR: Francis Ford Coppola. CAST: Marlon Brando, Martin Sheen, Robert Duvall, Harrison Ford, Laurence Fishburne, Dennis Hopper. 1979 (Vietnam War)

*Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman, The*. DIR: John Korty. CAST: Cicely Tyson, Richard Dysart, Odetta, Michael Murphy, Thalmus Rasulala. 1974 (race and civil rights)

*Beloved*. DIR: Jonathan Demme. CAST: Oprah Winfrey, Danny Glover, Thandie Newton. 1998 (Reconstruction era)

*Birth of a Nation*. DIR: D.W. Griffith. CAST: Lillian Gish, Mae Marsh, Henry B. Walthall. 1915 (Reconstruction era, KKK)

*Boycott*. DIR: Clark Johnson. CAST: Jeffrey Wright, Terrence Howard, CCH Pounder, Carmen Ejogo. 2001 (Montgomery Bus Boycott, Martin Luther King)

*Buffalo Soldiers*. DIR: Charles Haid. CAST: Danny Glover, Bob Gunton, Carl Lumbly, Glynn Turman, Mykelti Williamson. 1997 (Reconstruction era, Indian Wars, racism)

*Caine Mutiny, The*. DIR: Edward Dmytryk. CAST: Humphrey Bogart, José Ferrer, Van Johnson, Robert Francis, Fred MacMurray. 1954 (World War II, Cold War)

*Color Purple, The*. DIR: Stephen Spielberg. CAST: Whoopi Goldberg, Danny Glover, Oprah Winfrey. 1985 (race, women's rights)

*Coming Home*. DIR: Hal Ashby. CAST: Jane Fonda, Jon Voight, Bruce Dern, Robert Carradine, Robert Ginty, Penelope Milford. 1978 (Vietnam War and veterans)

*Dances with Wolves*. DIR: Kevin Costner. CAST: Kevin Costner, Mary McDonnell, Graham Greene, Rodney A. Grant. 1990 (Native Americans, westward expansion)

*The Deer Hunter*. DIR: Michael Cimino. CAST: Robert De Niro, John Cazale, John Savage, Christopher Walken, Meryl Streep. 1979 (Vietnam War and veterans)

*Dr. Strangelove, Or How I Learned To Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*. DIR: Stanley Kubrick. CAST: Peter Sellers, Sterling Hayden, George C. Scott, Slim Pickens, Keenan Wynn, James Earl Jones. 1964 (Cold War)

*Easy Rider*. DIR: Dennis Hopper. CAST: Peter Fonda, Dennis Hopper, Jack Nicholson. 1969 (1960s, countercultures)

*Eight Men Out*. DIR: John Sayles. CAST: John Cusack, D.B. Sweeney, Perry Lang, Jace Alexander, Bill Irwin. 1988 (baseball, Gilded Age)

*Flags of Our Fathers*. DIR: Clint Eastwood. CAST: Ryan Phillippe, Jesse Bradford, Adam Beach, Barry Pepper. 2006 (World War II, Iwo Jima)

*From Here to Eternity*. DIR: Fred Zinnemann. CAST: Burt Lancaster, Montgomery Clift, Deborah Kerr, Frank Sinatra, Donna Reed, Ernest Borgnine. 1953 (World War II)

*The Front*. DIR: Martin Ritt. CAST: Woody Allen, Zero Mostel, Michael Murphy, Andrea Marcovicci. 1976 (McCarthyism)

*Frost/Nixon*. DIR: Ron Howard. CAST: Frank Langella, Michael Sheen, Sam Rockwell, Kevin Bacon. 2008 (Nixon, Watergate)

*Good Night and Good Luck*. DIR: George Clooney. CAST: David Strathairn, George Clooney, Patricia Clarkson, Robert Downey, Jr. 2005 (McCarthyism)

*Grapes of Wrath, The*. DIR: John Ford. CAST: Henry Fonda, John Carradine, Jane Darwell, Russell Simpson, Charley Grapewin, John Qualen. 1940 (Great Depression, "Okie" migration)

*Inherit the Wind*. DIR: Stanley Kramer. CAST: Spencer Tracy, Fredric March, Gene Kelley, Dick York, Claude Akins. 1960 (Scopes "Monkey" Trial)

*Iron-Jawed Angels*. DIR: Katja von Garnier. CAST: Hillary Swank, Anjelica Huston, Frances O'Connor. 2004 (women's suffrage movement)

*Jarhead*. DIR: Sam Mendes. CAST: Jake Gyllenhaal, Scott MacDonald, Peter Sarsgaard, Jamie Foxx, Lo Ming, Lucas Black. 2005 (Persian Gulf War)

*Little Big Man*. DIR: Arthur Penn. CAST: Dustin Hoffman, Chief Dan George, Faye Dunaway, Martin Balsam, Jeff Corey, Richard Mulligan. 1970 (Native Americans, westward expansion)

