Grade 12
Cinema as a Witness to Modern History

A Foundation for Implementation

Manitoba

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Grade 12 Cinema as a Witness to Modern History

Course Overview

Media literacy

"Media literacy is an informed, critical understanding of the mass media. It involves examining the techniques, technologies and institutions involved in media production; being able to critically analyze media messages; and recognizing the role audiences play in making meaning from those messages."

– Rick Shepherd

Historical consciousness

"Historical consciousness can thus be defined as individual and collective understandings of the past, the cognitive and cultural factors which shape those understandings, as well as the relations of historical understandings to those of the present and the future."

– Peter Seixas

Course Goals

- to develop critical media literacy through an exploration of cinema
- to enrich students' knowledge and understanding of world history since the beginning of the 20th century
- to apply the concepts of historical thinking to the analysis of a variety of film genres in documentary and dramatic cinema

Course Description

This course will engage students in an exploration of the connections among cinema as an *art form*, cinema as a *product of history*, and cinema as an *interpreter of history*. Students will respond to and discuss the aesthetic and emotional elements of cinema and will apply historical thinking concepts to the analysis of historical themes as represented in various films and other sources. Throughout the course, students will apply critical media literacy skills in order to understand that film does not simply reflect the past, but interprets and retells the past and, at times, reconstructs it.

Students will view and respond to a limited number of carefully selected films that deal with key events, ideas, people, and developments that have shaped world history since the beginning of the 20th century (e.g., wars, revolutions, genocides, economic change, the legacy of colonialism and decolonization, gender roles and stereotypes, social values, and scientific and technological

advances, etc.). Students will learn to critically analyze the role of film in interpreting selected historical topics and will be guided to reflect on the role of cinema in shaping their own historical consciousness.

With a suggested study of eight to ten films, the course emphasis will be on quality rather than quantity. The proposed film selection includes representative examples of feature-length fictional films, documentaries, animation, black-and-white films, and independent films, and draws from various defining periods in the history of cinema, as well as from Canadian, international, and Hollywood mass media productions.

This course is based on a pedagogical approach that uses film as an instructional tool for both media literacy and the study of history. It includes model learning experiences based on suggested study films, guiding questions for critical film viewing, guidelines for further film selection, and background information on film history and the techniques of cinema.

Throughout the course, students will engage in guided viewing, write film critiques that show evidence of historical thinking and critical media literacy, and conduct historical research to evaluate and reflect on representations of history in film.

What will students learn to do, to understand, and to apply in this course?

Students will

- view films of various genres and reflect critically on cinematic representations of historical events, figures, ideas, and developments of the 20th century
- analyze and evaluate the techniques of cinema as an art form
- consider how documentary and fictional films reflect the values and perspectives of the society in which they originated
- conduct research into historical sources in order to analyze interpretation, error, bias, or anachronism in the representation of historical subjects in cinema
- apply the following six historical thinking concepts to analyze representations of history in film:
  - establish historical significance
  - use historical evidence
  - identify continuity and change
  - analyze cause and consequence
  - take historical perspectives
  - understand the ethical dimensions of history
- deconstruct and respond to selected films, including examples from local and Canadian cinema, international cinema, and American mass media productions

- study the evolution of film techniques and technologies
- write film critiques that apply principles of critical media literacy and historical thinking
- compare and evaluate the aesthetic and evocative qualities of various film genres
- assess the historical context of film production and the emergence of cinema as a business and a force in popular culture
- enrich their knowledge of significant developments in modern world history
- reflect critically on the role of cinema as a purveyor of persuasive social messages that deal with a range of controversial or sensitive subjects
- examine and assess the social role of cinema, the cinematic portrayal of violence, and the adequacy of film in interpreting history

Cinema as a Witness to History and a Product of History

High school students today are often habitual and uncritical consumers of a vast array of media productions. For many young people, film and television are important sources of historical knowledge and form the basis of their understanding of the past and of contemporary social issues. The audio-visual media have in many ways become the new storytellers, constructing historical narratives that seek to engage the hearts, the minds, and the aesthetic sensibilities of viewers.

Since the beginnings of cinema in the late 19th century, history has been represented and interpreted in a great variety of film genres. History is not only the explicit subject of archival primary sources, but it also plays an important role in Canadian and foreign documentary film, as well as in many Hollywood and international feature films. History is implicitly present in most of the repertoire of cinema, including drama, satire, biography, animation, independent films, propaganda films, and animation. Whether or not a cinematic message is overtly historical, films need to be critically analyzed and understood, not only for their explicit treatment of historical content, but also as historical archives in themselves. Films represent and express the values, understandings, culture, world view, and technological expertise of the time and place of their production. In this sense, cinema provides a rich instructional resource to support the development of media literacy, critical thinking, and historical consciousness.

This course uses cinema as a teaching tool to help students go beyond the experience of film as entertainment or even as a source of information. Film is particularly well suited to the development of historical perspective-taking or empathy across differences of time and place—concepts that can be challenging for youth in our present-oriented world. By studying cinema, students are better able to deconstruct the evocative power of image and music. It can also provide a relevant and engaging platform for student inquiry into questions about the human condition and the diversity of human experience, past and present.

Course Rationale

What is meant by "mass media"?

All forms of media use print, sound, and images, or all of these elements, *to mediate* (influence) our perceptions of reality through communication.

A medium may be considered as part of *mass media* when it also includes these elements:

- It is public, not a private interaction between individuals.
- It involves distance between the sender and receiver of the message (no immediate feedback).
- It uses technology or tools to extend or enhance communication (it is not directly person-to-person, like a conversation).

- It involves scale, or the simultaneous viewing of a message by a large number of people.
- It involves commodification, in that the message is not given freely but involves buying and selling or commercial interaction in some way.

Insofar as cinema involves all of these characteristics, it may be considered to be a component of today's mass media. Given the ubiquity and power of audio-visual communication, it is clear that students need to learn to apply the tools of critical media literacy so as to consciously and mindfully view images, including films, both inside and outside the classroom.

Mass media in the lives of students

> "By the time they finish high school, students will have spent an average of 11,000 hours in school, compared to more than 15,000 hours watching television and 10,500 hours listening to popular music. They will have seen several hundred films and been exposed to countless advertisements. Televised images constitute a new kind of daily environment for them and a source of knowledge as well as ideas, values and standards. Mass media constitute a dynamic and persuasive curriculum, whose content includes knowledge about people, places, politics, events, history, psychology, etc.; role models with regard to behaviours and practices such as fashion, food, relationships, etc.; and attitudes and values about such things as the use and abuse of power, politics, relationships, sexuality, violence, family, death, religion...."
>
> – John J. Pungente

Since the time of this observation, the ubiquity of audio-visual messaging has grown to the extent that some observers refer to the 21st century as a "post-literate" culture—a world awash with visual storytelling, in which images are taking the place of written communication. YouTube co-founder Chad Hurley claims his own site's exponential growth indicates that online video broadcasting is assuming a predominant place, not only for news and entertainment but for all forms of information and idea exchange. The widespread accessibility and immediacy of audio-visual media has led to the increased role of mass media, not only in popular culture but also in the field of education, including formal education.

Given this reality, it appears to be even more important to provide students with critical observational tools so that they remain active learners and not simply passive consumers of images. As informed citizens, students need to acquire an awareness of the way images are created, selected, embellished, marketed, and distributed for a wide variety of purposes, including financial gain and the desire to influence public opinion and taste.

> "What we are now seeing is the gradual ascendance of the moving image as the primary mode of communication around the world: one that transcends languages, cultures, and borders."
>
> – Stephen Apkon

Social Studies Curriculum and Critical Media Literacy

The Manitoba social studies curriculum engages students in a study of how human beings live together in their shared physical, social, cultural, political, and economic spaces. The concept of active democratic citizenship is central to social studies, as students acquire an awareness of human diversity and social organization and interaction across time, place, and culture. The overall goal of social studies is to enable students to make informed and ethical choices when faced with the challenges of living in a pluralistic society in an increasingly interconnected world.

In this context, active democratic citizenship involves applying critical thinking to one's decisions, judgments, and actions, both in the personal sphere and in the public sphere. An active democratic citizenry in the age of instant communication needs to learn strategies to avoid the pitfall of passivity—including unconscious media consumption and overexposure to powerful and highly influential images that may be misleading. This means that citizens in the 21st century need to be media literate, not mere consumers of media products. They need to be aware of their own values and of the many influences that shape their values, including the mass media they are exposed to, respond to, and create.

Mass media, as representations and interpretations of reality, are an important component of democratic practice, as they can be effective ways of exchanging multiple or divergent points of view. A critical study of cinema enables students to deconstruct and to reflect on the accuracy of cinematic representations and the aesthetic quality of the techniques of cinema. As students enrich their awareness of cinema as an art form, as an enterprise, and as a powerful component of mass media, they can deepen their understanding of the influence of film on their awareness of human experience and interaction. They can learn to "put themselves" in another time and place, and acquire deeper learning that goes beyond the acquisition of facts to engaging the heart and mind in understanding experiences other than their own. However, such an understanding requires pedagogical guidance and the conscious development of a new vocabulary, new habits of mind, and a new set of competencies for viewing, deconstructing, and reflecting on audio-visual media.

Resources

The Age of the Image: Redefining Literacy in a World of Screens by Stephen Apkon (2013).

"Windows on the Landscape - Taking Television Seriously" by John J. Pungente, in *Media Literacy Review* (1996). http://jcp.proscenia.net/publications/articles_mlr/pungente/windows.html

"Marketing and Consumerism—Overview." *Media Smarts* [August 13, 2013]. http://mediasmarts.ca/

Media Literacy Defined. National Association for Media Literacy Education [August 13, 2013]. http://namle.net/

Pedagogical Foundations and Approach

This course is founded on a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. In constructivist pedagogy, learning is seen as an active process in which the learner builds on existing knowledge to expand his or her understanding. According to Bruce Marlowe and Marilyn Page, constructivist pedagogy has the following characteristics:

- Learners *construct* knowledge, rather than simply receive knowledge dispensed by a teacher or an authoritative source.
- Learners *think and analyze questions*, making connections between new ideas and what they already know or understand.
- *Learners apply what is learned* in authentic learning situations related to their everyday experiences.
- Learners are *actively involved* in social interaction while learning.
- Learners *assume responsibility* for their learning process, with the teacher as a guide.
- Learners are exposed to *multiple perspectives and representations* of the topic being studied.

In this pedagogical approach, it is recommended that students learn from within their *zone of proximal development*, which, according to Lev Vygotsky, means "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers."

Implications for Teaching Strategies

A constructivist pedagogy means that the film selection for the course should not be restricted to familiar titles from well within the students' experience, but should include films that invite the students to "stretch the limits" of their natural preferences, including judiciously selected foreign films, black-and-white films, subtitled films, and selections from Canadian documentary and dramatic cinema. In this approach, teachers should provide models, frameworks, or other tools as a scaffolding to guide students to deconstruct the films they view. Students should be given frequent opportunities to think critically about cinematic themes and messages, not only to become aware of historical inaccuracies or misrepresentations, but also to process and consider their initial response to viewing a film.

Teaching from within students' *zone of proximal development* should include a range of opportunities for students to negotiate meaning through interaction with others who may have insights on the theme or the cinematic interpretation of the theme. This would mean planning for individual response time, discussion time in heterogeneous groups, and setting aside time to consult and consider the interpretations of experts in film criticism, 20th-century world history, or the history of cinema.

Throughout the course, students should engage in structured discussion so as to exchange with other viewers their divergent interpretations of a film, its style, or its historical content. They should be provided with models of film criticism and analysis (e.g., film critiques written by Pauline Kael or Roger Ebert, or samples from <www.rottentomatoes.com>). The teacher can facilitate learning by providing guiding or provocative questions for discussion, a framework of tools for film response or interpretive analysis, and suggested historical sources related to the film's context or topic.

The teacher is challenged to support the development of a rich and critical understanding of the language of cinema, while at the same time not to interfere excessively with the experience of cinema as an art form intended to evoke an emotional or ethical response. The pedagogical approach in this course may be seen as a process in which the teacher guides the students through the following phases:

1. Step *into* the film's time, place, and mood and respond to the immediate emotional message.
2. Step *back from* the film's time, place, and mood and notice the aesthetic qualities of the film.
3. *Observe the techniques* used to convey the message, using cinematic vocabulary.
4. *Conduct research* of other primary sources and interpret and compare.
5. *Compare* films from different styles, genres, or periods dealing with the same subject.

These phases may be approached sequentially within each film study or historical theme or may be visited periodically and recurrently as components of the course as a whole, depending on the organizational design used by the teacher.

Course Planning and Design Options

> "Teachers are designers. An essential act of our profession is the design of curriculum and learning experiences to meet specified purposes."
>
> – Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe

Teachers may design this course based on the conceptual organization that most aptly suits student needs, the availability of time and resources, and their own knowledge and preferences. The film selection, order of presentation, assignments, and assessment tasks will vary depending on the design chosen. Here are some options that have been proposed by teachers:

- Cinema as an evolving art form (history of film)

  > "Cinema is a modern form of writing in which light is the ink." (*Le cinéma, c'est l'écriture moderne dont l'encre est la lumière*.)
  >
  > – Jean Cocteau

With this course design option, the film selection and learning tasks are organized based on the study of cinema as an art form (as in France, where cinema is studied as *le septième art*, or "the seventh art"). In this approach, the emphasis is placed on film language and film criticism, film technique, and the history of cinema. Students learn to distinguish film genres and artistic conventions, to write formal critiques and analyses, and to compare different films dealing with the same theme. In this approach, course design may be organized on the selection of films or directors representative of significant turning points in the history of cinema.

- Cinema as an instrument of mass media (the industry of film)

> "The movies today are too rich to have any room for genuine artists. They produce a few passable craftsmen, but no artists. Can you imagine a Beethoven making $100,000 a year?"
>
> – H.L. Mencken

> "Companies in this industry produce and distribute motion pictures. Major companies include Disney, Fox, MGM, Paramount, Sony Pictures, Universal, and Warner Bros (all based in the U.S.), as well as Spain's *Promotora de Informaciones*, Toho Co. of Japan, and Village Roadshow of Australia. Consumer spending drives demand. The profitability of individual companies depends on creativity, marketing, and distribution. Large companies often have the advantages of attracting key actors and directors, a permanent staff of technical employees, and wide distribution networks. Small companies can compete successfully by creating movies for niche audiences on low budgets. The U.S. industry is concentrated: the 50 largest companies account for about 70 percent of revenue."
>
> – Motion Picture Production and Distribution Report Summary 2014

With this approach to course design, the teacher may choose to study the emergence of film as a lucrative and influential commercial enterprise in the 20th century and beyond. This would entail focusing attention on film production and distribution companies, film advertising and marketing, the role of cinema and celebrity in popular culture, film budgets and timelines, the dominance of Hollywood in the film industry, the business of film criticism and its impact on filmmaking, the development and use of special effects, rating systems, and awards, and the impact of new media on cinema. Teachers may choose to examine the emergence and history of mass media and media theory (e.g., the works of Chomsky or McLuhan) and may facilitate the comparative study of mainstream productions and auteur or independent productions.

- Cinema as social history (film as an artifact or product of history)

> "Theorists such as Pierre Sorlin, K.R.M. Short and Marc Ferro concurrently regard a fiction film as a window on the time during which it was produced. They see a film as a product of its time. When regarded in this light, *JFK* says more about 1991 than it does about the murder of John F. Kennedy."
>
> – Rasmus Falbe-Hansen

In this approach, the teacher focuses on film selection with an eye to the role of cinema in popular culture, concentrating on examples of how films reflect and influence the societal values of the time and place of their creation. In this course design, students would be encouraged to consider each film as a historical artifact in itself, and would conduct research into the context of the film's production before or after viewing. This may include a study of interviews with filmmakers and of the film production circumstances. In this approach, films may be selected for viewing in a chronological order based on the time and place of their production. Film studies would also involve examining the critics' responses at the time of release and later on in the history of film.

- Cinema as an interpretive witness of 20th-century history (*chronological*)

> "There is a need for historians to take film seriously as a way of 'doing' history and to start to open up a dialogue between written and filmed histories that moves beyond the simple dismissal of film's validity as a way of writing history because of its failure to adhere to practices as are expected of a written scholarly history."
>
> – Mike Chopra-Grant

This approach to the course makes the assumption that cinema should be considered, just among other sources, a credible interpreter of history. In this course design, teachers may choose to organize film viewing around the key chronological historical developments that have unfolded in world history since the beginning of the 20th century (e.g., from the Great War to the space race to the ecological impact of mass production). Film selection would involve selected documentary and dramatic films that portray and interpret historical content, and may involve students in pre-research related to each historical event using primary and secondary sources. Students would also be prompted to analyze historical errors and misinterpretations in cinema. This model of course design may include such elements as the role of the cinema in propaganda in times of war, the history of the National Film Board, and the emergence of documentary film in dealing with contemporary historical topics.

- Cinema as a reflection of the human condition *(thematic)*

> "What is saved in the cinema when it achieves art is a spontaneous continuity with all mankind. It is not an art of the princes or the bourgeoisie. It is popular and vagrant. In the sky of the cinema people learn what they might have been and discover what belongs to them apart from their single lives."
>
> – John Berger, British actor and critic

A teacher designing the course in this way would choose to base film selection on the broad themes of life in modern human societies (e.g., science and technology, ideology and revolution, oppression and resistance, women and power, etc.). In this approach, the emphasis may be upon a comparison of divergent approaches of filmmakers to the conflicts, dilemmas, joys, and tragedies of human life in the contemporary world. The students may be guided to analyze cinematic messages and

treatments of recurring historical themes and to reflect on the value of cinema as a portrayal of real life in the modern historical context, both public and personal.

Whatever course design option the teacher chooses, the film selection should include a variety of film genres and styles and should use film as an instructional tool to achieve the dual purpose of *critical media literacy* and *historical thinking*. This may often mean viewing short excerpts of films in order to illustrate a theme or understanding, or to observe a given element of cinematic technique or language. A suggested filmography is provided for teachers as a non-exhaustive starting point for film selection. Proposed guidelines for film selection have also been developed to help teachers to build further on these recommendations. A component of the course design should also incorporate student-selected films, whether as a culminating activity or as part of a study of a topic or theme in cinema.

How to Approach Film Viewing in This Course

Students will consider the films they view in this course not simply as entertainment or as sources of historical information: *the intention is that they develop a new way of viewing film*. They will be encouraged to reflect on the effectiveness of the medium of film in portraying history, and will consider how cinematic representations of history influence their thinking about the past. They will be guided by generative questions (either self-generated or teacher-generated) to respond personally to each film or film excerpt selected for study. A screening response journal is recommended as an important component of the course, based on the notion that students should be taught to engage in literate critical reflection in response to all three dimensions of media experience: what they see, what they hear, and what they feel. Some of these questions are a part of critical thinking in the broad sense, and as such are part of both historical thinking and media literacy. Other questions may specifically target an element of the language of cinema or the analysis of a particular historical theme or topic. Every film that is selected for viewing, both fiction and documentary, will be considered both as a product of its historical context and as a message communicated about history.

Consider the context of each film

The following questions will help guide the viewer's inquiry into the film so as to understand its historical and social context.

1. Who produced this film and under what conditions?

   Economic, artistic, cultural, and ideological factors are important elements of all cinematic productions and are at the heart of the film's intended message.

   Some films are produced by government or government organizations (such as the National Film Board or the BBC), others by commercial enterprises (studios), and others by individuals or groups who have particular intentions in mind. Films can be made to inform, to entertain, to educate, to influence opinion, to incite to action, and for many other purposes. The social conditions of a film's production (e.g., armed conflict, disaster, political change, censorship) can also influence the selection and presentation of content in film.

For example, one of the first films made about the war of Algerian independence *La bataille d'Alger* (*The Battle of Algiers*), directed by Gilles Pontecorvo, was produced by Saadi Yacef, one of the leaders of the Algerian National Liberation Front during this period. His perspective of the French army in Algeria was clearly influenced by his political views. Nevertheless, the film is considered to present a relatively balanced vision of the historical events in question.

2. In what historical period was this film produced?

   Every film is a product of its time and place, and is influenced by the biases, values, and preoccupations that are particular to its historical context. Film directors, screenwriters, journalists, historians, film critics, or film viewers—all are subject to history and are situated in history in a particular time and place. Even the film critiques of today are products of the present day: they are the fruit of a moment in time and space. Sometimes the historical context is present in a clear and explicit way, and sometimes not. For example, during the Second World War, Hollywood studios were producing Sherlock Holmes films in which the famous detective was fighting the Nazi menace. In spite of the fact that Holmes was a character of the late 19th century, the intended political message was stronger than the fear of introducing historical anachronism into the film.

   Another example of film as a product of its time and historical context is the American film *Little Big Man*, in which the historical figure of General Custer is depicted as a fanatical warmonger, obsessed with his own importance and completely ignorant of his enemy. The film, besides being an open satire of the American cowboys-and-Indians convention, is also said to be a direct criticism of the military leaders responsible for the war in Vietnam in the 1960s, when the movie was made.

3. Where was this film produced?

   The place or the country where the film was produced is important, since it influences the content and the theme of the film. For example, Iranian films in the 1980s–1990s were subject to strong censorship laws. Only children's films escaped censorship, as long as they did not contain an overt political message. The consequence of this was that Iranian film production during this period was dominated in both quantity and quality by children's films. These films possess a poetic quality that was imposed by the need to use metaphors and images, in order to hide any explicit political statement. The same phenomenon occurred with children's films produced in certain Eastern European countries after the end of the Second World War (e.g., in Czechoslovakia).

4. What message(s) is this film trying to convey?

   Generally, a film can be summarized in a key intended message. However, the intended message of a film can at times be quite different from the means it uses to communicate that message. Also, some films may convey an ambiguous message, whether intentionally or not, or they may express multiple or contradictory messages. In a historical context that is subject to strict censorship, this kind of duality can be very evident. Because film is

public communication, it can and has been used historically as a means of reinforcing or justifying a political system or its actions, or conversely as a means of critiquing a political system (e.g., the subtle political messages about Soviet Russia that appear in Nikita Mikhalkov's films, such as his depiction in *Burnt by the Sun* [1994] of the paranoia in the Stalin period of terror and purges in the USSR).

5. To whom is this film addressed? Who is its intended audience?

   The film viewing public has changed over the years, subject to the conventions and tastes of popular culture as well as technological advances in cinematic production. (Refer to the background information sheet on the history of cinema for further details.) It is therefore very useful to ask the question who the intended public of a film is, in effect, to create a virtual image of the audience.

Consider the language of cinema

The questions that follow are not based on research into the film's context, but rather on a critical appreciation of the film based on the technique and language of cinema.

6. What is the true message of the film, as opposed to its declared message? What are your immediate personal impressions of this film?

   A valid and realistic approach to film criticism is to begin with first impressions immediately after screening the film. Most often, these impressions are a direct response to the creative intent of the filmmaker. This creative message is expressed through cinematic language including elements such as choice of characters, dialogue (screenplay), photographic technique (e.g., lighting, scene selection, camera angle, pace, film editing, music, etc.). All of these creative elements are selected by the filmmaker so as to have an immediate effect on the spectator.

   Throughout this course, students will be viewing films that represent important historical themes of the 20th century and will be conducting historical research into these topics. It is important that students be continually urged to keep in mind the fundamental difference between studying history and responding to a historical film. While the historian strives above all for objectivity and accuracy when representing the past, the filmmaker seeks above all to evoke a personal, often emotional, response in the viewer. This can even be true of documentary films, which seek mostly to inform the viewer while, often at the same time, conveying a particular point of view regarding a historical event by retelling the story in a new way or from a different perspective.

7. Which means are used by the filmmaker to convey his or her message?

   Identifying the techniques used by the filmmaker to convey the intended message goes beyond simple curiosity. Cinematographic techniques have the power to move the spectator, to evoke laughter, tears, frustration, disgust, comfort, etc. These emotional responses can be used as a means

of persuasion or even as propaganda. The critical viewer needs to be able to assess the objectivity or justification of the message, and this kind of judgment requires analysis of the techniques used in the film. For example, the French film *The Sorrow and the Pity* (Le chagrin et la pitié, 1969) was banned until 1981, partly because it included an anti-Gaullist message. The film used archival footage and documentary cinema to attack the widely accepted view, supported by Charles de Gaulle, that most of France was involved in one way or another in the resistance and did not support Fascism or anti-Semitism nor collaborate with the Germans. Whatever the feelings about the French president of the time, the film was unanimously condemned for its abusive use of parallel montage as a means of attacking de Gaulle.

Cinema and historical themes or topics

It is appropriate to make a distinction between the historical elements of any film (its historical context, its situation in time and place) and the cinematic treatment of history in films that are essentially *about* historical events. For example, students could view excerpts of the 1972 American musical *Cabaret*, which depicted bohemian life in 1931 Berlin, in the context of the increasingly menacing presence of the Nazi party in the period of the Weimar Republic. For an example of a film that deals with a historical subject, they might consider the Russian propaganda film *Battleship Potemkin*, which is an account of a sailors' mutiny at Odessa in 1905. The film, which opens with an overt political message about the justice of the Russian Revolution, is presented as a dramatization of real events. See <www.archive.org/details/BattleshipPotemkin>.

Alternatively, students may be asked to compare the depiction of the Holocaust in *Schindler's List* to that in *Life is Beautiful,* which deals principally with the personal life experiences of a Jewish family during this period, while at the same time presenting a reflection on the Holocaust as an event in history.

In some cases, the basic material for a historical film, whether documentary or dramatic, comes from primary historical sources. In most cases, the evidence from these primary sources is selected, interpreted, and thereby transformed for the purposes of supporting the filmmaker's main message. Consider the example of the Italian film *A Special Day* (Una Giornata Particolare), which begins with a news report of 6 May 1938 about the parade of Mussolini and Hitler held in Rome on that day. The news bulletin serves to establish the historical context for the personal drama, which is the main message of the film.

Using film as an instructional tool for critical media literacy

In this course, students will learn a new way of viewing film, by mastering the principles of media literacy:

- All media are constructions of reality and not direct reflections of reality.
- Each media representation is constructed using a technical language and creative rules particular to its genre.

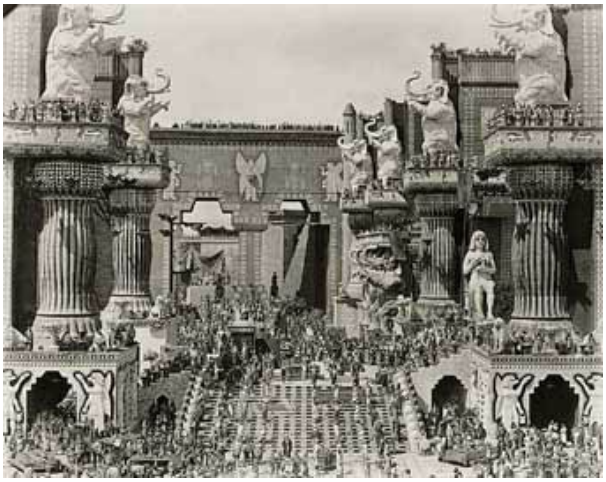
- Different people respond differently to the same media message.
- The media always incorporate values and points of view.
- Media messages are often created so as to achieve a political end or to achieve financial gain.

Using film as an instructional tool for historical thinking

Students need to be guided to think as historians as they view film with explicit or implicit historical content. In their questioning, viewing, research, and response, students will consider the following elements of historical thinking:

- selecting, interpreting, and using historical evidence
- evaluating the significance of historical events
- analyzing the causes and effects, both short-term and long-term, of historical developments
- observing continuity and change in the human condition over time
- considering the diverse perspectives of people who lived in the past
- reflecting on the ethical dimension of historical events and interpretations

Guidelines for Film Selection for This Course*



"A historically literate viewer understands that a movie can look historically convincing without presenting the past accurately."

- Still photo from *Intolerance*, D.W. Griffith, 1916, a silent black-and-white film that tells a tale of intolerance across four different historical periods.

The Power of Cinema

"Photography is truth. The cinema is truth twenty-four times per second...."
(La photographie, c'est la vérité et le cinéma, c'est vingt-quatre fois la vérité par seconde....)

– Jean-Luc Godard, Swiss filmmaker and critic

"What we are now seeing is the gradual ascendance of the moving as the primary mode of communication around the world: one that transcends languages, cultures, and borders."

– Stephen Apkon

Cinema is a particularly powerful component of contemporary society. Using the tools of mass media, modern technology, and artistic creation, film conveys a potent and highly influential message. Selecting films for educational purposes is a challenging task because of the ubiquity of the audio-visual medium, its purposeful emotional impact, its often controversial nature, and the dominance of cinema as a lucrative industry that is primarily designed to entertain. The following guidelines are suggested in order to help teachers plan a course that uses film judiciously as an instructional tool to facilitate critical thinking about cinematic interpretations of 20th-century world history.

This approach is intended to transform the way students view film. This means a move away from the use of strictly didactic films, as well as the use of films solely as a form of entertainment, celebration, or reward in the classroom. It may be useful to begin the course by surveying the students to find out how they view the primary purpose of cinema and to explore some of the film titles they have found to be enlightening or memorable and the reasons why. Through guided viewing and study of a small number of carefully selected films, this course is intended to transform students' ways of viewing, responding to, and appreciating cinema in general. As they move toward an enriched view of cinema and an independent level of critical thinking, students should be invited to propose their own film selections for study.

Suggested Guidelines for Selecting Films

- Keep in mind the dual purpose of this course: critical media literacy and historical thinking.

* **Selected Guidelines for Selecting Films:** Adapted from Peter Seixas, Figure 5.1, p. 104 in *Celluloid Blackboard: Teaching History with Film* (2006), ed. Alan Marcus.

- Historical thinking cannot be applied separately from the content of history. Concentrate on film selections that deal directly or indirectly with a significant historical development of the 20th century.
- Plan the course to allow students to carry out historical research using conventional sources, either before or after viewing a selected film, in order to gain knowledge about the historical context of the film and to ground the study in a realistic chronology of the period.
- Plan the viewing schedule (link to sample planners) around a relatively small number of carefully selected core study films (8–10) supported by other films—or film excerpts—that treat the same historical topic or theme in a different way. This means exposing students to a wide variety of film genres from different time periods, countries of origin, cultures, languages, and styles. This wide range of selection supports critical thinking with respect to both media and history.
- Select representative films that include Canadian, international, independent, and American big-screen Hollywood films. (Do not restrict choices to the dominant Hollywood film genre.) As additional work outside class time, students may view easily accessible films comparatively, such as mainstream Hollywood titles.
- Select films that lend themselves to being used as pedagogical tools and not simply as entertainment. Be wary of films that have a primarily commercial motivation, using them mainly as illustrative examples of the industry of cinema.
- Select films that provide students with rich opportunities to explore, experience, and deconstruct the power and impact of image.
- Include an example of a fictional feature film that sets a personal drama in an explicitly developed historical context.
- Include an example of a film that contains elements of propaganda or overtly false historical information. Guide students to critically analyze these elements.
- Include films that allow students to explore the power of history to transform individual lives, as well as the power of individuals to affect the course of history (human agency).
- Select films that persuasively present a variety of cultural and social perspectives.
- Allow time to research the context (social, political, historical, cultural, economic) of each study film selected for the course.
- Plan the course to include some student-selected films based on clear criteria established as a class and based on course goals.
- Many films evoke a strong emotional response. Be vigilant about screening films that include violent images or deal with difficult, sensitive, or controversial topics. This means preparing students in advance and allowing for facilitated debriefing time following film screening.

- When selecting films, be aware of the sensitivities and values of students and their communities. (A sample of a letter to parents or guardians has been provided.)
- Know your materials. Preview all films yourself in their entirety before using them in your classroom. Be aware of film classification ratings. Teacher recommendations, teacher guides, and annotations cannot provide all of the background information necessary to deal adequately with issues that may be considered sensitive by one person or community and not another.
- Take into consideration the aesthetic value, historical validity, appeal to the students, and relevance to desired learning outcomes of every film selected for viewing. Selection of material may vary from year to year based on some or all of these elements.
- It is not necessary to restrict film studies in this course to the purpose of identifying historical error or inaccuracy. In fact, it may at times be very useful to use a historically incorrect film to illustrate a point about historical interpretation, media impact, or dominant social values. (Some examples of this may include films such as the biopic *Laurence of Arabia* (1962), *Pearl Harbor* (2001), the Disney film *Pocohantas* (re: First Nations stereotyping), Oliver Stone's *JFK*, J.W. Griffiths' *Birth of a Nation* (re: white supremacist values), *Mississippi Burning* (1988), *Black Hawk Down* (2001), *Anastasia* (1997), etc….).

Notes

Sample film studies and a selection of film titles have been included in the accompanying filmography for the course. These films are not formally authorized or mandated curriculum selections, but are based on recommendations gathered from Manitoba high school teachers. The appropriateness of each suggested film should be considered by each teacher based on his or her group of learners and learning community.

Refer to the section on **copyright** for legal information regarding the use of commercial videos in the classroom.

Dealing with Controversial and Sensitive Issues

In the age of mass media, students are often exposed to sensitive and controversial messages. These messages can be disturbing and confusing if students are not taught how to consider them critically, in light of their own values and in the context of their learning communities. Careful, mindful exposure to controversial issues in a safe environment is an important educational opportunity for personal growth. Sensitive topics can be handled safely in the classroom through open but guided discussion. Teachers need to remain aware of students' varying reactions to difficult topics by establishing discussion guidelines and by being prepared to offer support should any personal difficulties arise.

Cinema can be a very powerful means of connecting students with sensitive, complicated human issues that are not clear-cut and simply resolved. The stories presented in cinema often explore dilemmas and problems of the human condition that deal with class, race, ethnicity, religious belief, gender, and sexuality. Cinematic depictions of history often deal with human tragedies that include violence, war, inhumanity, cruelty, racism, injustice, and suffering. Such portrayals, explored with care and preparation, may serve as a means for helping students develop empathy and understanding, rather than being simply an act of viewing stories on film. On the other hand, the fact that students are frequently exposed to powerful images of violence and sorrow may contribute to the contrary reaction—where the students become distanced from human suffering and pain. This is a factor to take into consideration when selecting films, when preparing students for viewing films, and when debriefing after viewing films. It is important to always recognize the power of cinema and to not overexpose students to images of suffering and sorrow without preparation and post-viewing discussion. Difficult images, whether primary source or reenactments, should be viewed in a purposeful and meaningful way and should not be frequently or carelessly re-viewed to the point of provoking indifference.

The following guidelines will assist teachers in dealing with controversial and sensitive issues in the classroom:

- Approach all issues with sensitivity to personal experiences.
- Be aware of the possible impact of exposure to powerful, difficult images.
- Do not overexpose students to difficult images that portray suffering, violence, hatred, or cruelty. Although images are very powerful (in particular, primary source images), it is important to recall that they can lose their potency and even their reality when they are repeatedly used by the media. Mass media, including cinema, can overexpose viewers to difficult images for dramatic effect or for a desired political or social impact. Often the media uses images repeatedly to the point of transforming them into symbols or icons, such that they become recognizable, familiar, and used to represent a particular event or historical period. In an image-saturated world, the repeated use of difficult images can result in desensitizing students and adults to the human content.
    - Always clearly define and contextualize the issues.
    - Establish a clear purpose for cinematic viewing and discussions.
    - Establish parameters for discussions, and ensure that controversial issues do not become personalized or directed at individual students.
    - Protect the interests of individual students by finding out in advance whether any student would be personally affected by the subject. Permit students to choose alternative tasks if there is a problem.
    - Help students accept that there may not be a single "right answer" or resolution to a question or issue.
    - Respect everyone's right to voice opinions or perspectives.

    - Guide students to clarify the distinction between informed opinion and bias.
    - Facilitate students' quests for sufficient and reliable information to support various perspectives on an issue.
    - Allow time to present varying perspectives fairly and to reflect upon their validity.
- Encourage students to always take the time to give reasons for their opinions.
- Even when dealing with a film that deals head-on with a controversial subject, establish as a ground rule that inappropriate language, including racist or sexist terms, cannot be part of the discussion of the film.
- In particular, it is important to apply the following principles when dealing with cinematic representations of controversial or sensitive topics.
    - Always emphasize student preparation before viewing the film.
    - Always allow sufficient debriefing time (individual journal, sharing in pairs or in small groups) after viewing the film.

Finally, it is important to recall that there are no easy rules for dealing with sensitive issues, since a wide and changing range of topics can give rise to controversy. Students' experiences or backgrounds, societal changes, and personal lifestyles and values can bring different issues into the forefront each year. Teachers need to remain attuned to what may be sensitive in their particular learning community. In effect, any topic that has a social, political, or personal impact can arouse feelings and lead to controversy. The role of the teacher is to guide inquiry and discussion while helping students to develop a respectful awareness of differing values and opinions.

Resources

"Dealing with Controversial Issues in the Classroom" by Manitoba Education (p. 20).
www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/abedu/foundation_gr12/introduction.pdf

Reel Conversations: Reading Films with Young Adults by Alan. B. Teasley and Ann Wilder (1997).

"Using Film in the Classroom." by Alberta Education (pp. 55–62).
http://education.alberta.ca/media/883682/5_film.pdf

"Considerations in Choosing Films for Classroom Use" by Alberta Education (pp. 405–408).
https://education.alberta.ca/media/883870/app1.pdf

"Guidelines for Teaching" by United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
www.ushmm.org/educators/online-workshop/teaching-about-the-holocaust/guidelines-for-teaching

Teaching Controversial Issues by OXFAM.
www.oxfam.org.uk/~/media/Files/Education/Teacher%20Support/Free%20Guides/teaching_controversial_issues.ashx

Generative Questions in Cinema as a Witness to Modern History

Generative questions for the course

- What can cinema contribute to historical interpretations of the 20th century?
- Is cinema a credible witness of 20th-century world history?
- Is cinema a product of history or an interpretation of history?
- Should cinema be used to interpret/represent/understand history?
- (Cinema as primary source) How does this film reflect the time and place in which it was created? In what way does this film convey the values of its time and place? In what sense is this film truly a historical film? How effectively does this film use primary sources as part of its message?
- (Cinema as secondary source) In what way does this film interpret the historical subject it depicts? Is it a convincing interpretation? Is it a reliable interpretation? How realistic is it? What sort of an interpretation of the 20th century does this film convey? What events and values does this film seem to deem important? What approach to history does this film implicitly or explicitly convey?
- (Cinema as technique) How does the language of cinema shape its portrayal of history and its choice of historical topics? How does this film use the power of image and other techniques to convey its message? In this film, which has the greater impact: the cinema techniques or the historical content? How does this film genre suit the historical topics or themes it deals with?
- (Cinema as business) How does the film industry influence society? What is the social/cultural/economic impact of the industry of film? What are the elements that dominate the film industry? What does the history of cinema tell us about the evolution of the film industry? How and why did Hollywood blockbuster cinema come to dominate the film industry? How does Hollywood blockbuster cinema influence our tastes in cinema? What are the advantages or disadvantages of viewing film from other countries or in other languages?

Generative questions for critical media literacy

- What do we need to learn in order to become critically literate film viewers?
- In what social or historical context was this film created? How does this film reflect this context?
- Who is behind the camera lens? What do we need to know about the cinematographer and director?

- What is the main message of this film? What values underlie this film?
- What is historical about this film?
- How can we deconstruct a historical film?
- How does film influence our understanding of 20th-century world history?
- Can we really understand history though film?
- What is the difference between dramatic and documentary film?
- Is documentary film more reliable than fiction as a source of historical information?
- What techniques does the filmmaker use to convey his or her message? Are these techniques successful?
- How does this film compare to another film that deals with the same subject?

Generative questions for historical thinking

History is an interpretive discipline. Students need to understand the distinction between public history (history as it is understood by the general public) and history as a discipline (an objective interpretation of the past based on evidence). The following is a key question related to historical thinking in this course: *Should cinema be used to teach history? Why or why not?*

The following questions may be used to generate reflection and critical thinking in relation to particular historical themes or topics in 20th-century history, as interpreted in cinema.

- How does this film portray the historical theme that it deals with? How does this film reflect the time and place of its creation?
- What really happened? How do we know what happened? What is the untold story?
- How can we tell what is fiction and what is non-fiction in cinema?
- How is cinema a primary source of historical information (documentary evidence of the past)?
- How is cinema a secondary source of historical information (interpretation of a past event)?
- Can cinema be considered to be a credible witness of history like conventional historical documents (primary and secondary sources)?
- How can cinema help deepen our historical thinking?
- How can cinema interfere with our historical thinking?

Questions related to historical topics or themes

- Does this film deal with a defining theme of 20th-century world history?
- What defining theme of 20th-century world history does this film deal with?
- Is this film a convincing witness of a significant event or theme of the 20th century?

- Is this film a credible witness of a significant event or theme of the 20th century?
- How does this film deal with private history (e.g., biographies or small, personal dramas) as compared to the larger narrative of history (e.g., the collective or macro-story)?

Generative reflection questions related to historical themes

War and peace

- Is there ever a just war? Has there been a just war in the 20th century? Does this film convey a particular message about the moral value of violent conflict?
- How is conflict between groups treated in this film? How are the opposing groups portrayed? Does this film implicitly or explicitly vilify a particular group as the enemy or glorify a particular group as the hero?
- Does this film treat violent conflict as entertainment? Does this film use portrayals of gratuitous, extreme, or explicit violence? For what reasons might the filmmaker choose to do this? Does this film downplay or gloss over violence by portraying it as a part of an adventure, a thrill, or a game?
- How does this film portray the possible sources of conflict?
- It has been said that all war films are in reality anti-war films. Do you believe this statement to be true?

Ideology and revolution

- What brings about a revolution? Is revolution preferable to slow, gradual change? Can a revolution be started by a single person?
- Is revolution generally a consequence of ideology, propaganda, or the gap between rich and poor, the powerful and the powerless?
- Do you believe that the impact of the communications revolution in the 20th century has meant progress or decline in quality of life?
- Do you find that most films express an ideology or belief system that is a product of the time and place in which they were created?

Cinema and propaganda

- How can cinema function as propaganda?
- In times of war, how and why have states or political groups used the power of cinema to pass a message on to the people?
- Which is more effective as an ideological tool: video, speech, written word, music, or photography? What does each medium do to convey a message for a specific purpose?
- Do you believe that filmmakers have a social responsibility? Do you think that cinema should be subject to censorship?

- Is all of cinema merely the creation of an imaginary world for entertainment purposes?
- Do you believe that every film does have—or should have—a moral message or lesson?

Oppression and resistance

- Is there a time and a place for authoritarian rule? Is there a time and a place for violent revolution?
- What is the dividing line between the legitimate exercise of power and the abuse of power? How does this film portray the power and authority of the state? How does this film deal with questions of state authority and sovereignty and the rights of individuals or groups to oppose this authority? How does this film deal with the rights of citizens to oppose a legitimate state power? How does this film deal with the question of international intervention in matters of state jurisdiction?
- Does this film portray examples of human resistance to oppression? How does this film depict groups or persons who act against the authority of a state?

Public history and personal experience

- What role can biography or personal memory play in helping us to understand history?
- How does the historical context influence individual lives?
- Is history simply the sum total of all individual stories?
- Which is more significant in this film: the private lives of individuals or the big story of history? Are private lives and relationships a significant force in history?

Social transformation and existential questions

The most dramatic developments of the 20th century resulted in profound and rapid social change (e.g., status of women, gender identity, rights of Indigenous peoples, attitudes toward colonialism and imperialism, environmental responsibility, ideas about civilization and progress, faith in technology, rapid scientific and medical advances, etc.). Films often depict personal life experiences, showing how individuals lived through and responded to the prevailing values of their time and place. By making history a living narration of the past, cinema can help people understand perspectives that are different from their own and possibly question the assumptions they take for granted.