*The Long Walk Home*. DIR: Richard Pearce. CAST: Whoopi Goldberg, Sissy Spacek, Dwight Schultz, Ving Rhames. 1990 (Montgomery Bus Boycott)

*Malcolm X*. DIR: Spike Lee. CAST: Denzel Washington, Spike Lee, Angela Bassett, Albert Hall, Al Freeman, Jr., Delroy Lindo, Kate Vernon, Lonette McKee. 1992 (civil rights, Nation of Islam)

*Matewan*. DIR: John Sayles. CAST: Chris Cooper, James Earl Jones, Mary McDonnell, Will Oldham, David Strathairn. 1987 (unionization movement, coal mining industry)

*Medium Cool*. DIR: Haskell Wexler; CAST: Robert Forster, Verna Bloom, Peter Bonerz, Marianna Hill, Peter Boyle. 1969 (1960s, race, 1968 Chicago Demo Convention)

*Milk*. DIR: Gus Van Sant. CAST: Sean Penn, Emile Hirsch, Josh Brolin, Diego Luna, James Franco. 2008 (gay rights)

*Miss Evers' Boys*. DIR: Joseph Sargent. CAST: Alfre Woodard, Laurence Fishburne, Craig Sheffer. 1997 (race, medical history)

*Mississippi Burning*. DIR: Alan Parker. CAST: Gene Hackman, Willem Dafoe, Frances McDormand, Brad Dourif. 1988 (civil rights, Freedom Summer)

*O Pioneers!* DIR: Glenn Jordan. CAST: Jessica Lange, David Strathairn, Tom Aldredge, Anne Heche, Heather Graham. 1992 (westward expansion, frontier)

*Patton*. DIR: Franklin J. Schaffner. CAST: George C. Scott, Karl Malden, Stephen Young, Tim Considine. 1970 (World War II)

*Ragtime*. DIR: Milos Forman. CAST: James Cagney, Brad Dourif, Pat O'Brien, Donald O'Connor, Elizabeth McGovern, Mary Steenburgen. 1981 (urban issues, civil rights, Gilded Age)

*The Right Stuff*. DIR: Philip Kaufman. CAST: Sam Shepard, Scott Glenn, Ed Harris, Dennis Quaid, Fred Ward, Barbara Hershey. 1983 (space program, NASA)

*Rough Riders*. DIR: John Milius. CAST: Tom Berenger, Sam Elliot, Gary Busey, Brad Johnson. 1997 (Theodore Roosevelt, Spanish-American War)

*Salt of the Earth*. DIR: Herbert J. Biberman. CAST: Rosaura Revueltas, Will Geer, David Wolfe, Mervin Williams. 1954 (Mexican-Americans, labor movement)

*Saving Private Ryan*. DIR: Stephen Spielberg. CAST: Tom Hanks, Matt Damon, Tom Sizemore, Edward Burns, Adam Goldberg. 1998 (World War II, D-Day)

*The Searchers*. DIR: John Ford. CAST: John Wayne, Natalie Wood, Jeffrey Hunter, Ward Bond, Vera Miles, Harry Carey, Jr., Ken Curtis, Lana Wood, Patrick Wayne. 1956 (frontier, whites and Indians)

*Separate But Equal*. DIR: George Stevens Jr.; CAST: Sidney Poitier, Burt Lancaster, Richard Kiley, Cleavon Little. 1991 (civil rights, *Brown v. the Board*)

*Sergeant York*. DIR: Howard Hawks. CAST: Gary Cooper, Walter Brennan, George Tobias, Ward Bond, Noah Beery, Jr., June Lockhart, Joan Leslie. 1941 (World War I)

*Sunrise at Campobello*. DIR: Vincent J. Donehue. CAST: Ralph Bellamy, Greer Garson, Alan Bunce, Hume Cronyn. 1960 (Franklin Roosevelt)

*Thirteen Days*. DIR: Roger Donaldson. CAST: Kevin Costner, Bruce Greenwood, Steven Culp. 2000 (Cuban Missile Crisis)

*To Kill a Mockingbird*. DIR: Robert Mulligan. CAST: Gregory Peck, Mary Badham, Philip Alford, John Megna. 1962 (race, civil rights)

*Truman*. DIR: Frank Pierson. CAST: Gary Sinise, Diana Scarwid, Richard Dysart, Colm Feore, James Gammon, Tony Goldwyn. 1995 (Cold War)

*The Tuskegee Airmen*. DIR: Robert Markowitz. CAST: Laurence Fishburne, Allen Payne, Malcolm Jamal-Warner, Courtney B. Vance, Andre Braugher. 1995 (African-American pilots in WWII)

*United 93*. DIR: Paul Greengrass. CAST: J.J. Johnson, Gary Commock, Polly Adams, Opal Alladin, Starla Benford, Trish Gates. 2006 (9/11, terrorism)

*We Were Soldiers*. DIR: Randall Wallace. CAST: Mel Gibson, Madeleine Stowe, Greg Kinnear, Sam Elliott. 2002 (Vietnam War)