- How can cinema influence our image of groups or individuals? How has cinema been used historically to convey particular images or stereotypes of cultural groups? How should this be controlled and who should make these decisions?

- How are gender roles portrayed in this film? Is there a "male" and a "female" perspective? Are qualities of character shown in both genders or are they depicted as particular to only one gender?
- Does this film convey stereotypes of ethnic, cultural, or national groups or gender identities? How are these identities portrayed in this film?
- What are the big questions about human life and the human condition that are dealt with in this film?
- What types of moral decisions are the characters faced with and how do they respond?
- How does this film portray human suffering? How can cinema help deal with human suffering?

Critical Media Literacy

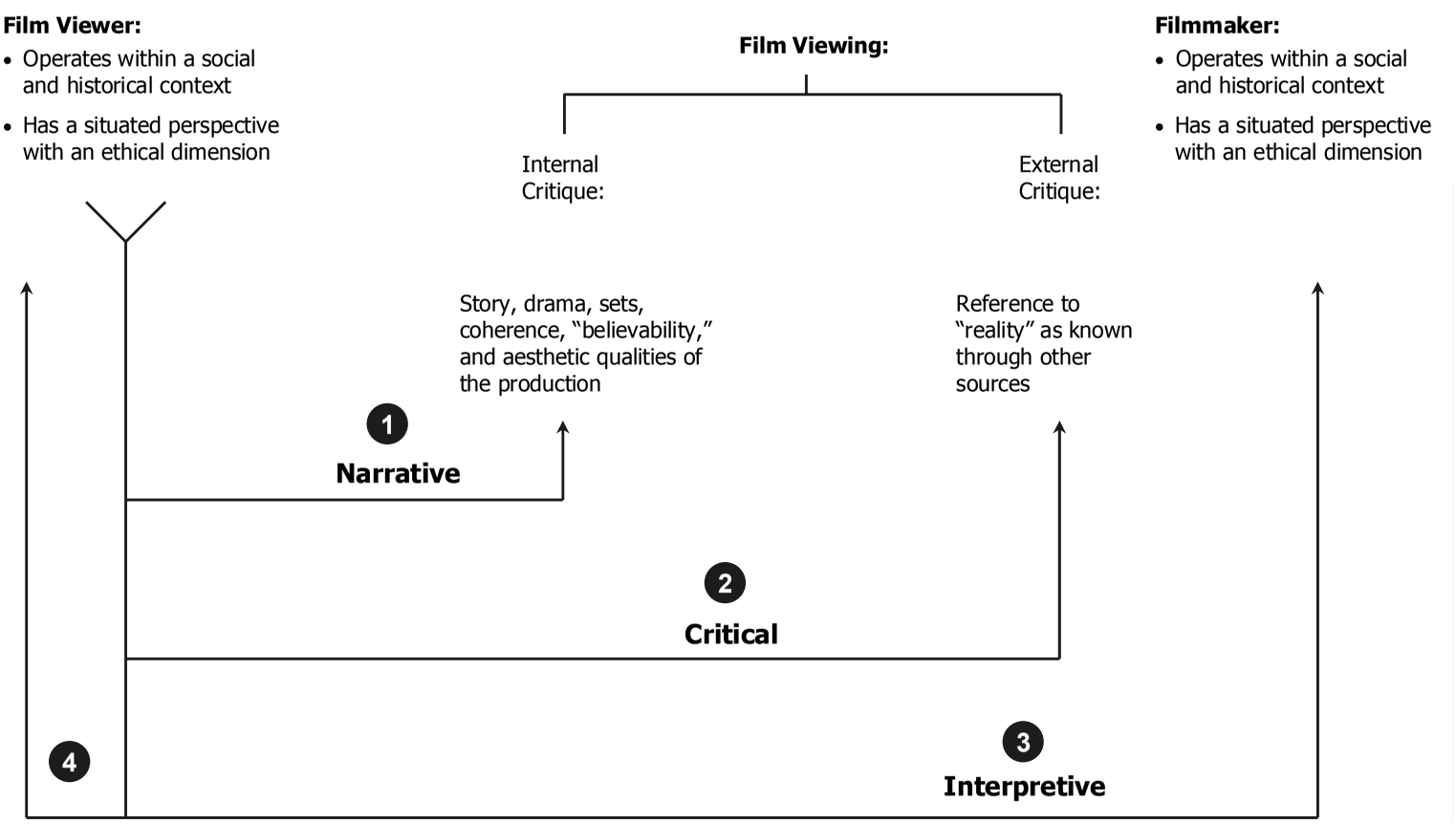
> "Visual media are redefining what it means to develop the tools of literacy to understand a changing world—with regard not just to the reception of information but also to its expression."
>
> – Stephen Apkon

Given that an essential goal of this course is to enable students to develop critical media literacy, the selection of resources and of learning tasks should provide students with tools for acquiring this new literacy. This entails not only responding to the "media experience," but also acquiring an understanding of the basic principles that apply to cinema as an element of mass media. In effect, this means learning the language and vocabulary of visual literacy and internalizing it as a part of all film viewing. In relation to this particular social studies course, this also means that students should attain the following **enduring understandings:**

- Cinema does not in effect reflect history objectively, but interprets and represents it for various purposes and messages.
- Cinema as a contemporary art form is created with an aesthetic purpose that greatly influences the message it conveys.
- Cinema seeks, often above all, to convince or to create an emotional impact.
- The message of a cinematic production is negotiated by each viewer, and as such is subject to widely divergent responses and interpretations.
- Cinema has emerged in the course of the 20th century as a lucrative, competitive, and highly concentrated enterprise in the world economy, mostly dominated by American production and distribution companies.
- Cinema may be seen as a way of uncovering the relationship between public (collective) drama and personal (individual) drama.
- Cinema consists of a wide range of distinct genres, each with its own techniques, conventions, and styles.
- The legitimacy of cinema as a source of historical knowledge and interpretation is subject to debate.
- Cinematic interpretations of the past should be validated by consulting conventional sources of historical knowledge.
- Cinema is a phenomenon of the 20th century; hence, it is the product of cultural and social values of the time and place of its production.

As viewers of films, students begin from their own historical context and interpret their film experience both from an internal stance and an external stance, understanding that the film itself is a product of the filmmaker's own historical context. This is a complex task of critical thinking that depends upon understanding the principles of media literacy, as well as the application of historical thinking. For a summary of this process, refer to the diagram that follows.

Process of Interpreting Films Using Historical Thinking*



* Adapted from Peter Seixas (2006), Figure 5.1, p. 104 in *Celluloid Blackboard: Teaching History with Film* (2006), ed. Alan Marcus.

Key Concepts for Media Literacy*

Media educators base their teaching on key concepts for media literacy, which provide an effective foundation for examining mass media and popular culture. These key concepts act as filters that any media text has to go through in order for us to critically respond.

1. **Media are constructions.**

   Media products are created by individuals who make conscious and unconscious choices about what to include, what to leave out and how to present what is included. These decisions are based on the creators' own points of view, which will have been shaped by their opinions, assumptions and biases—as well as media they have been exposed to. As a result of this, media products are never entirely accurate reflections of the real world—even the most objective documentary filmmaker has to decide what footage to use and what to cut, as well as where to put the camera—but we instinctively view many media products as direct representations of what is real.

   Ask:

   - Who created this media product?
   - What is its purpose?
   - What assumptions or beliefs do its creators have that are reflected in the content?

Teaching implications

Carry out research into film directors, actors, screenwriters, the original source of film, and the filmmaker's approach. This may mean viewing interviews with filmmakers as part of every film study. In films that deal with an explicit historical subject, carry out pre- or post-viewing research using independent historical evidence and primary sources if possible. Consider and discuss questions related to the adequacy of cinema in effectively portraying history.

2. **Audiences negotiate meaning**

   The meaning of any media product is not created solely by its producers but is, instead, a collaboration between them and the audience—which means that different audiences can take away different meanings from the same product. Media literacy encourages us to understand how individual factors, such as age, gender, race, and social status affect our interpretations of media.

   Ask:

   - How might different people see this media product differently?
   - How does this make you feel, based on how similar or different you are from the people portrayed in the media product?

* **Key Concepts for Media Literacy:** Reproduced from <http://mediasmarts.ca/digital-media-literacy/general-information/digital-media-literacy-fundamentals/media-literacy-fundamentals>.

Teaching implications

Compare films of different cultures or periods. Plan to allow time to compare responses to films in post-viewing discussions. Consider the culture of film reviews and critiques in the media. Study and compare examples of professional film reviews. View films from different countries or in different periods that deal with a similar historical topic.

3. Media have commercial implications.

Most media production is a business and must, therefore, make a profit. In addition, media industries belong to a powerful network of corporations that exert influence on content and distribution. Questions of ownership and control are central—a relatively small number of individuals control what we watch, read, and hear in the media. Even in cases where media **content** is not made for profit—such as YouTube videos and Facebook posts—the ways in which content is **distributed** are nearly always run with profit in mind.

Ask:

- What is the commercial purpose of this media product (in other words, how will it help someone make money)?
- How does this influence the content and how it's communicated?
- If no commercial purpose can be found, what other purposes might the media product have (for instance, to get attention for its creator or to convince audiences of a particular point of view).
- How do those purposes influence the content and how it's communicated?

Teaching implications

Take time to gather information about cinema as an industry and how it functions in contemporary society. Model the process of taking notes of film producers and production companies, screenwriters, directors, actors, awards, etc. Carry out research into cinema production and distribution, film budgets and timelines, the impact of awards and film reviews in the press, and statistics related to cinematic production, distribution, and marketing.

4. Media have social and political implications

Media convey ideological messages about values, power, and authority. In media literacy, what or who is absent may be more important than what or who is included. These messages may be the result of conscious decisions, but more often they are the result of unconscious biases and unquestioned assumptions—and they can have a significant influence on what we think and believe.

As a result, media have great influence on politics and on forming social change. TV news coverage and advertising can greatly influence the election of a national leader on the basis of image; representations of world issues, both in journalism and fiction, can affect how much attention they receive;

and society's views towards different groups can be directly influenced by how—and how often—they appear in media.

Ask:

- Who and what is shown in a positive light? In a negative light?
- Why might these people and things be shown this way?
- Who and what is not shown at all?
- What conclusions might audiences draw based on these facts?

Teaching implications

Plan for reflection time to step back from the film-viewing experience to study the film as a social artifact or primary source. Plan time before the viewing of a film to study or research the context of the film's creation: the social, political, and cultural factors at work in the time and place of the production (historical perspective-taking).

5. **Each medium has a unique aesthetic form.**

   The content of media depends in part on the nature of the medium. This includes the technical, commercial, and storytelling demands of each medium: for instance, the interactive nature of video games leads to different forms of storytelling—and different demands on media creators—than are found in film and TV.

   Ask:

   - What techniques does the media product use to get your attention and to communicate its message?
   - In what ways are the images in the media product manipulated through various techniques (e.g., lighting, makeup, camera angle, photo manipulation)?
   - What are the expectations of the *genre* (e.g., print advertising, TV drama, music video) towards its subject?

Teaching implications

Plan time early in the course to acquire and understand the language of film (e.g., cinematography techniques, film genres, lighting and camera terms, soundtrack, production process). Use visual examples by viewing excerpts of films to illustrate techniques. Plan some focused film viewings or re-screenings of carefully selected excerpts to study techniques or conventions.

Suggested Teaching Strategies

Analytical film-viewing practice

One of the main purposes of this course is to instil in students a new approach to viewing film. To attain this purpose, it is essential to do some preparatory work with students. This means explicitly teaching students how to do

analytical film viewing by carrying out analytical viewing practices early in the course. For this task, it is useful to begin with a selected short dramatic film or excerpt, ideally a 3- to 10-minute clip. The clip may be viewed three separate times, with each viewing having a different and clearly defined purpose.

This kind of practice will help the students master using the language of cinema, will help them change the way they view films, and will help set up the course so that film is used as a tool for deeper learning rather than simply as entertainment or habit.

In their book *Reel Conversations: Reading Films with Young Adults,* Alan Teasley and Ann Wilder recommend constructing a film-viewing grid in which students are guided to observe the literary, the dramatic, or the cinematic elements of the film being viewed. Whatever the area of focus, students incorporate the elements of critical media literacy to evaluate the film by asking themselves the following questions: *What did I see and hear? What are the strongest impressions that remain with me? What is something that worked well in the film? What is something that didn't work well?*

Teasley and Wilder provide the following three-step process for film viewing:

Step 1: Narrative viewing

Invite students to view the film clip and to focus on observing its narrative elements, which means, in effect, concentrating on the film's story as though it were a book. This would involve paying attention to the following elements:

- setting, including historical context of time and place
- characters (both fictional and historical)
- plot: events or developments, central conflict and minor conflicts, build-up of tension or suspense, resolution
- theme: ideas, symbols, or elements that express a dominant message, belief, or values

Notes

If desired, teachers may choose to set aside a separate viewing of film (or an excerpt) strictly to observe the historical elements. In this case, students may have carried out pre-research into the historical topic or theme.

Step 2: Dramatic viewing

For this screening, invite students to focus on the film's *dramatic elements*. This means viewing the film as though it were a play, observing these elements:

- script, including narration and dialogue
- acting, how the actors portray emotions or character, and show the relationships between characters
- costumes and makeup
- a set, including props

Step 3: Technical viewing

The third way of viewing a film is to focus primarily on its *technical or cinematic elements*. In cinema, this means concentrating on the language and conventions of film as an art form. Viewing practice should now focus on these elements:

- the genre or style of the film
- cinematography, camera shots, angles, distance, lighting
- montage or editing: transitions and changes between scenes, fade-ins, techniques to show the passage of time, special effects
- soundtrack: background sounds, music

A note on analytical viewing of documentary film

Teachers may choose to do a separate analytical viewing practice using a historical documentary film, because its purpose is considerably different from the purpose of any dramatic film. In this case, there may be some preparatory study of the historical theme or topic. Then, in an initial viewing, students may focus solely on the *historical content* of the film, observing the key points related to the time period, such as events, historical figures, dates, and facts, or the use of archival sources, or the filmmaker's historical interpretation of the topic.

In a second or separate viewing, students may be encouraged to observe the technical or cinematic elements of the film: *What are the visuals, the camera effects, and the cinematography? What is the soundtrack and narration? Is there any music*? What techniques does the filmmaker use to capture the viewer's attention?

Suggested resources

For further details about documentary technique and language, refer to the following website:

National Film Board, *Behind the Camera*
http://www3.nfb.ca/enclasse/doclens/btc.php?DLshown=true&language=e

Chapter 2 of *Reel Conversations* by Teasley and Wilder also includes a useful "Analytical Viewing Practice Grid" and a "Note-Taking Guide" that students can use to compile their observations.

Choosing films or film excerpts for analytical viewing practice

Since this type of viewing is intended to teach and practice a new habit of mindful critical viewing, it is important to use a carefully selected dramatic short or excerpt of a sequence from a feature film for this film-viewing practice. Analytical film viewing may be repeated later in the course to reinforce habits of critical observation, using a clip from a film that students have already seen, if desired. Students may also be divided into groups, with each group assigned one set of elements to observe, followed by a plenary exchange of observations. Alternatively, students could be assigned an

analytical viewing task during a second viewing of one of the selected film studies for the course. Regardless of the task organization, it is important to select for these purposes an artistically excellent film or film excerpt, and to make it short enough to allow for a second or even a third viewing as needed. This means one should avoid expressly didactic films, or films chosen solely for their historical content, or films that portray scenes of extreme sorrow, suffering, sexuality, or violence. By occasionally practising analytical film viewing and focusing on one or another of the elements of the film (narrative/historical, dramatic, or technical), students can overcome their habitual preferences (e.g., by introducing them to foreign language or subtitled films, black-and-white films, silent films, or animated films). By using short films or film excerpts, it is possible to expose students to excellent examples of cinema in a variety of genres that go beyond the films they are familiar with. It may also offer multiple occasions for students to apply the vocabulary of cinema and film criticism.

Suggested resources

Pigeon, by Anthony Green (2004).

Available at Manitoba Education Library or for purchase online:
www.avodaarts.org/index.php?page=pigeon

Set in Remies, France in 1941 and based on a true story, *Pigeon* recounts a rare and startling act of resistance. This 11-minute film by filmmaker Anthony Green was an official selection of the 2004 Toronto International Film Festival and grand-prize winner at the 2005 New York Jewish Student Film Festival.

Film Genres

Film genre refers to a recognizable category of films that share certain common elements or conventions (e.g., artistic style, setting, theme or subject matter, time period, narrative form, symbols). There is no single list of defining criteria for determining the genre of a film. However, for the purposes of this course, the most useful criterion for determining film genre is the distinction between *fiction* and *documentary.*

Fiction

Feature-length fictional films tell an invented story. The plot, as well as the characters, may be inspired by real or imaginary events or people. The story may take place in real or imagined places or settings, in real or imagined time periods. The key idea is that the story is imaginary, whatever its factual basis or components.

Fictional film may be divided into several genres, based again on a variety of criteria. For example, one or more of the following criteria may be used:

- artistic style: techniques used to give the film its "look" and "feel," such as lighting, cinematography, scenery, props, special effects (e.g., animation, musical comedy, auteur film, silent film)

- characteristic tone or mood: comedy, drama, satire, dramatic comedy, romantic comedy
- period or setting: for example, the American West in the 19th century for Westerns, the future and outer space for science fiction films, classical Antiquity for "sword and sandal" epics
- theme or subject matter: crime or detective/mystery, adventure, history, horror, romance, war, etc.
- narrative form or structure: basic plot, pattern of events, characters

Film genres and sub-genres are often combined: a western may also be a comedy or a romance; an adventure film may also be a musical comedy or an animated film. It is not always a straightforward task to classify films by genre, as there are many types of sub-genres and combinations of more than one genre.

Some cinematic productions deliberately mix one or more genres to create a desired effect or message. For example, *Little Big Man* (1970) is an American "revisionist" film that uses the conventions of the western film, while reversing the customary power relationship between Indigenous people and the American army. Although the film's explicit topic is the defeat of General Custer at Little Big Horn, the primary message of the filmmaker is the exaggerated militarism of American generals during the Vietnam War.

About historical film

"When we want to characterize a film briefly, we try to isolate the features it has in common with other films, so that it can be classified as a type. Most of the types we are familiar with—westerns, thrillers, comedies, science fiction, horror—developed within the world of cinema, despite their literary origins, and they no longer exist except as cinematic types. The peculiarity of historical films is that they are defined according to a discipline that is completely outside the cinema; in fact there is no special term to describe them, and when we speak of them we refer both to the cinema and to history. This is a point that should be of interest to historians: it would seem that audiences recognize the existence of a system of knowledge that is already clearly defined—historical knowledge, from which filmmakers take their material."

– Pierre Sorlin

There are a variety of genres among the films selected for this course, including a substantial number of historical films (mostly dramatic feature films). It is important to establish what is meant by *historical film* before analyzing, researching, or critiquing the films we select. Strictly speaking, there is not a film genre that may be exclusively classified as *historical film*; however, most of the films suggested for this course deal at least in part with a historical topic or theme. For purposes of critical viewing, we will refer to these films as being of the genre "historical drama," to distinguish them from the historical documentaries that are also part of the course. Other films suggested for critical viewing (e.g., *Doctor Strangelove*, *Metropolis*, *Little Big Man*, or *The Great Dictator*) may not constitute historical drama and are considered insofar as they are historical artifacts or products of their time and place.

A note on war films

"In the year 2024 the most important thing which the cinema will have helped to accomplish will be that of eliminating from the face of the civilized world all armed conflict. With the use of the universal language of moving pictures the true meaning of the brotherhood of man (sic) will have been established throughout the earth."

– D.W. Griffith, American filmmaker, 1924

Contrary to this prediction, the 20th century was an era of exceptional conflict, with wars claiming more victims than ever before. Not only did European wars become truly global for the first time, but the new technologies of violence—from poison gas to the atomic bomb—meant that it was easier to kill large numbers of people at once. The practice of total war meant that all resources, civilian and military, were mobilized to fight, with the aim of annihilating the enemy. The nature of war became highly ideological, using media as propaganda to create an image of war as heroism and adventure, or to portray the enemy as morally evil.

Because this course deals with historical topics, it is unavoidable that war films constitute a substantial portion of the films selected. It is, however, important for students to recognize that the 20th century is not solely defined by war and genocide, and that many other significant developments—including medical advances, revolutionary change in technology and communications, and widespread post-colonial and post-feminist social progress—emerged as factors that transformed life for much of the world in the 20th century and into the 21st century. Students need to be cautioned to reflect critically on the role of cinema as a popular entertainment industry, and to note the fact that filmmakers choose their themes—predominantly including tragedy and violence—not so much in order to accurately record reality as to incite a strong emotional response in the viewers. This is the element of "spectacle," much refined and perfected by Hollywood, and it is naturally appealing to the human propensity to tell stories, especially stories that move us and contain drama, suspense, and tension.

Students cannot become critically media literate by indulging in a steady diet of war and disaster films. It is essential to avoid an exaggerated emphasis on films depicting violence, not only because this can create a skewed image of world history, but also because it can lead to desensitization or the trivialization of human suffering. A pedagogical approach that emphasizes preparation, consulting conventional historical sources, and guided debriefing following the study of difficult topics is an important component of this course. Teachers should plan film selection so that it is *not* constituted primarily of war films.

Suggested teaching strategy: Critics have claimed that all movies inherently glorify war, even when they claim to have a pacifist message. This assertion has often been attributed to French filmmaker François Truffaut, who maintained that to portray war is, in effect, to ennoble it. Using the films they viewed as examples, students may engage in debate or discussion on this question. They may be encouraged to note examples of how cinema can

overtly or subtly give an impression of glory or heroism to war, and how it can communicate the opposite message. An example of a film that includes both elements is *The Longest Day*, which portrays the 6 June 1944 Normandy invasion. The film uses heroic military music to emphasize the triumphant aspects of the Allied invasion. However, note this quote from one of the Allied soldiers (played by Richard Burton) just before the end of the film: "He's dead, I'm crippled, you're lost. Maybe it's always like that in war. I wonder who won."

Auteur film

Auteur theory, in contrast to classification of film by genre, analyzes films on the basis of the expression of the creator of the film—usually the director—and his or her distinctive style or vision. This type of film is identified by the signature look and feel of the film, such as the films of Woody Allen, Alfred Hitchcock, or, in Canadian cinema, a local filmmaker such as Guy Maddin. In this course, students may be exposed to some examples of auteur films from the Canadian documentary tradition though a unit of study dealing with the National Film Board.

Non-fiction

In English language cinema, there is a clear distinction between fiction and non-fiction film. Documentary film refers to all video production that does not rely on the use of imaginative storytelling or fiction; it includes a variety of genres whose primary content focus is reality. Televised news bulletins, reportages, interviews, concert recordings, and reality TV programs are all examples of non-fiction, although not strictly documentary. In some views, documentary film must involve in-depth research, interpretation, and analysis of a given topic, as opposed to news reports or other video that simply record and present the subject without overtly including a consideration of its sources or implications. Most documentaries use a narrative structure or form to convey their subject matter. Refer to the section on documentary for further information.

Mixed genres

Mixed genres, such as *docudrama, reality television,* or *re-enactments,* do not make a clear distinction between the factual and fictitious elements they include. A genre such as docudrama is first and foremost a dramatic story based on a real-life event. It includes some elements of historical fact interwoven with fictional details to enhance the narrative. Sometimes a docudrama is the result of the filmmaker's desire to retell a factual event in such a way as to bring it more fully to life than is possible with a purely documentary account. At other times, there remains insufficient primary source evidence (interviews, witnesses' accounts, letters, or archival images) on which to base a full retelling of the event. By beginning with a real event and filling any gaps in evidence with invented or imagined details, the scriptwriter and the director make choices in their message that can distance them, in varying degrees, from the true event.

Documentaries often include *re-enactments* as a way of using fiction to tell the story of an event in a style that is more immediate and more dramatic than

what can be shown using a straightforward documentary style. However, re-enactments are usually presented as such and do not claim to replace the facts. In the context of the documentary, dramatic re-enactments are often used to co-exist with and complement interviews, archival documents, or images and news reports, which can tend to confuse them with actual historical evidence.

Reality television is another recent hybrid genre. The characters in a reality TV program are real people. They appear by their real names and with their own true personal histories. They react to events with their own characters and emotions, not as actors playing roles. However, the context in which these individuals interact is a fictional creation. Producers, scriptwriters, and directors create an artificial environment in which the participants are required to respond and change in accordance with a set of invented parameters and rules. These programs, which are in effect sophisticated televised games, are generally closer to fiction than to documentary. Some of them are subjected to screenwriting to the point that the participants are required to take on a determined role. Others, such as historical reality programs, create a real historical context (e.g., two couples living a year as pioneers of the 19th century) and allow the participants to respond as they would in real life.

Suggested teaching strategy: In order to become accustomed to distinguishing film genres, students may use a model genre study using guiding questions, such as in the example that follows.

Model genre study: exploring film genre

Title of film: _____

Country of origin, release date: _____

Narrative and dramatic elements

- List the main events in the film's storyline in the order in which they happened. Does the film tell this story in chronological order? Does the story frequently shift from past to present? Does the film show long passages of time or does the story occur in a short time period?
- Describe the main characters of the film in stereotypical or simple terms. How did these characters interact with each other in the film? Is there a hero in the story?

Style (artistic and technical elements)

- Describe how the film looks overall. What is the setting? Is the time and place realistically portrayed or is it imaginative? How can you tell what the time and place is? Does this film remind you of other films? Why? Does most of the story take place in a character's mind?

- Describe the cinematography in this film. What did you notice about the lighting, the colours, the camera shots, angles, and distances? Describe any unique or memorable scenes.

Notes

For terms and definitions of cinematic techniques, refer to the glossary of film terms or to the following website:
www.elementsofcinema.com

- Describe this director's editing style. Are there juxtaposed shots of contrasting subjects (montage sequences)? Do the shots simply cut from one to the next in the order that they happen? Are there shots that move back and forth from one subject to another (cross-cutting)? Are there transitions that show a passage of time (ellipsis)?
- What kind of music and sound effects are used in the film? Special effects? Intertitles?
- What do you think is the main theme of the film? What is the dominant mood or emotion? Is there a message you feel the director is expressing in the film?
- What is your overall impression of the look and style of the film?

Documentary Film

Background teaching considerations: Students are probably familiar with viewing didactic films of the documentary genre in school on curriculum topics for instructional purposes. They likely have a notion that these "educational" documentary films are simply sources of factual information, and rather unexciting to watch. In their lives outside of school, on the other hand, they may have watched fact-based videos online for the purposes of seeking information (e.g., how-to videos on YouTube), or real-life films on the Internet with a popular impact due to shock value, uniqueness, or photographic distinction. With the rapid emergence of documentary film as part of mainstream popular culture, students have likely been exposed to documentary films with strong social messages, such as Michael Moore's *Bowling for Columbine* (2002), *Super Size Me* (2005), *The March of the Penguins* (2005), or Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006). They may see documentary as having an overt message of social change. Furthermore, with the advent of new technologies permitting widespread capacities in film editing, captioning, and photographic montage, students may be interested in documentary as filmmakers rather than solely as viewers.

For all of these reasons, and to support critical media literacy, it is recommended that teachers dedicate time early in the course to a study and analysis of documentary styles and purposes.

Additionally, since Canada's National Film Board (NFB) has a significant history as a leader in documentary film, a part of this study should be

dedicated to the history and productions of the NFB. Given the educational mandate of the NFB, a large number of the NFB productions, including teacher guides and backgrounders, are available for classroom viewing online.

Statements about documentary

Arlene Moscovitch included the following quotations about the documentary genre in her book *Constructing Reality: Media Studies in Documentary.*

> "Documentary is telling a story with elements from life."
>
> – David Sobelman, Filmmaker

> "… beyond the newsmen and the magazine men and the lecturers, one begins to enter the world of documentary proper, into the only world in which documentary can hope to achieve the ordinary virtues of an art. Here we pass from the plain (or fancy) descriptions of natural material, to arrangements, rearrangements, and creative shapings of it."
>
> – John Grierson

> "The best documentary films are provocative challenges to the status quo, films that have an edge, a point of view, films which incite controversy and public debate, contributing to a healthy democracy."
>
> – Canadian Independent Film Caucus

What is documentary?

> "Democratic education needs its own vital system of communications, its own system of 'wildfire across the sky'... You cannot do it by information alone or by analysis alone, for the life escapes. The radio, the picture, the poster and the story are the instruments in your hands and art has inevitably become half of your teaching."
>
> – John Grierson

Documentaries deal with real people or real events, past or present. Documentary films may be divided into sub-genres based on their theme or content, such as biopics (e.g., *Gandhi* or *The Motorcycle Diaries*), ethnographic films (e.g., *Nanook of the North*); scientific documentary (e.g., *An Inconvenient Truth*); historical documentary, often using primary source footage (e.g., *Nuremberg: The Nazis Facing Their Crimes* or *Night and Fog*).

Canadian filmmakers, largely through the support of the National Film Board (NFB), have long been recognized as a significant international force in documentary filmmaking. The first film to be officially called a "documentary" was Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (1922), a study of the early life of Canadian Inuit living in the Arctic. Flaherty is often regarded

as the "father of the documentary film." He was fascinated by the lifestyle of the people of Canada's North and determined to make this film in order to preserve their culture from disappearance as a result of colonization. Flaherty lived with the Inuit people for six years and collaborated with them in producing a film that showed traditional Inuit life from the perspective of *how they saw themselves* rather than as an outsider depicting a quaint people. Although Flaherty in fact had the Inuit people stage or dramatize certain scenes for filming purposes, the content was authentic and approved by the people being filmed. In effect, the film is an example of what documentary theorist and NFB founder John Grierson called the "creative treatment of actuality" in the portrayal of the day-to-day life of a people whose lifestyle was rapidly changing in the face of modernization and Europeanization. Grierson himself became an international pioneer in documentary by "combining a standard of innovative artistry with a populist interest in everyday life" (Melnyk, p. 59).

In practice, we recognize documentary (and all non-fiction film) by certain characteristics, such as the use of interviews or archival documents as part of the film's narrative or story. Documentary film in general seeks to preserve knowledge that may otherwise be lost or overlooked. However, keeping in mind the media principle that the media do not directly reflect reality, most documentary films are crafted to convey a particular message, opinion, or point of view regarding the topics they depict. Some documentary films present their content in a strictly observational style, as though the filmmaker is simply a "fly on the wall" observing the events or people being filmed. The filmmaker is not overtly present in the film, but his or her vision is transmitted by the choices made and the techniques used to present the subject. In other more participatory documentary styles, the filmmaker is present in the film and expresses his point of view as he records the subjects or carries out interviews (e.g., Michael Moore's films, which have a more subjective style of presentation). Some documentaries (such as *The Fog of War)* are almost entirely based on interviews, and the narrator's presence is dominant but not explicitly part of the filming. Others (such as *Home*, *Manufactured Landscapes, Watermark)* rely primarily on the impact and power of distinctive photographic images to convey their intended message.

Documentary and Propaganda

> "Canada was forced, by war, to enter the age of mass communications. The voices of Matthew Halton and Lorne Greene became familiar to everyone. News broadcasts were made from Britain and the continent, and 16 mm films were brought into community halls. These films made the war as real as the people next door... World War II brought the documentary film into universal use as a tool to inform and motivate people."
>
> – C.W. Gray

Documentary film emerged in 20th-century history, particularly in times of war, as an effective propaganda tool (refer to the section on cinema and propaganda for further information on this topic). Canada's National Film Board was created in 1939 with the mandate "to make and distribute films across the country that were designed to help Canadians everywhere in Canada understand the problems and way of life of Canadians in other parts

of the country." With the outbreak of the Second World War, a primary role of the NFB quickly became one of encouraging and supporting the Allied war effort. Founding commissioner John Grierson, known as a pioneer of documentary filmmaking, was also a specialist in the psychology of propaganda: he saw the documentary as "a hammer to shape society." Grierson remained a powerful influence on documentary film in the 20th century, and was largely responsible for the emergence of documentary as what has sometimes been called "Canada's national art form."

Purposes of documentary film

Documentary films, whatever their subject, tend to have one of the following purposes:

- to give a voice to the voiceless, the people we do not normally hear from in the mass media, and to depict their lives as they would have experienced them
- to find or reveal something extraordinary in everyday life
- to urge us to take notice or to look at things differently
- to shine a light on a largely unknown or unnoticed element of human experience
- to draw attention to how things got to be the way they are
- to observe the behind-the-scenes processes rather than just focusing on the final product or destination

Styles of documentary

Film theorists generally identify four different styles of documentary film:

1. **Expository style:** This is the traditional form of documentary in which an unseen speaker gives a voice-over commentary to explain the images in a "voice of God" style, giving the impression of objectivity. This style is often associated with nature or historical documentaries. In general, it is a more didactic style, in which the images play a supporting role to the narration. (An example of this style is the *Why We Fight* documentary series by Frank Capra.)
2. **Observational style:** This style is associated with 'fly-on-the-wall' type films that give the impression of the passage of real time, and in which the subjects seem to be unaware of the camera. The filmmaker is not seen or heard, and there is no narration, no non-diegetic music, and no sound effects. (An example of this style is Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*.)
3. **Interactive** Many documentaries feature a certain amount of interactive filming, including interviews. Scenes involve the subjects responding to questions asked of them, in which the questions of the filmmaker may be left in or edited out (such as in *The Fog of War*). More recent versions may be explicitly participatory, such as the films of Michael Moore, in which the filmmaker and the cameraman are actively part of some scenes.
4. **Reflective style:** This style is usually associated with more experimental documentaries, such as films in which the process of making the film is directly shown. It may also include poetic documentaries, such as *Pacific 231*,

which use actuality for aesthetic purposes, or performative documentaries such as *Night and Fog*, in which the haunting personal narration evokes a sense of memory rather than an objective history of the Shoah.

Suggested teaching strategies: As a guide for analytical viewing practice in this unit, students may use the following chart (Exploring Documentary Technique and Style). Many of the suggested National Film Board documentaries are available for viewing on the educational website of the National Film Board:
https://www.nfb.ca/

Exploring Documentary Technique and Style

Observe which of these elements are used by the filmmaker and describe their effect on the documentary style.

- A subject appears to speak directly to the camera.
- Footage appears that does not include the subject(s).
- Archival images are included.
- Narration or explanatory voice-over describes or explains the scene.
- Captions or intertitles are provided as explanations.
- Music is added to create a mood or effect.
- Visual symbols are used to create an effect.
- People are filmed before or after they are interviewed.
- The film uses a montage of contrasting images.
- The film uses slow-motion or time-lapse photos.
- The film includes diagrams or maps.
- The camera does rapid zooms, pans, or tilts.
- A long cut is shown with no voice-over.
- You can see or hear the filmmaker in the documentary.

Documentary Technique and Style Worksheet		
Film title, director, country, year		
Example of a scene from the film	Expository/observational/ interactive/reflective style (E/O/I/R)	Impressions of the effect

The following NFB titles may be particularly useful in this unit:

- *Nanook of the North* by Robert Flaherty (1922). Excerpt suggestions: introduction intertitles, seal hunt and construction of the igloo scenes.
- *Ted Baryluk's Grocery* by John Paskievich (1982). (Note that Paskievich is a Winnipeg filmmaker.)
- *City of Gold* (Capitale de l'or) by Wolf Koenig and Colin Low (1957).
- *Shameless Propaganda* by Robert Lower (2013).
- *Capturing Reality: The Art of Documentary* by Pepita Ferari (2008). Suggested excerpts: interviews with Errol Morris, Michel Brault, Alanis Obamsawim.
- Short documentaries by Roman Kroitor, award-winning Canadian filmmaker who was an early user of *cinéma vérité* and co-founder of IMAX theatre. His innovative photographic techniques, without use of narrative voice-over, influenced later documentary filmmakers. Examples of his films: *Paul Tomkowicz: Street-railway Switchman* and *In the Labyrinth*, an experimental film using multiple images of people that was created for Expo 67.
- *21-87* by Arthur Lipsett (1964). A collage of shots of the passing crowd, a commentary on machine-dominated society, and said to be an influence on George Lucas's *Star Wars*.

The following chart indicates suggestions of other documentary titles that may be included as part of the study of pertinent historical themes.

Historical theme or topic	Suggested film	Pedagogical purpose
Space travel	*The Space Shuttle* (documentary, narrated by William Shatner, 1h 20 min). Available on YouTube.	May be used to complement *Apollo 13*
Environmental impact	*Home*, Yann Arthus-Bertrand (with teacher guide online)	May be used to complement the documentary *Manufactured Landscapes*
Holocaust	*Nuremberg: The Nazis Facing their Crimes* (2006)	May be used to complement *Life is Beautiful* or other dramatic films on the Holocaust
Cold War	*The Fog of War*	May be used to complement dramatic films on the Cold War or to study the use of documentary technique and style

Resources

Websites:

National Film Board, *Behind the Camera.* Interactive website about documentary technique and language
http://www3.nfb.ca/enclasse/doclens/btc.php?DLshown=true&language=e

National Film Board, *The Documentary Lens.* A thematic website showing how National Film Board documentaries have portrayed Canada and the world since 1939
http://www3.nfb.ca/objectifdocumentaire/index.php?language=english

NASA Space Shuttle Documentary. Feature-length documentary from NASA on YouTube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6aDDcyIk_0Y&index=7&list=PL95FEF848D3579107

Home, Yann Arthus-Bertrand
www.youtube.com/watch?v=NNGDj9IeAuI

The National Film Board and propaganda, NFB film *Shameless Propaganda.*
https://www.nfb.ca/film/shameless_propaganda

History of the National Film Board
https://www.nfb.ca/historique/

Print:

Movies for the People: The Story of the National Film Board's Unique Distribution System by C.W. Gray (1977).

"First Principles of Documentary" by John Grierson (1976).

One Hundred Years of Canadian Cinema by George Melnyk (2004).

Constructing Reality: Exploring Media Issues in Documentary by Arlene Moscovitch (1993).

Introduction to Documentary by Bill Nichols (2001).

The Language of Cinema

Learning the language of film

Just as the writer must master the rules of language and grammar in order to create a literary work, the cinematographer must master the conventions and language of film. Instead of dealing with verbs and adjectives, the filmmaker manipulates images through the use of angles, transitions, lighting, and sound in order to express ideas. The film critic must also know and understand the language of film. In the same way, the spectator's experience of viewing a film is enriched by an awareness of the language and techniques of film.

We tend to believe that film is a purely visual medium, but in fact the experience of cinema has many dimensions. First of all, there is the film's story, most often told through dialogue and narration. Along with this, the viewer takes in the visual information supplied by camera shots, angles, movements, transitions, editing, and composition, as well as by the other visual content supplied by lighting, colour, set, and costumes. Then there is the auditory information, supplied though choices of music, sound effects, ambient sound, silence, and the voices of the actors.

The following is a glossary of the basic vocabulary required to understand the language of cinema. Each time we watch a film, we can practice posing questions to help us observe the film's *texture*: trying to understand why the filmmaker chose to include these particular elements of colour, lighting, or sound in the film. This document also suggests examples of guiding questions for the study and analysis of any selected film, be it drama or documentary. Some of the media literacy questions proposed for each film study relate to cinematic language or technique, while others are *diegetic* questions, referring to the film's narrative content. Throughout the course, students should frequently have the opportunity to view or re-view selected scenes from films in order to examine the use of the various techniques of cinema.

Glossary of Film Terms

Pedagogical considerations: Students should understand and apply the correct terms when referring to the techniques of cinema. Familiarity with the elements of cinematic language will help students deconstruct or analyze film as they become mindful of the deliberate aesthetic decisions used by filmmakers. This awareness can lead to a deeper understanding of the art of cinema and its persuasive technique.
This glossary of terms is divided into sections pertaining to elements of cinematography (camera, lighting, *mise en scène*), editing, soundtrack, and style or genre. A strategy to develop the vocabulary of cinema is to invite students to select and present illustrative examples of each of the key terms from movies they have viewed and to create a visual montage about the elements of cinema.

Cinematography
comes from the Greek root words *kinema* (movement) and *graph* (writing). The art of cinematography includes using camerawork and lighting to create a general impression of a scene and its story. The director of a film, with the cinematographer, plans the *mise en scène* (a French term meaning "placing on stage") or the arrangement and look of everything that appears on the screen, including actors, lighting, decor, props, and costumes.
As in the art of photography, the filmmaker must decide what he or she wishes to include—or to exclude—in the selected shots. For example, in order to concentrate on a conversation, the filmmaker may choose a very tight frame that shows very little of the setting; while in a traditional Western film, one can expect many long shots showing the expanse of blue sky and wide prairie. In such a context, the characters can appear to be small. All of these choices depend upon the intention of the filmmaker and the world that he or she chooses to depict.

Composition
refers to the arrangement of actors, objects (natural and manufactured), and other visual elements that are included to form the image within a shot: Where are the characters situated? Are they centred? Are they off to the left or to the right? Are they off in the distance? Is there a barrier between the characters, such as a table, a bicycle, or another object?
In order to understand a film, one has to become aware of the artistic choices and decisions of the filmmaker and consider why these choices were made. In cinematography, very little is left up to chance. The director seeks to create a believable world, and in order to do so, she or he makes a number of choices designed to have an effect on the spectator.
The basic elements of a motion picture are the frame, the shot, the scene, and the sequence.

Frame refers to each still photograph or image as the camera is rolling. *Framing* a shot refers to deciding on the elements to include and exclude. Modern film projections are generally projected at a rate of 24 frames per second. *Freeze frame* means to reprint the same frame a number of times, giving the effect of freezing the action into a still photograph on the screen.

Shot refers to the basic unit of film, a single uninterrupted series of frames or images of a single subject from action to cut.

Scene refers to a unified group of shots, usually with the same characters, and most often in the same time and location.

Sequence refers to a group of interrelated scenes that together compose a unit in the film's story, usually with a beginning, middle, and end.

Recommended Teaching Strategy

Choose a short film clip (10 to 20 minutes), preferably from a film the students have already seen, and rescreen with students, asking them to clap to identify each shot and to indicate the end of each scene.

Camera shots

Camera shots are the basic elements of cinematography. Cinematographers frame shots by deciding what to include, by adjusting camera-subject distance, and by varying camera angle and camera movement to create a variety of shots. Camera shots establish the meaning, purpose, and emotion conveyed on the screen.

Establishing shot shows a broad view of the subject and its setting, often used at the opening of a scene to show the location before moving into the action.

Close-up shot usually shows just the face with very little visible background; it is often used to focus on the expression of emotion.

Extreme close-up focuses on one important detail as the entire subject taking up most of the frame (e.g., the eyes or the mouth of a person, or an important object in the story).

Medium shot is the most common shot, often used for a small group of people in conversation; this type of shot includes at least two people shown from the waist or mid-chest up.

Full shot is used to show a full-length view of a single person.

Long shot takes in the subject and the setting at once, and encourages a sense of detachment from the action.

Over-the-shoulder shot shows two people in conversation from a close angle as though the viewer is a participant in the conversation.

Camera angle

High angle (overhead shot): The camera is placed at an angle above the subject, making the subject seem smaller, less important, or less powerful.

Aerial shot: This is a high-angle shot taken from the air above the scene.

Low angle: The shot is taken from an angle below the subject, making the subject appear larger, more important, or more powerful.

Eye level: Most shots of people are taken at this level, as it is the most natural angle.

Recommended Teaching Strategy

A useful resource to illustrate key terms related to camera shots in the following short video:
"Zoom and Re-Zoom" by Istvan Banyai:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_qLMUkSc1WA

"Zoom" by Istvan Banyai (5 minutes):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMhUujrN4iU

Camera movement

Zoom: The cinematographer uses the camera lens to move quickly closer (zoom in) to the subject—or farther away (zoom out). The change in focus is evident to the viewer. Zooming in on a character often precedes an important gesture or expression.

Pan: The stationary camera is moved side to side (horizontally).

Tilt: The stationary camera is moved up or down (vertically).

Tracking shot: The camera, mounted on a wheeled cart or dolly, is rolled along to follow the action. This is often used to follow a subject in action scenes. It can also be used to move closer to the subject (dolly in) or further from the subject (dolly out).

Lighting

"Lighting is cinema," said the great Italian filmmaker Federico Fellini. There are many ways to create effects and mood by lighting a setting, characters, or objects. The choice of lighting is influenced by the environment (natural light, time of day), the production equipment (lights, colour filters, camera types, video or film format), production conditions (filming time, filming in studio or on-site), and especially by the artistic intent and expertise of the director and the cinematographer.

In lighting, as in all artistic effects, different approaches tend to characterize each particular style or period of cinema. For example, there is the *film noir* style (high-contrast black-and-white photography), "news film" lighting (available natural light), and soap opera lighting (interior shots with bright or high key lighting and no shadows). Lighting technique is also highly dependent upon the technology of the time and has changed greatly over the course of the 20th century. The lighting style chosen by the film director or cinematographer greatly influences how the viewer of the film perceives the images in the film and the mood or atmosphere that is created by the film. For example, a filmmaker may use *backlighting* (a light source from behind the actors) so that the heavy shadows and silhouettes create an effect of drama or foreboding. *Low key lighting* can create a mood of mystery while *high key lighting* directs attention to a particular person or object on scene. As a critical viewer of cinema, students should be aware of the impressions that are created by the use of lighting.

Editing

Any element that may occur by chance in the filming process becomes a deliberate choice at the time of editing. During the editing process, the *rhythm* of the film is established, by selecting the desired shots, determining their length, and assembling them into a sequence. Does the filmmaker wish to follow a subject closely for long intervals with little movement in order to emphasize the psychological drama? Or does he or she wish to create excitement and movement by a series of short and varied camera shots, as in an action film? How does the filmmaker wish to make the transition from one shot to the next?

Various techniques are used in the editing process to assemble a series of shots and scenes for a desired effect. Today, film editing is done electronically rather than by splicing together segments of film, as in the earlier days of cinematic production.

The following techniques are used to put together the filmmaker's selected shots in a narrative sequence.

Cut: The most common editing technique, in which two shots are combined so that the film "cuts" from one image to another.

Continuity editing: This is the style of classical Hollywood editing, in which the transitions from one scene to the next are invisible.

Fade: A fade is a transition in which a shot begins in darkness and gradually assumes full brightness (*fade-in*), or the shot gradually gets darker (*fade-out*). A fade often implies that time has passed or may signify the end of a scene.

Dissolve: This is a kind of transition where one image is slowly replaced by another as it fades out, creating an effect of connection between images.

Wipe: In this transition, a new image wipes off the previous image. A wipe is more fluid than a cut and quicker than a dissolve.

Flashback: This is a cut or dissolve to a shot of action that happened in the past.

Shot-reverse-shot: A shot of one subject, then another, then back to the first. It is often used for conversation or reaction shots.

Cross-cutting or parallel editing: These are cuts between actions that are happening simultaneously, and are used to create tension or suspense and form a connection between scenes.

Eye-line match: Cut to an object, then to a person. This technique shows what a person seems to be looking at and can reveal a character's thoughts.

Ken Burns effect: An editing technique in which camera *pan* and *zoom* are used on still images; this technique is often used in documentary films on historical subjects. An explanation of this effect can be viewed on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nNTiyRDhlRYa

Students may also view the National Film Board short documentary *City of Gold* (20 minutes, narrated by Pierre Berton), which uses the Ken Burns effect.

Ellipsis: An ellipsis is an editing transition (fade, dissolve or wipe, or jump cut) to omit a period of time or indicate a gap in the film's narrative.

Editing Styles

Students today may be accustomed to the classical Hollywood editing style, which is mostly distinguished by fluid, smooth transitions from one shot to another. By contrast, many European and Russian films join shots together in choppy complex layers, in order to link contrasting ideas and symbols.

Montage theory of editing began in Communist Russia in the 1920s, with

Recommended Teaching Strategy

Students may be encouraged to collect clips of films that have a particularly strong musical score or soundtrack and to analyze the effect of the music on the film's central message or theme. An example of a film created to accompany existing music is *Pacific 231* by Jean Mitry (1948). The eight-minute film, created to complement music by Arthur Honegger, also won a Cannes award for editing and is available online:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bw-DukkgAmk

Another example of the impact of soundtrack is the Vietnam War film *Platoon*, in which Samuel Barbour's *Adagio for Strings* is used to accompany a particularly gruesome scene:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ECQeLQURNuw

Students will note that the profoundly sad music does not really match the action onscreen, but has tremendous emotional impact, and serves to carry a message about the hopelessness and sorrow brought about by war.

filmmakers such as Sergei Eisenstein (1898–1948). Contrary to classical Hollywood editing, this style uses a series of abruptly juxtaposed shots or scenes to create the effect of conflict or to suggest the passage of time. A well-known example of this editing style can be seen in the seven-minute Odessa steps sequence in *Battleship Potemkin* (1925): http://movieclips.com/daHPk-battleship-potemkin-movie-the-odessa-steps/

This film once had such impact that it was banned in many nations, including its native Soviet Union. The scene depicts a brutal czarist massacre on the Odessa Steps—not a historical reality, but a fictional portrayal used as a tool of revolutionary propaganda of the period. It is a powerful example of Soviet montage theory, in which editing is not the smooth unrolling of images, but the juxtaposition of divergent and jarring images to create the desired effect.

Soundtrack

The addition of sound effects and music are also artistic decisions that contribute a great deal to the ambiance and rhythm of the film. A soundtrack can use original music or existing music, usually selected to maximize the emotional impact of the scene. Generally, the final step in the editing process is the addition and refining of the film's soundtrack, which may include sound effects related to the story as well as other sound elements that are external to the content or *diegesis* of the film.

The film *score* is the background music accompanying the motion picture. It may be an original composition or an existing piece used to complement the film's story.

Diegetic sound refers to sound that could logically be heard by the characters in the film.

Non-diegetic sound refers to sound that cannot be heard by the characters but is designed for audience reaction only, such as ominous music for foreshadowing a frightening event.

Voice-over refers to off-screen narration to accompany a series of shots unfolding onscreen; usually used to present dialogue that could not actually be heard.

Narration refers to a superimposed explanatory voice (usually not the voice of one of the characters in the scene).

Sound bridge refers to a brief carry-over of sound from the previous scene at the beginning of the next scene.

Cinema Styles, Genres, and Techniques

Animation: Animated film, rather than a film genre, is more a technique or a group of techniques. We can find animation used as a technique in documentary films, fictional films, advertising, community service announcements, and music videos. But there are also short films and full-length or feature films that are entirely made using animation techniques.

Animation techniques can be used to simulate movement by applying them to a variety of media: drawings (to create cartoons), puppets, découpages, modelling clay forms, objects, or even photographic still shots in a technique called *pixilation*, such as is used in the films of Canadian filmmaker Norman McLaren. See the NFB website for examples of films by Norman McLaren using this technique. www.onf.ca/film/neighbours_voisins/

With animation, it is possible to create scenarios that are impossible in video production. In fact, animation techniques are often used in video to create a variety of special effects.

An example of animation using puppetry and with no dialogue is Jiri

Trnka's 18 minute film *The Hand* (Czech Republic) about the iron fist of Soviet domination. This was the filmmaker's final film before he was forced by the government to stop making films: http://vimeo.com/42689371

Cinéma vérité: A style of filmmaking developed by French film directors in the 1960s, sometimes called *cinéma direct* or "film truth." Their production techniques did not depend on star-quality actors, sets, props, large casts, special effects, and big budgets such as in most Hollywood films. The *cinéma vérité* directors used non-actors, small hand-held cameras, and real settings as their locations for filming. Often they would record actual conversations or interviews of real people, and then find pictures to illustrate the sound recordings. The final production, as with most fictional film, was put together by editing. The goal was to depict life as it really is using film as an artistic medium.

Expressionism: This refers to a style that uses lighting, editing, and costumes to depict the inner feelings and emotions of the characters or the filmmaker, as opposed to realism, which seeks to reflect the external reality that everyone can see and share. Expressionism is a style of fantasy film that was common in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s. It was characterized by dramatic lighting, dark visual images and shadows, grotesque and fantastic shots, distorted sets and angles, heavy makeup, highly stylized acting, and symbolic mime-like action and characters. An example of German expressionism in cinema is Fritz Lang's *Metropolis.*

Film noir: This term (which in translation is "black film") is used primarily to describe a style of American crime drama that dealt with themes of cynicism, sexuality, and loss, and was characterized by gloomy endings. Hollywood's classic film noir period stretched from the early 1940s to the late 1950s. The style uses low-key, heavily shadowed black-and white photography and has roots in German Expressionism, which used symbolism and dramatic black-and-white photography to deal with dark themes. Film noir iconography (visual symbols) can be seen in music videos by artists such as Madonna, Lady Gaga, and Beyonce. For further information, refer to "A guide to film noir style" by Roger Ebert, which can be found at <www.rogerebert.com/rogers-journal/a-guide-to-film-noir-genre>.

Realism: Realism is an artistic attempt to recreate life as it is. The artist seeks to report and describe what she or he sees as accurately and objectively as possible, without embellishment and without imposing a personal viewpoint. Realism began as an artistic movement in the 18th century in Europe and America.

Special effects: Special effects are illusions in a film that are created by visual or mechanical techniques. Digital special effects are created by the computer manipulation of images. For example, the opening shot of the American film *Forrest Gump* (1994) tracks an unusually long and extremely intricate flight of a feather. To create the shot, the real feather was filmed against a blue background in different positions; these shots were then used against shots of the landscape and altered to show the feather landing on Gump's shoe. In the same way, digital special effects are used to show Forrest Gump in historic events (Governor Wallace in Little Rock and his assassination attempt; meetings with three past presidents—Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon—and other celebrities such as Elvis Presley and John Lennon; Gump playing Ping Pong with a digitized ball and crowd in China, etc.).

The launch sequence in *Apollo 13* (1995) was created using footage shot at the original location of the launch at Cape Canaveral. The artists scanned the film and altered it on computer, removing recent building construction, adding grass to the launch pad and painting the skies to make them more dramatic. This altered film was then mapped onto 3D planes to create a virtual set that was animated to match the camera movement as it followed a rising rocket. Other special effects, such as models, animation, and quick shots of actors in a descending Boeing 707 jet, were used to re-create the zero-gravity experience. Compare these sequences to excerpts from the Apollo documentary *For All Mankind* (1989), available online at <http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/for-all-mankind/>.

Surrealism: Surrealism is an aesthetic style with a revolutionary dimension, closely associated with Marxism, poetry, Freudian psychoanalysis, and the turbulent political thought of the interwar years in Europe. In 1938, the French writer André Breton and the exiled Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky co-wrote *Manifesto: Towards a Free Revolutionary Art* as a doctrine of surrealism. Surrealism used the unconscious as a starting point for artistic exploration, concentrating on dreams, the irrational, the fantastic, and the unreal. For the early surrealists, cinema represented a space that could bridge the conscious and the unconscious. The surrealist movement in visual art and literature flourished in Europe in reaction to what its members saw as the destruction caused by the "rationalism" that had led European culture and politics into the horrors of the First World War. More recent examples of surrealist films that blend fantasy and reality include Guy Maddin's *Saddest Music in the World* (2003), set in Winnipeg during the Great Depression, or *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006), set in the Spanish Civil War.

Recommended Teaching Strategy

As a task to review and apply cinematic vocabulary, students may plan and carry out a simulated awards ceremony inspired by the Oscars, in which they recognize and comment on film techniques in various categories (directing, cinematography, lighting, soundtrack, musical score, editing).

Resources

Cinema Magic (analysis of special effects in Forrest Gump):
www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-V-tJKKq-A
www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZ2SWXwoYwQ

Internet Movie Data Base *(movie terminology, glossary of film terms):*
www.imdb.com/Glossary/

AMC film site *(film terms glossary):*
www.filmsite.org/filmterms7.html

The Film Education Website UK *(terminology):*
www.filmeducation.org/resources/primary/teaching_with_film/film_in_the_classroom/terminology/

Film Studies Program, Yale University *(film analysis guide)*
https://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis/

Elements of Cinema (*What is Cinema?*):
www.elementsofcinema.com/general/what-is-cinema.html

Media Smarts website:
www.mediasmarts.ca

National Film Board (*Behind the Camera*):
https://www.nfb.ca/behindthecamera

Film Analysis Handbook: Essential Guide to Understanding, Analysing and Writing on Film by Thomas Caldwell (2011).

Cinema Timeline

Pre-1920s: Origins of film

1893	Edison builds the world's first motion picture studio. Constructed in New Jersey, nicknamed "the Black Maria" (a type of police van), it cost $637.67.
1894	The first *Kinetoscope* parlor or "peep show" opens in New York City. A *Kinetoscope* parlour is a row of coin-operated, single-viewer peep show devices. The first commercial presentation of a motion picture takes place here. Soon, peep show parlours are established in cities across the U.S. and Canada.
1895	Auguste and Louis Lumière obtain a patent for their *cinématographe* in France. The Lumière brothers hold a public demonstration at the Grand Café on the Boulevard des Capucines in Paris. This was the first system that could show an image to a large audience. The brothers caused a sensation with their first film, *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory* (La sortie des ouvriers de l'usine Lumière à Lyon), an everyday outdoor image of workers leaving the factory gate. See YouTube, *First film ever:* www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYpKZx090UE&NR=1&feature=fvwp
1896	Alice Guy-Blaché, generally acknowledged as the world's first female film director, creates the first ever narrative fiction film, the one-minute film *La Fée aux Choux (The Cabbage Fairy).*
1900s	Movies become a popular form of entertainment all over the world.
1900	Eastman Kodak introduces a very simple $1 cardboard box camera called the Brownie.
1902	The first permanent movie palace—Thomas Tally's *Electric Theater*—is built in Los Angeles.
1902	Georges Méliès creates the first science fiction film and the first film with special effects: *Le voyage dans la lune (A Trip to the Moon).*
1905	Harry and John Davis open their first "nickelodeon" in Pittsburgh. The term combines the cost of admission—a nickel—and the Greek word for theatre, *odeon*.
1906	The first feature-length film, *The Story of the Kelly Gang (or Ned Kelly and His Gang),* premieres in Melbourne, Australia.
1906	The first 35mm film is filmed by a camera mounted on the front of a cable car in San Francisco in 1906. The film was lost for many years but is now available on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=NINOxRxze9k
1907	Filmmakers arrive in Los Angeles and soon make the first "Hollywood" films.
1907	*L'Enfant prodigue (The Prodigal Son),* directed by Michel Carré in France, is the first feature-length film at 90 minutes in length.

1908	The first fully animated film, *Fantasmagorie* by French director Emile Cohl, is created.
1909	There are around 9000 movie theatres in the United States, as nickelodeons take root as a popular new form of entertainment.
1911	The first feature-length film shown in the U.S. opens in New York: a 69-minute Italian epic called *Dante's Inferno*. It costs over $180,000 to make.
1912	There are 15 film companies now operating in Hollywood.
1912	The German film *Night and Ice* (In Nacht und Eis), one of the earliest disaster films, depicts the sinking of the Titanic and is released just a few months after the actual incident. It is now available on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=mp8rV6-1alg
1912–1913	The nickelodeon era winds down as movies become longer and more respected and begin appearing in real theatres.
1913	American director D.W. Griffith develops many innovative new film techniques that are still used today.
1914	The start of the First World War halts European motion-picture production, crippling the industry there for years to come. As a result, the American industry is able to take advantage and become the new dominant player.
1914	Charlie Chaplin's first film, *Making a Living*, is released.
1914	Giovanni Pastrone directs *Cabiria*, a landmark, three-hour Italian silent film that is an early example of spectacular filmmaking that sets the stage for future big-budget epics. Set in Ancient Rome and shot on location in North Africa, Sicily, and the Italian Alps, it includes many dramatic sequences, stunning scenery, and innovative technical achievements.
1914	Paramount Pictures is founded in Los Angeles.
1914	Charlie Chaplin is recruited by Keystone Studios, where he was working in an English variety act. He makes 35 short silent films in 1914, the start of his rise to cinema's first great star. He invents his trademark 'Little Tramp' character in his second picture, the 11-minute *Kid Auto Races in Venice.*
1915	D.W. Griffith's three-hour Civil War epic *The Birth of a Nation* premieres with a ticket price of $2 (which was extremely expensive for its time). The film popularizes techniques such as close-up shots, flashbacks, cross-cutting, and other new technologies that are used to this day. It is the most extravagant film up to that time (costing approximately $110,000 to make), and highly controversial because of its racist theme.
1915	Charlie Chaplin's *The Tramp* is produced in Chicago, popularizing the famous silent-film character.

1915	Bell & Howell introduces a movie camera that allows directors to film close-ups without having to physically move the camera.
1916	D.W. Griffith releases *Intolerance*, which is an expensive follow-up to *The Birth of a Nation*. With a budget of almost $2 million (the most expensive film yet), it becomes the first multi-million-dollar box-office "bomb" in film history.
1919	United Artists is formed by Charlie Chaplin, D.W. Griffith, Douglas Fairbanks, and Mary Pickford so they can control their own work and distribute and produce their own films.

1920s: Silent film

1922	Robert Flaherty produces *Nanook of the North*, the first non-fiction narrative feature film. The word *documentary* was reportedly first used by John Grierson (later director of the NFB) in 1926. Flaherty's film helps initiate the rise of documentary film, although it raises some controversy because it re-creates or stages some of its hunting scenes, rather than being truly non-fictional.
1922	Walt Disney produces his first cartoon, *Little Red Riding Hood,* at his original Kansas City Laugh-O-Gram animation studio.
1923	Director Cecil B. DeMille produces his first version of *The Ten Commandments,* which was at the time the most expensive film ever made with the largest set ever constructed.
Mid-to late 1920s	Most of the major Hollywood motion-picture studios have been established, including Warner Brothers, Fox, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), Paramount, United Artists, Universal, and Columbia.
1925	Sergei Eisenstein directs *Battleship Potemkin,* a Russian film about a mutiny aboard the Potemkin battleship. This film establishes many film techniques that are used to this day.
1925	Charlie Chaplin's classic masterpiece *The Gold Rush* is released.
1926	*Flesh and the Devil* marks the first-ever horizontal-position kiss and the first open-mouthed kiss in American film.
1926	Douglas Fairbanks' film *The Black Pirate* is the first full-length blockbuster film to feature colour. It uses an early two-colour process, as well as traditional black and white.
1927	The silent era of films comes to an end with Warner Brothers' production of *The Jazz Singer*, starring Al Jolson. Although the story is told with traditional silent-film subtitles, it is considered the first "talkie" because it includes Jolson lip-syncing to some songs and delivering a few lines of synchronized dialogue.

1927	German director Fritz Lang releases *Metropolis,* an expensive expressionistic production that is a box-office failure in its time but has since proven to be a ground-breaking, influential film.
1927	The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences is founded and the first Academy Awards ceremony takes place in 1929.
1927	The Hays Code proclaims the following 11 film "taboos": profanity, nudity, illegal drug use, any inference of sex perversion, "white slavery," marriage between two people of different races, sex hygiene and venereal diseases, scenes of actual childbirth, children's sex organs, ridicule of the clergy, and willful offense to any nation, race, or creed.
1928	Paramount is the first studio to announce it would only produce "talkies."
1929	In response to popular demand, theatres rush to install sound equipment and movie attendance surges. Small, independent studios begin to drop off as they cannot afford to keep up with the new technology.
1929	Walt Disney Productions is established.
1929	Alfred Hitchcock releases his (and the UK's) first sound feature, *Blackmail.*

1930s: Talkies, growth of the studios, beginning of the "Golden Age of Hollywood"

1930	Further censorship guidelines are established to outline what is acceptable and unacceptable in films, barring representations of such things as pre-marital sex, alcoholism, and criminal activity. The Motion Picture Production Code (MPPC) is subsequently established.
1935	Twentieth Century Pictures and the Fox Film Corporation merge to form 20th Century-Fox.
1936	Charlie Chaplin releases *Modern Times*, the last film to feature his Little Tramp character.
1937	Walt Disney releases the first feature-length animated film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.*
1938	Although hand-tinted films were standard practice in the 1910s and 1920s, and Technicolor had emerged in the late 1920s in films such as *The Ten Commandments* (1923), *Ben-Hur* (1925), and *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925), the first widely shown full-colour movies are developed and released.

1938	John Grierson, a British documentary filmmaker, studies the state of film production in Canada. Grierson's report leads to the establishment of the National Film Board, which was created to produce and distribute films of national interest, including propaganda in support of the Second World War.
1939	A large number of classic films are produced, including *Gone with the Wind* and *The Wizard of Oz*.
1939	A television is introduced at the New York World's Fair, and RCA begins selling its first TV sets in stores.

1940s: War and post-war years, beginnings of American film noir

1940	Disney's groundbreaking *Fantasia*, an animated film set to a stereo soundtrack of classical music, is released.
1940	John Ford directs *The Grapes of Wrath*, the famous drama about the Dust Bowl based on John Steinbeck's novel.
1940	Charlie Chaplin releases his first talkie feature film, *The Great Dictator,* a timely satire of Adolf Hitler. As a result of this film, Chaplin is the first person to ever receive three simultaneous Oscar nominations: as producer, actor, and screenwriter.
1941	*Citizen Kane*, Orson Welles' movie about a newspaper publisher named Charles Foster Kane (based on real-life publisher William Randolph Hearst), is released. The revolutionary film was highly influential for its many technical innovations.
1942	The National Film Board creates a production and animation department under the skills of filmmaker Norman McLaren.
1945	*Open City*, an influential Italian neo-realist film directed by Roberto Rossellini, is released. Neo-realism remains popular until 1952 and is further developed by filmmakers like Fellini and Antonioni.
1945	The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) is designated a permanent standing committee in the U.S. Congress. Created in 1938, the committee was focused on the goal of stopping subversive activities, in particular Communism. Senator Joseph McCarthy chaired the committee, leading to the term *McCarthyism* to describe extreme efforts to repress people and ideas.
1945	Marcel Carné created a three-hour romantic story of the French resistance called *The Children of Paradise* (Les enfants du Paradis). It was notable for being made in secret during the time of Nazi occupation in France.
1947	The MPPC forbids derogatory references to a character's race.

1950s: Cold War and post-classical cinema, epic films, and the growing impact of television

1950	The *National Film Act of Canada* is revised to remove all direct governmental intervention in the administration of the National Film Board.
1950	Television becomes more and more popular and film theatre attendance subsequently declines.
1951	Senator McCarthy and the HUAC continue to investigate communism in Hollywood and put hundreds of people in Hollywood on a blacklist so they will no longer be able to work.
1951	*Les Cahiers du cinéma*, a cinematic journal that became very influential in the history of cinema, is launched.
1956	The AMPEX Corporation begins selling its videotape recorder (VTR), which revolutionizes TV production.
1956	*Le Monde du Silence (The Silent World)* (1956), by Jacques Cousteau and Louis Malle, is the first documentary to win the Palme d'Or award.
1960	*La Dolce Vita,* an Italian film directed by Federico Fellini, is a commercial success but is criticized for its "immoral" character. He is a major influence on later directors such as Woody Allen, Martin Scorsese, and Pedro Almodovar.
1957	As McCarthy's HUAC progresses, the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences agrees that anyone who admits to Communist Party membership or who refuses to testify before the committee will not be allowed to receive an Oscar nomination.
1958	Drive-in theatres are very popular and there are many thousands open for business throughout the U.S. and Canada.
1958	*Cinéma vérité* or "direct cinema technique" begins to grow in popularity. This film style is very realistic and similar to a documentary in that it focuses on recording (or "observing") events without intruding on the subject.
1959	The French New Wave (*Nouvelle Vague*) of filmmakers thrives. This group of filmmakers includes influential directors like François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard.
1959	Hollywood continues to react to the rise of television by creating larger-than-life widescreen spectacles in Technicolor, such as the chariot races in the epic blockbuster *Ben-Hur*.

1960s: End of the Hollywood studio system, birth of independent cinema

1960	Alfred Hitchcock revolutionizes the suspense genre with the release of *Psycho.*

1960	1960 marks the end of the HUAC blacklist era.
1961	*Auteur* filmmaker John Cassavetes makes his directorial debut with the low-budget, black-and-white film *Shadows*. In contrast to Hollywood's studio system, this film is entirely self-financed and self-distributed. An example of the cinema vérité genre, it is notable for its improvised dialogue and use of non-actors.
1961	*Victim,* a film noir thriller starring Dirk Bogarde, is the first English film to discuss homosexuality without being judgmental or using negative stereotypes.
1964	*Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb,* is released. This film is a satire about the Cold War and the nuclear arms race.
1966	Major changes are made to the Hays Code, creating a new Motion Picture Association of America rating system that permits films to be labelled "recommended for mature audiences."
1968	Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* reinvents the science fiction genre and revolutionizes outer space special effects.

1970s: American "new wave" of cinema, birth of the blockbuster film

1973	*Hunger*, an 11-minute animated National Film Board short by Peter Foldès, is one of the first films to use computer animation. It is also the first computer-animated film to be nominated for the Academy Award for Best Short Film (Animated).
1975	HBO (Home Box Office) begins broadcasting the first satellite-delivered pay cable service in the U.S.
1977	George Lucas directs *Star Wars*, which is made for $11 million and grosses nearly $200 million on its first release, becoming the highest-earning film to date and revolutionizing merchandizing as a new model for film studios to make money.
1979	Miramax Films is established as a small production company to distribute small independent films. This model will help to change the studio system structure in how films are produced.
1979	The popularity, profitability, and success of HBO (Home Box Office) spur the growth of cable TV. Soon after, new cable TV networks successfully compete against the major TV networks.

1980s: Coming of age films, rise of sequel films, more blockbusters and disaster films

1981	Director Steven Spielberg collaborates with producer George Lucas *(Star Wars)* to create *Raiders of the Lost Ark,* which cost $23 million to produce and earned more than $200 million.
1985	The first Blockbuster Video store opens in Dallas, Texas, marking the emergence of video rentals as a significant source of income for the film industry.
1988	The U.S. *Film Preservation Act* is implemented, committing the government to designating 25 films each year as "culturally, historically or aesthetically significant films."

1990s: Mainstream films include remakes, sequels; growth of alternative or independent ("Indie") cinema; rise of computer-generated films

1991	James Cameron's *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* includes the first naturally moving computer-generated character in a movie.
1992	Americans spend $12 billion to buy or rent videotapes, compared to just $4.9 billion to see movies in the theatre.
1994	Best Picture winner *Forrest Gump* uses innovative digital techniques to insert the main character into existing archival footage, making it appear as if he is interacting with historical figures.
1996	This year sees the first public HDTV (high definition television) broadcast in the United States. HDTV provides higher resolution and improved image detail.
1997	DVDs begin replacing VHS videotapes as a popular medium for distributing films.

2000s: Age of advanced special effects, and the search for the perfect blockbuster in American film, cinema in the digital age, beginning of online cinema distribution

2000s	The Hollywood studio system is dominated by six companies: Sony, NBC Universal, Viacom, Time Warner, Fox, and Disney.
2000	Chinese cinema captures critical attention, particularly the martial arts film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. It receives a record 10 Oscar nominations, including Best Foreign Language Film.

2002	Director/writer/producer Michael Moore's *Bowling for Columbine* is the first documentary to win the Cannes Film Festival's 55th Anniversary Prize as well as the Writers Guild of America Award for Best Original Screenplay. It also wins the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature.
2002	In the second part of the trilogy *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*, digital effects and motion-capture technology are used to create the character of Gollum.
2003	Revenue from video rentals and DVD sales overtakes the revenue from traditional theatrical box office.
2003	DVD overtakes VHS in the movie rental business. Studios wind down the release of VHS versions of their movies.
2006	Al Gore's documentary about climate change, *An Inconvenient Truth,* breaks box-office records for a documentary.
2006	YouTube goes live and changes the way people receive video content forever. *The History of YouTube:* www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2NQiVcdZRY
2006	In response to growing Internet piracy, Apple and Amazon begin making full-length, on-demand movies available for legal download.
2007	Kirby Dick releases his documentary *This Film Is Not Yet Rated,* which demonstrates the arbitrary and secretive nature of the MPAA film classification system.
2009	There is a notable increase in documentary films about environmental topics (e.g., *The Cove*, which reveals whaling practices in Japan).
2009	Despite the continued popularity of big-budget films with expensive special effects, documentary cinema becomes more popular. American producer David Lynch launches *The Interview Project*, which is an online documentary in which he travels the U.S. and films interviews with ordinary people. http://interviewproject.davidlynch.com/
2010	"On July 24, 2010, thousands of people around the world uploaded videos of their lives to YouTube to take part in *Life in a Day*, a historic cinematic experiment to create a documentary film about a single day on earth." www.youtube.com/user/lifeinaday

Possible Activities

- Create an illustrated timeline or visual montage that depicts the history of cinema: students could work in groups on specific periods; be sure not to focus solely on Hollywood films.
- Select an event, find a film clip about this development, and present an argument about its significance in the history of film.
- Analyze the role of political developments, changing social values, censorship, wars, economic or environmental crises, and technological developments on cinema as an art form.
- Following a study of film history, have a team debate the question: Is film the seventh art form or is it simply a popular mass medium?
- Ask students: Can documentary film be considered the new "keeper of the public record" in history?

Getting Started: A Survey of Our Movie-Watching Habits

This survey is proposed as a model to use at the beginning of the course to identify students' viewing habits and preferences. At the end of the course, students may be invited to develop and complete a second class survey in order to determine whether their film-viewing habits and preferences have changed to become more critically oriented.

"Never have people watched so many movies... but mainly not in theaters."
– Octavio Getino, Argentinian film director, 2012

1.a. Estimate how often you watch movies at home.

___ times per week

___ times per month

1.b. How do you usually access the films you watch at home? (Rank in order with 1 being the most frequent)

___ Internet (downloaded to computer or mobile device)

___ Pay-per-view movie (cable TV on demand)

___ Video streaming or over-the-top content services (such as Netflix)

___ DVD/Blu-ray purchase

___ DVD/Blu-ray rental

___ Other

2. Rank in order of priority the criteria you use to select a movie (1 being the most important)

___ Actors

___ Director

___ Interesting story

___ Awards (Oscars, Golden Globes, etc.)

___ Recommended by friends or family

___ Good reviews in media

___ Music or soundtrack

___ Special effects, technology, or cinematography

___ Other reasons (please describe)

3. What genre of movie do you view the most frequently? Rank in order with 1 being the most frequent.

___ Action/adventure/war

___ Dramatic fiction

___ Animation

___ Suspense/horror/detective/crime

___ Science fiction

___ Comedy

___ Documentary

___ Historical drama

___ Other genres or sub-genres: please specify (e.g., musical comedy, Western, romantic comedy, docu-drama) _____
_____

4. Do you consult websites to help you select movies (e.g., IMDB, Wikipedia, movie websites)?

___ Yes ___ No Comment:_____

5. Do you take into consideration film classification (e.g., PG, 18+, etc.) when selecting a film to view?

___ Yes ___ No Comment:_____

6. How often do you go to the cinema to watch a movie?

___ 0–2 times per month

___ 2–4 times per month

___ More than 4 times per month

7. How often do you watch a film in the classroom?

___ times per month

___ Which subject(s)? _____

___ Were these films mostly educational or for entertainment purposes?
_____

8. Have you ever watched a black-and-white film? Did you enjoy it? Please comment. _____
_____
_____
_____

9. Have you ever seen a silent film? Did you enjoy it? Please comment. ___
_____
_____
_____

10. Have you ever seen a foreign film with subtitles? In what language/from what country? Did you enjoy the film? _____
_____
_____
_____

11. About how many Canadian films have you seen in the past year? Did you enjoy them? What do you think about Canadian film? _____

12. Do you enjoy watching documentaries? Name a documentary film that you enjoyed and describe its topic. _____

13. About what percentage of the films you watch are Hollywood/American productions? _____

14. Do you usually read the credits at the end of the film? _____

15. Can you name a film that you enjoyed that dealt with a historical subject?

16. What is your particular interest in choosing this course? _____

History and Cinema

Why Study History through Film?

> "Current scholarship calls for history education to not only provide students with nuanced understandings of the past, but also calls for students to acquire skills and habits of mind central to the act of 'doing history', such as interrogating the trustworthiness and perspective of texts, reading sources with sensitivity to context, and empathizing with people and situations from very different times and cultures."
>
> – Celluloid Blackboard (pp. 9–10)

> "Helping students learn history through critical consumption of film may offer a fine antidote to common criticism of history education. Commercial films are designed to entertain; they can engage students emotionally as well as intellectually. Feature films offer the potential to motivate students, to help students gain access to diverse perspectives, develop empathy with characters and situations in contexts different from their own, and to connect their lives, values, and concerns with those of people in the past. Films may help students construct their own insight about different eras and cultures, particularly when analyzed as primary sources reflecting the time period and culture in which they were made."
>
> – Celluloid Blackboard (p. 3)

Since the middle of the 20th century, there has been a radical shift, especially among young people, in how history is communicated and how it is understood. Students of history are increasingly interested not only in questions of fact, but also in questions of ethical responsibility for the past, or the inclusion of diverse and previously silenced voices in historical narrative, or challenges to the previously held meta-narratives of history. Public history through cinema is not only a thriving industry, it also challenges many conventional academic approaches to teaching and learning history. In short, our historical consciousness—our way of imagining and seeing the past—has been redefined by cinema.

All around the world, and particularly in developed countries, students of history as well as people with a passing interest in history are likely to develop their understanding of the past through visual media (cinema, television, news, Internet) rather than by reading historical texts or documents. This suggests that historical documentaries, historical feature films, or TV series are no longer simply an alternative to written history, but rather the preferred source of historical information and narratives for a large portion of the population. History is being represented and popularized in a variety of new forms for new and larger audiences.

But the ubiquity and popularity of cinema does not necessarily imply that it is the preferred means of learning about history. In fact, the debate looms large among historians, educators, researchers, and filmmakers as to the value of film in addressing serious historical topics and questions. Whether

or not students are more inspired to explore the past through the medium of documentary and dramatic storytelling, many historians distrust historical film. Rosenstone (2001) explains why: "Films are inaccurate. They distort the past. They fictionalize, trivialize, and romanticize peoples, events, and movements. They falsify history." He continues to explain that this point of view hides the real reasons why academics do not accept that cinema has a role in history education: it is a medium beyond the control of historians, it is capable of creating a compelling and engaging historical world with which books cannot compete, and it is seen as a disturbing symbol of an increasingly post-literate world.

Despite this lack of consensus, educators continue to use film in history classrooms, often without clear pedagogical purposes. Research has begun to study how history is represented in visual images and filmic discourse, and to uncover how cinema contributes to historical understanding. Engaging students in critical thinking about the disputed and problematic relationship between cinema and history is an important component of this course.

Key Ideas in the History-Cinema Connection

Many of the films recommended or selected for this course may be classified as either historical drama or historical documentary. Regardless of the film genre, historians and educators alike generally agree that a film, just as any historical representation, does not ever depict the past "as it really was." Inevitably, the products of cinema are a blend of historical record, invention, selection, simplification, artistry, and point of view. In effect, this means that all historical films are fictional: even if they are based on records, they have to reconstruct in a purely imaginative way most of what they show. Sociologist and film historian Pierre Sorlin (2001) concludes that it is a meaningless question to analyze historical errors in film to the exclusion of "more important questions" related to the historical mechanisms at work in cinema, such as the selection (or omission) of historical facts, the connections between evidence about the past and the particulars of human experience, the representation of the "underlying logic of history," and the depiction of a society's "historical capital" or commonly accepted knowledge of the past.

For these reasons, and in order to facilitate historical thinking, this course will not generally treat any historical film as the sole source of information about the past. Students will be expected to consult other historical sources as a part of their study of any historical theme or topic. As students acquire factual knowledge and engage in historical thinking and inquiry, they will come to an understanding of certain key elements of the relationship between cinema and the discipline of history:

- Cinema is often seen as being primarily—or solely—entertainment. Although it is true that cinema is a form of entertainment, this does not mean that a film cannot be at the same time a part of the "cultural conversation about the past" that is history. This type of dichotomy relies on

the assumption that history is purely an academic subject and has no role in the public sphere.

- Conventional approaches to history education have tended to assume that a film cannot accomplish what a historical book can do in the representation of "accurate" history. Paul Halsall (2001) elaborates: "... in the case of feature films, a single narrative is usually imposed on complex events and personalities, and cinematographic needs require that all the blanks in the record (what people were wearing, who was standing in the background, how someone's voice sounded) be filled in." On the other hand, Halsall continues, a scholarly historical book has its own drawbacks in representing history: it lacks three-dimensional vision, it often imposes a single point of view on a complex reality, and it may unquestioningly convey inaccurate information, disguised by an appearance of objectivity. He concludes that students and teachers need to recognize that the past is not the exclusive domain of historians, since there are any number of "other pasts" that matter to people. In this view, academic history has an important role in accessing, validating, and interpreting the past, but it is enriched by the work of public historians, poets, artists, actors, theologians, novelists, or politicians, all of whom contribute to our historical consciousness.
- Beyond the simple analysis of historical accuracy, there are multiple ways of viewing the cinema-history connection, all of which encourage historical thinking: studying film as a product of cinematic history and the evolution of cinematic conventions; reflecting on how a film reflects the period of its creation, including its contemporary reception; thinking about cinema as an element among a multiplicity of historical genres, or as another avenue to understanding the past.
- Recent pedagogy has become more open to multimodal storytelling—including cinema—as part of the study of history for many reasons, including its potential to motivate and engage students with history, to expose students to diverse perspectives, and to make connections between the general (the macro-story) and the particular (the micro-story). Alan Marcus (2005) makes the case that cinema can be used as an instructional tool to help students understand the interpretation of evidence, to support historical perspective-taking, and to make connections between the past and the present: "The power of film's visual medium coupled with their narrative core open the door for students, with guidance, to cultivate a mature sense of historical empathy." Marcus makes the point that this depends upon a pedagogical approach that is designed to lead students toward a more sophisticated and dynamic way of viewing film, rather than viewing films as sources from which to gather "facts" passively. In order to think historically, students need to be led to pose deep questions about historical films, to analyze bias and omission, and to compare legitimate sources carefully. Film viewing needs to be planned, with preparation that includes historical research and follow-up that includes frequent guided discussion and reflection, in order to help students develop new ways of thinking about history and cinema.

In effect, both history and filmmaking are interpretive in nature, and their connection needs to be explored as a part of leading students to think critically about their own historical consciousness and the various factors that influence how they think of the past. Cinema is a global phenomenon that was born and came of age in the 20th century, and as such can easily be approached as a part of the social history that has influenced and continues to influence contemporary ways of thinking. Additionally, cinema makes use of a vocabulary that today's students are familiar with, respond to, and quite often take for granted, which provides fertile ground for questioning—and enhancing—new forms of literacy.

> "But does the fact that movies represent a more popularly accessible route to narratives about the past mean that we should grant the same status—as a form of valid knowledge about the past—to feature films as to scholarly written histories? One response to this question is to point out that, despite the widespread assumption that these supposedly rigorous, written histories possess greater objectivity than feature films, these histories are also the product of human agency and so are equally susceptible to distortion.
>
> This shift concedes that there is a need for historians to take film seriously as a way of 'doing' history and to start to open up a dialogue between written and filmed histories that moves beyond the simple dismissal of film's validity as a way of writing history because of its failure to adhere to the same practices as are expected of a written scholarly history."
>
> – Mike Chopra-Grant

Should Cinema Be Used to Teach History?

> "Traditional written history ... is too linear and too narrow in focus to render the fullness of the complex, multidimensional world in which humans live. Only film, with its ability to juxtapose images and sounds, with its 'quick cuts to new sequences, dissolves, fades, speed-ups, [and] slow motion' can possibly hope to approximate real life, the daily experience of 'ideas, words, images, preoccupations, distractions, sensory deceptions, conscious and unconscious motives and emotions.' Only film can provide an adequate 'empathetic reconstruction to convey how historical people witnessed, understood, and lived their lives.' Only film can 'recover all the past's liveliness.'"
>
> – Robert A. Rosenstone

Robert Rosenstone (2001) argues that teachers in today's "post-literate" age should accept history as portrayed in film as a new kind of history that "neither replaces written history nor supplements it. Film stands adjacent to written history, as it does to other forms of dealing with the past such as memory and the oral tradition." As such, history on film should be accepted as another way of understanding our relationship to the past, without collapsing all standards of historical truth. Rosenstone supports the idea of using film, including mainstream historical drama, as a useful tool for promoting deeper historical understanding. Many teachers choose to approach cinema by studying films as primary sources, or evidence of the social and political concerns of the time and place of their creation. Others choose what Rosenstone calls an "implicit" approach, using the same logic as applied to written history to evaluate the verifiability, argument, and evidence of representations of history on screen. This practice tends to assume that written history is the best means for understanding the past and, furthermore, that written history is a mirror of the reality of the past. These assumptions are arguable but problematic, since the discipline of history is not a mirror but a construction, a process of making meaning of the traces of the past. Regardless of which approach is taken, teachers need to focus on questions such as these: *What sort of historical world does each film construct and how does it construct that world? How can we make judgments about that construction? How and what does that historical construction mean to us? How does the historical world on the screen relate to written history?* (Rosenstone, 2001, p. 52)

Rosenstone suggests that historical film be considered in three different categories: dramatic film, documentary film, and experimental film. For the purposes of this course, film selection should include examples from each of these three categories. This means that mainstream dramatic film may be very useful as a part of students' considerations of a historical topic or theme. Teachers need to engage students in reflecting on how mainstream dramatic films—as well as documentary films—create a historical world. This would involve not only experiencing cinema subjectively and emotionally, entering into the world it creates for us, but also stepping back from this initial experience to observe and question how a vision of reality is created though the codes and tools of cinematic realism.

This process involves developing an awareness of the following six characteristics of mainstream historical films:

1. **Narrative structure:** Mainstream film tells history as a story with a beginning, middle, and an end, and usually conveys a moral message. Most often, the moral message it embeds is uplifting or assumes a view of history that is always progressive.

2. **Emphasis on individuals:** Mainstream film insists on the personal, particular dimension of history. Its focus is on the personal conflicts of people who are seen as important or ordinary but who suffer problems (in a historical context) that they often overcome through heroic or admirable actions.
3. **Simplification:** Mainstream film mostly presents history as a closed, complete entity, not subject to other possible outcomes. Although some documentary films explore alternative positions or options, these are mostly secondary to the main theme of the film.
4. **Dramatization:** Mainstream film tends to emotionalize history through its use of techniques such as camera shots, music, soundtrack, and other effects to emphasize and intensify the impact of the events it depicts. Written history, although not always devoid of emotion, does not strive to create an emotional experience. This raises questions about the value of historical empathy (i.e., does it really contribute to our historical understanding?).
5. **Historical appearance:** Mainstream film seeks to reproduce the "look" of the past in a living way that artifact displays and written documents cannot. The use of period props and decor can create an appearance of authenticity—often used by Hollywood to generate a "myth of facticity"—in which the actual facts of history are re-invented or changed to suit the film's story.
6. **History as process:** Mainstream film brings together many elements of life in society (such as gender, economics, politics, race, class) as interwoven parts of the lives and experiences of its characters. Written history cannot convey this integrated, dynamic sense of process as effectively.

Besides using mainstream drama and documentary film, it is useful in this course to expose students to examples of experimental film from various periods of the history of cinema. Experimental films are those that do not use the techniques of cinematic realism to make us "enter into" a historical world, but instead seek to open us up to a new way of looking at the past. Possible examples of such films include *auteur* films, propaganda films, or surrealist cinema, such as excerpts of silent films by Sergei Eisenstein, films by Manitoba director Guy Maddin or other local filmmakers, or even science fiction films such as *Metropolis* or Kubrick's *2001, A Space Odyssey*. In these films, students may be led to observe what notion of history is conveyed, and how the filmmaker urges us to look at the past—or even the future—in an original or new way. The inclusion of such films can encourage students to extend their zone of comfort beyond the familiar language of the cinematic realism they have come to expect from Hollywood films.

In conclusion, these observations do not aim to establish the superiority of cinema to written history for purposes of historical study. The pedagogical intention is that teachers design their course so as to bring students to think critically about what cinema can offer to a study history and to consider the ways in which cinema may—or may not—be considered to be a credible witness of modern history.

How Can Cinema Be Used to Teach History?

Suggested Teaching Strategies

Most Grade 12 students recognize that going to the cinema requires a suspension of disbelief, which allows the viewer to enter into the world portrayed on the screen as though it is the "real" world, past or present. However, this fiction has a parallel in conventional history: "The written work of history, particularly the grand narrative, also attempts to put us in the world of the past, but our presence in a past created by words never seems as immediate as our presence in the past created on the screen." (Rosenstone, 2001, 54) The difference is that conventional history teaching does not merely seek to sweep students away into an emotional experience of the world of the past, but to engage them in critical thinking about what is known about the past and how we come to know it. With this goal in mind, it would be futile to expect that history teaching can or should compete with cinema. However, cinema can be used as an instructional tool in many different ways, both to offer a parallel experience of the past and to provoke questions about the significance of the past, its evidence, its patterns, its epistemology, and its relevance. Cinema can also be used to help students observe the distinction between public history, its popular narratives in the guise of a shared or collective cultural memory, and history as an objective discipline with its own methodology and discourse. This can be done using a wide variety of teaching strategies (refer to the section on recommended pedagogical approach), particularly strategies that promote development of historical thinking through questioning and inquiry.

Strategies that use film to promote historical thinking may include some of the following:

- using film as an entry point or activating strategy to introduce a historical topic
- using films that have contradicting perspectives of a past event or person
- comparing different styles or genres of film dealing with a selected historical topic
- allowing for student input—based on reasonable justification rather than simply preference—on the choice of historical topics or themes (significance)
- re-screening films or excerpts of a film to scrutinize their treatment of particular historical elements
- supporting a dramatic film by screening a documentary on the same topic, a film from a different country of origin, or a different time period
- providing a pre-screening chronology of key events to situate the historical topic in time
- carrying out individual or group pre-research using conventional historical sources
- encouraging students to carry out post-research to validate cinematic portrayals of historical topics, themes, or characters

- asking students to identify historical anachronisms or errors encountered in film
- teaching students to assess the historical value of films using clearly elucidated and objective criteria
- interrupting a film, on occasion, in order to clarify a historical fact or to answer a question about historical context
- providing information or support research on the historical context of the creation of a film
- viewing interviews of film directors that address questions about the veracity of the film's historical content and the context of its production
- assigning historical elements to be examined or noted during an initial screening or a re-screening
- providing guiding historical questions or tasks for an ongoing screening journal
- dedicating class time to the study of the history of cinema and including films from a range of time periods (not solely recent releases)
- viewing, with careful preparation and debriefing, excerpts of films used as propaganda throughout history (refer to the section on film and propaganda for suggested examples)
- teaching students how to distinguish cinematic realism from actual historical archival materials used in film
- occasionally using historically incorrect films to illustrate a point about media, objectivity, or historical perspective, or to motivate additional historical research (refer to the list of examples of historically incorrect films pertaining to 20th-century history)
- including a component of student-selected films, based on criteria that refer to the concepts of historical thinking
- allowing discussion time regarding the historical topics or themes addressed by the films studied (do not limit class discussions to exchanges about initial film response)
- providing students with articles about cinema and history (see sources at the end of this section) to summarize the arguments or engage in debate about the value of cinema in relation to the study of history
- inviting students to carry out inquiry into a historical topic of their choice with a focus on one or more historical thinking concepts
- asking students to write an essay that addresses an element of historical thinking by making reference to films they have viewed

Guiding Principles for Critical Reflection on Historical Topics

Throughout the course, students should be given multiple occasions to examine and reflect on the following principles that underlie the concepts of historical thinking.

- History is an interpretive discipline, not a science. Historical evidence does not speak for itself but requires interpretation.
- Facts, opinions, biases, and points of view need to be considered, even in historical documents that appear to be objective, such as documentary films or primary source documents from archival sources.
- Primary sources of historical information, including historical drama and documentary films, often reveal far more about their author or origins than they do about the subject they present. Comparison and analysis of sources can reveal that even primary source evidence can contain errors, and can be subject to bias or omission.
- Historical thinking can lead us to recognize and question clichés or general suppositions, such as the following:
  - History is a narrative of progress over time.
  - Some civilizations are more advanced than others because of their technological achievements.
  - Technology and science will eventually be capable of solving all human problems.
  - Developed economies are evidence of more advanced societies.
- Unlike a dramatic movie, history does not unfold in terms of a narrative structure or plot, with a central conflict, climax, episodes, and resolution. The path of history is far more complex and it rarely leads to an ultimate resolution.
- The past is gone—only its effects and traces remain. As a result, it needs to be approached as an unknown territory, rather than solely in terms of its similarity to the present. Historical thinking should enable us to be on guard against a "presentist" interpretation of the past.
- Other cultures, past and present, are as powerful as one's own culture. Although cultures share certain common elements, they remain distinct. Historical thinking can enable the detection of simplistic folkloric interpretations of culture or broad superficial generalizations about cultures.

Historical Thinking

Applying Historical Thinking to Cinema

Grade 12 students are familiar with the six concepts of historical thinking, which form the basis of their study of Canadian history in Grade 11. In this Grade 12 course, students practice historical thinking as they acquire knowledge and understanding of 20th-century world history though cinema and other sources. Throughout the course, they are guided to think historically while, at the same time, applying the principles of critical media literacy. In their questioning, viewing, response, research, writing, and discussions, students apply the elements of historical thinking to their study of selected documentary and feature films.

The six historical thinking concepts are based on the work of Dr. Peter Seixas (2012), University of British Columbia:

*Historical Thinking Project, Historical Thinking Concepts**

1. Establish historical significance

   Suggested strategies:

   - students may consider the relative importance of people, events, and developments of the past based on objective criteria
   - students may assess how the films they view represent and interpret key historical events, ideas, developments, and figures since the beginning of the 20th century
   - students may observe various cinematic perspectives and representations of historical importance or significance
   - students may reflect on the role of cinema in establishing and promoting a shared narrative of the past, or a public history based on recognized events and persons of significance
   - students may compare how different films or film genres address questions of historical significance

Continued

* **Historical Thinking Concepts:** Adapted with permission from <http://historicalthinking.ca/historical-thinking-concepts>.

Historical Thinking Project, Historical Thinking Concepts

2. Use historical evidence

   Suggested strategies:

   - students may select and interpret primary and secondary source evidence from various film genres and other historical sources in order to understand 20th century and contemporary world history
   - students may consider various examples of how cinema interprets and uses primary and secondary sources in order to retell the past
   - students may observe how a film reflects the context of its creation
   - students may research the social or cultural context of a film's creation
   - students may assess the historical accuracy of a film in comparison to other sources

3. Identify continuity and change

   Suggested strategies:

   - students may distinguish and describe patterns of continuity and change over time, as represented in documentary and dramatic films
   - students may study and compare various cinematic perspectives and representations of progress and decline
   - students may analyze conflict and resolution in historical narratives in film
   - students may reflect on film depictions of enduring and fleeting elements of the human condition since the beginning of the 20th century

4. Analyze cause and consequence

   Suggested strategies:

   - students may analyze the various long-term and short-term causes and effects of past events and the role of human agency in these events
   - students may examine film representations of the complex role of human intentions, decisions, and actions in history
   - students may reflect on the long-term impact of decisions and developments of the past
   - students may evaluate the impact of an ideological message in a film
   - students may reflect on the connections between the grand narrative of world history and the lives of individual persons

Continued

Historical Thinking Project, Historical Thinking Concepts

5. Take historical perspectives

   Suggested strategies:

   - students may adopt diverse historical perspectives to try to understand the past as it was experienced by the people who lived in it
   - students may acknowledge and reflect on the emotional experiences and aspirations of people who lived in the past
   - students may study the influence of economic factors on a film's creation and reception
   - students may discern how the past differs from the present and represents a particular and unique element of human experience

6. Understand the ethical dimensions of history

   Suggested strategies:

   - students may consider the ethical dimension of decisions and actions in the past
   - students may detect and respond to the value judgments that influence historical accounts on film
   - students may pose questions about the meaning and implications on today of the injustices and sacrifices of the past
   - students may assess the value judgments that influence representations of historical events in cinema and other sources

In order to support the practice of historical thinking, teachers should select or plan tasks that engage students in practicing the following skills:

- formulate and clarify questions to guide historical inquiry
- select and identify diverse primary and secondary sources of information
- consider the purpose and validity of historical sources
- interpret, analyze, and record information from primary and secondary sources
- compare diverse perspectives and conflicting accounts of the past
- identify underlying values in historical sources and accounts
- construct and communicate historical narratives, explanations, arguments, or other interpretations of the past using a variety of media

Pedagogical Planning to Support Historical Thinking

> "Cultural historians have treated movies as sociological documents that record the look and mood of particular historical settings; as ideological constructs that advance particular political or moral values or myths; as psychological texts that speak to individual and social anxieties and tensions; as cultural documents that present particular images of gender, ethnicity, class romance, and violence; and as visual texts that offer complex levels of meaning and seeing."
>
> Source: *Digital History: Using New Technologies to Enhance Teaching and Research*: www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/index.cfm

Teachers may plan their course based on the starting point of film selection, historical themes, or a chronology of historical events. Regardless of the course design, some time should be devoted to learning to view films as cultural artifacts or social phenomena. This means acquiring knowledge about the evolving language and techniques of cinema, as well as acquiring knowledge about key themes, events, and personalities of 20th-century world history. This process should involve historical research or inquiry using multiple sources, including film. It should also involve a wide range of learning tasks that allow students to think historically about cinema and its representations of history. The following teaching suggestions are intended to support teachers in their course design or planning so as to support historical thinking:

- Student tasks should not be limited to summarizing "historical facts" acquired from films or other sources, but should facilitate the application of one or more of the six concepts of historical thinking to a consideration of the film's historical content.
- In order to think critically about historical representations in cinema, students need to acquire historical knowledge. An important part of planning for this course is that the teacher establish, where possible and with student input, the historical topic to be addressed through each film study. Historical research may be done in advance of each film study or as a follow-up to viewing, as determined by the pedagogical purpose and the characteristics of the film selected.
- Film should not be used in the course as a stand-alone or sole source of historical information. For every selected historical topic, it is recommended that students view both dramatic and documentary film, as well as consult other historical sources.
- Every film studied should be considered as a *product* of its historical context (i.e., as an artifact or primary source of evidence regarding the time and place of its production) and as an *interpretation* of a historical theme or topic (as a secondary source or interpretation of an element of 20th-century history).

In effect, teaching strategies should be planned so as to include explicit reference to the elements of historical thinking, in particular to the concepts of evidence, interpretation, historical perspective taking, and the ethical dimension of history. The following proposes some questions that may be used to guide student film viewing and help structure conversations about a film's historical content and themes and what messages they conveyed to the students about the past.

Fact and fiction (content coverage, realistic period representation)	**Reconstructing the past** (historical and social construction)	**Empathy** (moral response, reacting to the past)
Is this film's representation of history supported by historical evidence? To what extent are the characters and plot based on historical evidence and to what extent are they fiction? What recognized elements of historical fact are left out or altered in the film? How realistically does this film depict the period in question? To what extent do the film's real and imagined details about the period succeed in recreating the past?	How are meanings about the past conveyed in this film? How does the film's story make use of authentic evidence of the past to tell the story? What decisions does this film make about historical uncertainties or gaps in evidence? What messages does this film convey about diverse social groups of this period? To what extent does this film focus on representing the perspective of the dominant social group of the period?	How effectively does this film evoke feelings and involve the viewer in emotional issues of the past? How authentically does this film portray varying perspectives of the past? What values and moral conclusions about people, perspectives, or events in the past are conveyed by this film? To what extent does this film simplify or judge people and events of the past? To what extent does this film impose contemporary social values on its portrayal of the past?

* Source: Based on Scott Alan Metzger's structured document analysis of how history feature films can inform teaching and learning about the past, in "Evaluating the Educational Potential of Hollywood History Movies," Chapter 4 of *Celluloid Blackboard: Teaching History with Film*, ed. Alan Marcus (2007).

Resources

The following are some useful articles for student discussion on the cinema-history connection.

"Thinking about Historical Film—Is It Worth the Trouble?" by Paul Halsall.
http://manchester.academia.edu/PaulHalsall/Papers

"It Is It Was: Feature Film in the History Classroom in Routledge" by Alan S. Marcus.
www.tandfonline.com/action/aboutThisJournal?journalCode=vtss20#.U8bRxjSEh-U

"The Historical Film: Looking at the Past in a Postliterate Age" by Robert A. Rosenstone.

History in Images—History in Words: Reflections on the Possibility of Really Putting History onto Film by Robert A. Rosenstone.
http://authors.library.caltech.edu/27482/1/HumsWP-0121.pdf

Cinema and Propaganda

Propaganda may be defined as "information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote or publicize a particular political cause or point of view." (Oxford)

Since its birth in the early 20th century, cinema has effectively served to disseminate popular culture and, as such, it has often been employed to purposefully convey social or political messages.

A notable example of an early American propaganda film is the notorious film by D.W. Griffith *The Birth of a Nation* (1915). The film represents a heroic view of United States history based on racist and white supremacist values, and contains many historical inaccuracies. In spite of its controversial content, it is widely considered to be an outstanding example of innovative film technique in the history of American cinema. Charlie Chaplin called Griffith "the teacher of us all," and scholars of cinema refer to his work as the beginning of film as a literate medium, as described by Stephen Apkon (2013, p. 68):

> *Griffith presciently understood the camera as the "viewer's eye," the only source of information that the viewer was going to have, and from which an effective emotional punch might be levied. He played with the idea of wide shots to show larger landscapes and to establish place within the story, and close-ups for intimacy and to see the characters' expressions, and he began to develop the kinds of shots that have become inherently understandable to us as part of a common vocabulary.*

Students may view segments of this film to note its cinematography, such as the use of long panoramic shots, still shots, and night photography, as well as the elaborately effective battle sequence using hundreds of extras. It also features its own musical score written for a full orchestra, adding considerable emotional impact to the dramatic plot, which combines fiction and history and builds up to an exciting climax.

Historically, there is a clear link between film and propaganda. In many ways, cinema lends itself readily to propaganda, because of the power of image to evoke an emotional response and its intent to place the viewer in the immediate circumstances being depicted. Throughout periods of nationalist fervour, crisis, or conflict in 20th-century history, many nations created historical documentaries as a means of reinforcing and publicizing their values and ideologies. Recognizing the accessibility and the compelling power of audio-visual media, it became fairly commonplace for governments to use film as a means of influencing public opinion and behaviour.

In Canada, the National Film Board was created in 1939, originally as an agency of the federal government, with a mandate that included the production of propaganda films in support of the wartime effort. For example, the NFB series *World in Action* and *Canada Carries On* series were part of the propaganda effort.

Suggested resources

For further information, refer to:

- National Film Board history, interactive website: www.nfb.ca/history
- *Shameless Propaganda.* Dir. Robert Lower (2013), National Film Board (72 minutes).
  This documentary uses films and still photos from the Second World War NFB propaganda effort, and cites founding Commissioner John Grierson's vision of the documentary as a "hammer to shape society."

In the United States, the Pentagon commissioned film director Frank Capra to create the *Why We Fight* series (1942). *Prelude to War* shows the necessity of combating the Axis powers during the Second World War, depicting the world in black-and-white terms, with the "free world" of the Allies presented as a brightly illuminated planet and the "slave world" of the Axis powers as a planet deep in shadow and darkness. Excerpts of these films are now publicly available for viewing on YouTube.

More recent examples of American propaganda films include *The Atomic Cafe* (1982), which is a satirical collection of 1940s and 1950s U.S. government films designed to reassure American citizens that the atomic bomb was not a threat. Other U.S. propaganda films with a distinctly militaristic message include *Green Berets* (1968), created to counter the wave of anti-Vietnam-War feeling, and *Blackhawk Down* (2001), which depicts elite American soldiers in a 1993 raid on a warlord in Somalia. Both of these films have a clear intent to glorify or present a heroic image of the American military.

In fact, some propaganda films created during times of war were excellent documentaries in spite of their overt ideological message. Others were simply produced to exploit the popular medium by propagating a simplistic emotional message.

During the Second World War, as the power of film became more recognized and refined, and as popular access to cinema broadened, the use of documentary film as a tool of propaganda increased around the world. Leni Riefenstahl is an example of a German director working during the Nazi period whose artistic technique has been recognized in the history of cinema. Her films include *Triumph of the Will* (1935), the observational style documentary of the 1934 Nazi Party rally in Nuremberg. The film, which contains no narration but makes artistic use of photographic techniques, was infamously used as an expression of the glory of the Nazi vision, making it an outstanding example of using "the power of the image to represent the historical order at the same moment as it participates in the construction of aspects of the historical order" (Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, p. 114). Riefenstahl also created *Olympia Part One: Festival of the Nations* (1938), which documents the 1936 Olympics at Berlin. Students may view clips of these films to observe the use of symbols, lighting techniques, and camera angles (elements of cinematic technique considered to be remarkable for the

period), as well as to study the ways in which film language is used to convey a powerful ideological message.

Sergei Eisenstein is an example of a film director who created Soviet propaganda films and became known for his ground-breaking cinematic techniques. Students may view clips of his films to observe his use of montage editing in the 1925 silent anti-czarist propaganda film *Battleship Potemkin* (e.g., the famous Odessa Steps sequence), or the 1927 silent film commissioned to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Russian Revolution: *October (Ten Days That Shook The World).* The screening of selected clips may be guided toward discerning remarkable elements of cinematic technique and observing the emotional impact of certain scenes—in spite of the lack of dialogue and special effects. Students may also be invited to observe elements that illustrate the film's propagandistic intent, such as the juxtaposition of shots of various religious and military icons, to indicate their similarity as forms of idol worship.

Pedagogical considerations

With sufficient preparation in developing habits of critical media literacy, Grade 12 students are capable of discerning the artistic quality of some of the suggested films and to identify how they may include a propagandistic intent. Much of dramatic cinema relies on appeal to emotion, which is an undisputable factor in any attempt to manipulate public opinion. It would therefore be useful to take some time to review examples of the use of psychological techniques to influence opinion. The Institute for Propaganda Analysis created a website at <www.propagandacritic.com/articles/intro.ipa.html> that lists the seven most commonly used propaganda techniques as follows:

1. **Name calling:** This technique attaches a negative label to a person, thing, or group without supporting the opinion with facts. Often the label is repeated with frequency so that it begins to appear "normal."
2. **Glittering generality:** This technique uses important-sounding "happy" words that sound good but have no real meaning, often used in general statements that cannot be proved or disproved.
3. **Transfer:** This technique tries to transfer the prestige of a known positive symbol to a person or an idea. For example, using the Canadian flag as a backdrop for a political event makes the implication that the event is in the best interests of citizens.
4. **Testimonial:** This easily identified technique is the use of big-name personalities to support or promote a product, a group, or a point of view, regardless of the personality's knowledge of the subject.
5. **Plain folks:** This technique uses a "down-home" approach with images of stereotypical ordinary people doing ordinary activities to convince us to support someone or something.

6. **Card stacking:** This term refers to stacking a deck of cards in one's favour, and is a technique used to slant a message by using key words or favourable statistics (or omitting unfavourable facts) in order to lead to half-truths.
7. **Bandwagon:** The "bandwagon" approach appeals to the human need for belonging, and urges people to believe that because everyone else is doing something, you should do it too.

There are three more techniques not included on the Institute for Propaganda Analysis's list that could be included:

1. **False analogy:** In this technique, two things that may or may not have anything in common are represented as being similar. In most false analogies, there is simply not enough evidence available to support the comparison.
2. **Either/or fallacy:** This technique is also called "black-and-white thinking" because it creates the impression of only two opposing choices, without any middle ground. It tries to polarize issues to a stance of either being for or against something, thereby negating all attempts to find a common ground.
3. **False cause:** This technique tries to make people believe that if B follows A, A must cause B. It is an error to assume this cause-and-effect connection unless the data supports it directly.

The following are some suggested films to show in order to identify historical inaccuracies. Although the identification of historical inaccuracy in cinema is a part of the learning process in this course, it is not the sole teaching and learning objective in viewing historical films. However, it may be useful to deliberately include examples of films that contain historical misrepresentations. For these purposes, one may select some films that are clearly propaganda (e.g., *The Birth of a Nation*, *Triumph of the Will*, *October),* since they effectively use cinematic technique to distort the truth and sway the audience's beliefs. Students may be encouraged to recognize that many of the mass media techniques of persuasion are equally effective as tools for disseminating propaganda (e.g., repetition, use of symbolic imagery, the use of loaded words or connotations and associations, appeals to emotion, the simplification of questions or ideas, the representation of people or groups by stereotypes, the glorification or exaggeration of certain figures or groups as opposed to the denigration or disparagement of others, appeals to mythology, incitement to fear, use of music or widely known works of art, allusions to shared experiences, unsubstantiated generalizations, etc.).

Students may be invited to propose their own examples of films that convey historical falsehoods through omission, exaggeration, or invention. They may observe that it can be difficult to distinguish historical inaccuracy in certain films because the fictitious elements are embedded in a look of genuine reality, while others—such as the Disney films—contain evident elements of fiction and make no real claim to historical accuracy. They may also note that in cinema even a clearly fictionalized version of the past can exert a lasting and powerful influence, such that viewers may retain falsified images and impressions of history long after the film has been viewed.

Some of the following films may prove to be useful for identifying spurious historical information, stereotypes, or biases:

- *Lawrence of Arabia* (US-UK, 1962)
- *Pearl Harbor* (US, 2001)
- *Pocahontas* (US, 1995)
- *JFK* (US, 1991)
- *Where Eagles Dare* (US-UK, 1968)
- *U-571* (US, 2000)
- *Anastasia* (US, 1997)
- *Mississippi Burning* (US, 1988)
- *Anastasia* (US, 1997)

Assessment

Authentic assessment involves gathering, interpreting, and communicating evidence of what students have learned, what they understand, and what they are able to do in relation to the stated purposes of the curriculum. Assessment

tasks should employ a variety of instruments, should be congruent with instruction, and should be designed to include student collaboration. Ideally, all assessment tasks should involve continued teacher-student dialogue and should engage students in self-assessment and goal-setting. For the purposes of this course, assessment tasks should be based on the dual course goals of attaining critical media literacy and applying historical thinking to viewing and responding to cinema.

Suggested Assessment Guidelines for the Course

Assessing Critical Media Literacy

Critical media literacy assessment tasks should focus on evaluating how students *experience* cinema, how they *interpret* cinema, and how they *apply the language* of cinema to their viewing and responses to film.

- **Experiencing cinema**
  Sample assessment tasks might include the following: viewing logs and note-taking; screening journal responses; participating in or facilitating post-viewing discussions; creating annotated filmographies; responding to viewing surveys; engaging in debates about films; introducing or making presentations on student film selections; taking part in student-organized film festivals; critiquing film trailers or posters; and creating film trailers or posters.
- **Interpreting cinema**
  Sample assessment tasks might include the following: writing film reviews, critiques, or analyses; responding orally or in writing to a film review; engaging in film deconstruction tasks; comparing documentary and dramatic film genres; evaluating historical fiction films; conducting background research into film history; analyzing film production context and influences; discussing or writing on film genres and conventions; critically analyzing film as mass media; inquiring into cinema as an industry; and presenting film clips and critiques.
- **Applying the language of cinema**
  Sample assessment tasks might include the following: storyboard or film trailer productions; critical analysis of an element of cinematography or visual language; creation of a visual glossary using film excerpts; film language quizzes; application of cinematic terms in discussions and writing; comparison of technical elements in two or more films; comparison of the treatment of a topic by films of different genres, time periods, or cultures; screening journal entries related to cinema techniques, forms, or conventions; creation of a film trailer or poster; creation of film storyboard or montage of film techniques.

It is useful to develop, with student input, a set of indicators that describe critical cinema literacy as applied to the selected historical themes or topics. Media Smarts: Canada's Centre for Digital and Media Literacy has included on its website at <mediasmarts.ca> the following list of elements that should be referred to by the indicators:

- How well does the student understand the key concepts of media literacy and the specific ideas or concepts being explored in the assigned task?
- How thoughtfully does the student conduct inquiry and analysis of the questions raised by the assigned task? How effectively has the student identified related issues or questions to examine?
- How successfully has the student applied the targeted technical skills and vocabulary associated with critical literacy in cinema?

Assessing Historical Thinking

Assessment of historical thinking should focus on how students apply the six concepts of historical thinking to selected historical topics in the course. The starting point for the selection of historical topics may be based on a chronological approach beginning with the start of the 20th century, or it may be based on significant film selections that deal with historical subjects. Historical thinking may also be assessed as a function of how students are able to analyze a film as a historical artifact (a product of its time and place), or to consider the significance of a film in the context of cinematic history.

Applying the Six Historical Thinking Concepts

- *Historical significance*
- *Historical evidence*
- *Continuity and change*
- *Cause and consequence*
- *Historical perspective*
- *Ethical dimension*

Cinema is particularly useful to support *historical perspective-taking*—or historical empathy, as this concept is sometimes referred. This means that course evaluation should include assessing how effectively students are able to go beyond the boundaries of "presentism," so as to understand that the past involves values and beliefs that differ significantly from those of today. Assessment of historical thinking should include tasks that allow students to demonstrate a critical understanding of cinema as a secondary source of historical information (e.g., by identifying error, falsehood, and anachronism in cinematic depictions of the past, or by comparing cinematic interpretations of the past with those of other historical sources, including conventional sources). Historical thinking can also be assessed by observing student awareness of film as a product of history (e.g., through inquiry into the context of a film's production and its sources of historical information). Students' application of the inquiry process may be evaluated through observing their ability to pose research questions, and to select, compare, and validate multiple historical sources, including historical documentaries, archival films, and conventional written documents (using *historical evidence*).

Students' ability to apply the concepts of *continuity and change* or *cause and consequence* may be assessed through observations of their ability to conduct inquiry into history of cinema topics, into questions of 20th century chronology, or into the social context of film production. Student competency in making pertinent links between past and present and in recognizing the complexity of historical links and influences, including the connections

between personal and public history, can also serve as indicators of student mastery of the application of these historical thinking concepts. Student application of the concept of *the ethical dimension* of history can be assessed through reflection tasks on questions such as cinema and war, cinema and propaganda, cinema and censorship, cinema and its influence on popular culture, women and cinema, or Indigenous peoples and cinema.

Discussions, debates, or written arguments about the relative importance of historical topics selected for film, or reflection on the reasons why a director may have chosen to depict a particular historical topic, can serve as evidence of the application of the concept of *historical significance*. Finally, since the concepts of historical thinking cannot be applied separately from historical knowledge, a part of the assessment of historical thinking should be based on students' acquisition of knowledge of historical topics and themes (e.g., through occasional quizzes, tests, or essays).

It is useful to develop, with student input, a set of indicators that describe the application of the concepts of historical thinking to cinema. The indicators may be based on the Guideposts to Historical Thinking, as developed by Peter Seixas and summarized in the document found at <http://historicalthinking.ca/sites/default/files/files/docs/Guideposts.pdf>.

The following documents are also useful for the development of assessment criteria in historical thinking:

- *Historical Thinking Concepts* by Peter Seixas
- "Six Historical Thinking Concepts Graphic Organizer" from *Benchmarks of Historical Thinking Framework Document* by Carla Peck and Peter Seixas. http://historicalthinking.ca/historical-thinking-concepts

The indicators should refer to the following elements:

- What do students know and understand about significant themes and topics in 20th-century world history?
- Are students able to conduct supporting historical inquiry as part of their interpretation of a film?
- Are students able to carry out source comparisons and evaluations?
- Are students able to engage in reflection in response to generative questions on historical topics addressed in cinema?
- Do students use the language of the historical thinking concepts?
- Do students show recognition of the interpretive nature of history? Do they strive for objective historical explanation or narration?
- Do students refer to multiple sources when discussing a historical topic? Are they able to objectively compare cinematic and conventional sources as sources of historical information?

Examples of Assessment Instruments

Some examples of assessment instruments related to the application of historical thinking may include the following:

- writing a historical essay
- identifying historical inaccuracies and anachronisms in selected films
- writing a screening journal entry in response to a historical question
- creating a historical film storyboard
- comparing the historical accuracy of a film to another source of historical information
- selecting and justifying film selection on a given historical topic
- writing a film critique or film analysis that focuses on or entails historical thinking
- analyzing a historical topic with reference to particular films studied
- conducting inquiry into a historical topic to support a film study
- creating a montage of film clips that use primary source evidence
- conducting inquiry into the most frequent selection of historical topics for cinema in a selected decade
- analyzing examples of historically based ethical dilemmas treated in cinema
- creating a diagram of the multiple causes and consequences of a selected historical event as portrayed in film
- describing patterns of continuity and change by comparing films of two different periods
- analyzing the impact of film technique on creating an effect of historical realism

Students may also carry out guided or independent inquiry, using conventional and cinematic sources, into a selected historical topic such as the following:

- the historical role of cinema as an instrument of propaganda
- patterns of continuity and change in the portrayals of women/gender roles/Indigenous peoples/other social groups in cinema
- the history of women in filmmaking
- the history of film censorship and film classification in Canada and elsewhere
- the history of Canada's National Film Board and the art of cinema in Canada
- the evolution of documentary film as an art form
- the evolution of digital photography, film editing, and special effects and their impact on cinema
- the rise of the corporate-dominated Hollywood film industry and its impact on cinema
- the history of cinema as an international business and its impact on the economic system
- an analysis of the worldwide marketing of cinema

- a study of the impact of recognition and awards systems (e.g., Academy Awards, Cannes, popular film critics, and magazines) on the marketing of film
- the impact of cinema on related industries and the worldwide marketing of cinema-related products
- a study of outstanding examples of film controversies in the history of cinema (e.g., contested historical content and interpretation)
- a study of the evolving role of cinema in social history and its impact on social values

Reflection Questions that May be Used to Synthesize and Assess Learning

A significant part of the assessment of learning in this course should be based on evaluating students' competency in crafting thoughtful film reviews and film critiques that demonstrate media literacy as well as historical thinking. This can be supported by an ongoing classroom practice of writing screening journal responses after each movie viewing (refer to the guidelines for the screening journal for further suggestions). The task of writing more formal film critiques may be based on a model provided by the teacher or may be in response to a guiding or generative question. Regardless of the level of autonomy in this task, it is important that students have regular practice in writing film reviews and critiques, and that they be aware of the criteria for assessing these works, or even that they help determine these criteria with the teacher. A useful starting point for developing assessment criteria for a film critique may be found in the following resource:

"Figure 2.9." in *Reel Conversations: Reading Films with Young Adults* by A. Teasley and Ann Wilder (p. 36).

In addition, the following questions may be used as starting points for summative assessment tasks at the end of a unit or at the end of the course to demonstrate the application of historical thinking to the study of cinema.

Refer also to the suggested examples of generative questions, which may be used as instruments of summative assessment.

1. The 20th century has been characterized by many historians as a period of increased violence on a global scale. Is this, in your opinion, an accurate assessment of one of the defining characteristics of the century? (*ethical dimension, historical perspective*)

Notes

Students may be asked to research the question of violence in the 20th century and develop a video that synthesizes their response to the question.

Suggested resources

For this task, students may refer to Steven Pinker on the myth of violence:
www.edge.org/3rd_culture/pinker07/pinker07_index.html

"The Myth of Violence", a TED talk by Steven Pinker
https://archive.org/details/StevenPinker_2007

Summary of Steven Pinker's Argument:

"Since the beginning of the twentieth century, increasing numbers of people have been exposed to the images of warfare and human violence, from the concentration camps of the Second World War, to Cambodia, to Rwanda, to 911, to Bosnia, to Sudan. These powerful images have led to a widely held belief that modern society is characterized by unprecedented violence. But now that social scientists have started to examine human violence over the centuries, they have discovered that the institutions and values of modernity have not, in fact, made humanity more violent. To the contrary, human violence has been in decline over long periods in history, more particularly in Western societies over the course of the twentieth century.
Why then, does this belief about the essentially violent nature of 20th century society persist? Why the preponderance of war movies on the cable history channels?"

2. Discuss the idea that historical film is not really about history at all, but is about the present. Support your response with examples from at least two films you have studied. *(historical perspective, historical evidence)*
3. In the digital age, is everyone a filmmaker? Select some examples of amateur film from YouTube or other public websites and analyze their value as historical sources or as witnesses to history in the making. *(historical evidence, historical perspective)*
4. What makes a documentary film into a work of art as opposed to a news report or a teaching device? Support your argument by using examples from cinema. *(historical evidence)*
5. Does the advent of "new media" mean the end of the domination of mass media by a few powerful corporations? For example, do entities such as YouTube, Google, etc. open up the work of communications to permit the free collaboration and exchange of ideas? *(ethical dimension, cause and consequence)*
6. Are the new media creating a generation that cannot process the surplus of information and that relies on image more than on literacy skills to acquire knowledge? Or are the new media transforming people from consumers of media into active controllers and producers of media? *(cause and consequence, ethical dimension)*
7. Does the digital age mean the democratization of information through choice, feedback, and sharing, or does it diminish the field of historical inquiry into an unverified and uncontrolled chaos of information of questionable veracity? *(historical significance, cause and consequence)*

8. Create and organize a program for a historical film festival based on events since the beginning of the 20th century and plan the accompanying promotional program of your selected films. Be prepared to justify all of your film selections using objective criteria. *(historical significance, historical evidence)*

Notes

This task may be used as a collective performance task at the end of course.

9. Analyze and compare the use of music in a feature film and a documentary film preferably related to the same historical theme. Explain how the film soundtrack can be used to enhance historical thinking. *(critical media literacy, historical evidence, historical perspective)*

Notes

Some examples to consider are the use of Samuel Barber's "Adagio for Strings, op. 11," accompanied by documentary footage following September 11th, 2001, in which the BBC Orchestra performs on September 15, 2001, in honour of those who lost their lives four days earlier. See also the soundtrack of Oliver Stone's film *Platoon* (1986, U.S.), and analyze how the same music is used in a Vietnam War scene to depict the impact of the conflict.

10. Do a comparison of the depiction of a specific historical development using a documentary and a dramatic feature film and selecting film clips to illustrate your points. (*critical media literacy, use of evidence, ethical dimension*)

Notes

Students may select and compare clips from two films (e.g., compare scenes from Alain Resnais' documentary *Night and Fog* to scenes from *Life is Beautiful*).

11. Create a storyboard for a dramatic or documentary film dealing with one of the historical topics studied in the course, using still photos and descriptors to indicate the film sequence. The storyboard should present a sequence of 4–5 key scenes, a description of each scene, and a summary of key dialogue or narration. *(use of evidence, critical media literacy)*

Notes

This task may be an analysis of a film they have selected or viewed, or it may be a creation for a historical film they would like to create to depict a particular historical event.

12. Select two war films produced at different times or in different countries and compare their portrayal of events (e.g., Vietnam). Discuss differences in the messages conveyed, historical interpretation, and use of historical evidence. *(historical significance, ethical dimension, cause and consequence, continuity and change)*
13. Write a historical essay**,** referring to examples from films you have viewed, in response to one of the following questions:
    - To what extent can dramatic film contribute to our understanding of modern history?
    - It has been said that there is no such thing as a historical film, since all films are created from the perspective of the present. Give some examples of films that contradict this idea.
    - Consider the argument that cinema has been instrumental in creating a mythology of violence about the 20th century, and find examples that support or contradict this statement.
    - Compare and evaluate the treatment of a selected historical theme (e.g., genocide, war, Indigenous peoples, role of women, abuse of power, the impact of technology, etc.) in a documentary film and in a fictional feature film.
    - Does the emotional response sought by a filmmaker support or impede historical thinking? Support your answer by using examples from at least two films you have studied.
    - If the media never really simply reflects reality but only interprets it, in what sense can we say that film is a credible witness to modern history? Argue for or against, citing examples of films you have viewed in this course. *(critical media literacy, use of evidence, historical knowledge, ethical dimension, cause and consequence, historical perspective)*

Film Classification

In Canada, theatrical movie ratings are a provincial and territorial responsibility. There are a total of seven provincial film classification boards or offices. All classification boards screen and assign ratings and information pieces to all films that are released in theatres. All boards, with the exception of Quebec, have a ratings system similar to that of the Canadian Home Video Rating System.

The Manitoba Film Classification Board has a six-tiered rating system and also provides content advisories where needed for films and video games in Manitoba. A summary of the ratings system is provided below and is available on the MFCB website at <www.gov.mb.ca/chc/mfcb/pdf/film_video_game_brochure.pdf>.

GENERAL: General viewing. Suitable for all audiences.

PARENTAL GUIDANCE ADVISED: Theme and content may not be suitable for all children.

PERSONS YOUNGER THAN 14 MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT: May contain: violence, coarse language, and/or sexually suggestive scenes.

PERSONS AGED 14 TO 17 MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT: May contain explicit violence, frequent coarse language, sexual activity and/or horror.

RESTRICTED TO PERSONS 18 OR OLDER: May contain: frequent use of sexual activity, brutal/graphic violence, intense horror, and/or other disturbing content.

EXEMPT: Any film not subject to, or exempt from, classification.

Some titles may carry additional information advisories.

For further information on content advisories and film classification, consult the website of the Manitoba Film Classification Board at <www.gov.mb.ca/chc/mfcb/index.html>.

To verify the classification of a film title and any advisories associated with a film, click on the link *Search for Classifications* and search by title.

It is recommended that the classification of any film selected for viewing in a Manitoba school be verified by consulting the Manitoba Film Classification Board website. In this Grade 12 course, many of the suggested films included in the filmography are rated PG, but others have content advisories and are

rated for a more mature audience. It is part of the teacher's responsibility to prepare the students for addressing the sometimes difficult and controversial topics dealt with in the course. For further suggestions on this matter, refer to the section on dealing with controversial and sensitive issues. In addition, it is recommended that parents be advised at the beginning of the course of the nature of the topics and films addressed. A sample parent letter is included on the following page. This letter may be adapted by teachers to include pertinent advisories, film titles, or potentially controversial topics.

Note: Many of the films that students see today show the American rating system, which is that of the MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America). The MPAA criteria and age categories are different from those used in Manitoba and elsewhere in Canada. For further information on the American film classification system, consult the MPAA website at <www.mpaa.org>.

Sample Parent Letter

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your son or daughter has chosen to enroll in *Cinema as a Witness to Modern History*, a new Grade 12 social studies course that uses examples of modern film to explore key themes in world history since the beginning of the 20th century. During the course, students will view a selected number of fictional and documentary films in class and will also be required to view selected films as homework assignments. The purpose of the course is twofold:

1. to engage students in critical thinking about the role of cinema as an art form, mass media tool, and source of historical information
2. to engage students in in-depth research and evaluation of the significance, relevance, consequences, and ethical implications of historical events that have shaped the modern world

Most of the recommended films are rated 14A by the Canadian Home Video Ratings system. Some of these films contain graphic scenes and adult content, as they deal with difficult topics such as genocide and war. Throughout the course, we will encourage students to discuss the films they view, both in the classroom and at home with you, their parent or guardian. Students will carry out research and written assignments and will be guided to respond to the selected films so as to develop a heightened awareness of the emotional impact of film and to discover its effect on their understanding of modern history.

The films have been carefully selected to represent a variety of countries of origin, film genres, cinematic techniques, and topics. They include films and filmmakers that represent key turning points in international and Canadian film history. Some of the recommended titles include the following:

- *Life is Beautiful*
- *The Great Dictator*
- *Doctor Strangelove*
- *My Winnipeg*
- *The Lives of Others*
- *Persepolis*
- *Kandahar*

Other current films may be used or suggested as home viewing assignments. Additionally, clips from movies will be shown to illustrate specific cinematic techniques or effect. In all cases, graphic or disturbing scenes will be shown in the context of an explicit educational purpose, with appropriate student preparation as well as debriefing after viewing. Most of the student assignments will involve reference to selected study and support films.

Please sign below and have your son or daughter return this letter as soon as possible. If you have any concerns about your son or daughter viewing these films or if there is specific subject matter you do not wish them to view, please note this beside your signature. You may also email me if you have any questions or concerns.

Regards,

(signature) *(print name)* *(student's name)*

Copyright Law and Showing Films in Classrooms

In Canada, an amended *Copyright Act* came into effect in November 2012. The new *Copyright Act*, along with Supreme Court rulings on fair dealing, has led to substantial changes in the way schools and libraries deal with copyrighted material. The new law expands the concept of fair dealing for educational purposes, and permits the use of legally obtained and publicly available audio-visual materials for educational purposes in classrooms.

Some general applications of the copyright law in education:

- Commercially produced movies, if legally purchased or obtained, may now be shown in the classroom for educational purposes. Only the students who are part of the class or course may view the movie, and the movie must be directly related to the class or course curriculum. However, teachers cannot make copies of films they have purchased, rented, or downloaded to show in the classroom. The classroom use of electronic movies obtained through online streaming services is dependent upon the terms of use of the agreement. (Both Netflix and iTunes are not allowed to be used in this fashion due to their terms of service.)
- Materials that are publicly available online (films in the public domain or made publicly available through sites such as YouTube or creative commons sites) may be used. In all cases, the sources must be cited.
- Fair dealing permits the use, copying, and electronic communication of copyright-protected work for educational purposes as long as it is a short excerpt of the work. However, teachers and students should not post copyright-protected work (including excerpts or adaptations) on a publicly available site such as a wiki. It must be posted on a site that is only accessible to students in the classroom.
- Teachers may copy news-related material from TV or Internet to be used in the classroom for up to 30 days only, but they may not make additional copies of the material.
- In the context of any event that includes invited guests other than students in a classroom (e.g., a film club, film festival, or school fundraising event), audio-visual materials—including music soundtracks from films—cannot be used without securing a transactional license from the proper licensing body (i.e., ACF).
- Creating new works or montages using video clips (mash-ups from videos for student assignments) is now permitted, providing that the sources are cited and are acquired legally. However, these works should not be posted on spaces that are open to the public.
- Note that all student work is copyright-protected and cannot be displayed outside the classroom or on publicly accessible websites without securing written permission from the student or the student's parents or legal guardian.

For further information, teachers should refer to the following links that provide information on copyright law for educators:

The Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC) provides an overview of the new Canadian copyright law, as well as the latest edition of *Copyright Matters* (2012). It is available at <http://cmec.ca/publications/lists/publications/attachments/291/copyright_matters.pdf>. All Manitoba schools should have a copy of this edition of *Copyright Matters*.

The Government of Canada also has information on what the new act means for teachers: *What the new Copyright Modernization Act will mean for teachers and students*. It is available at <http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/crp-prda.nsf/eng/rp01185.html>.

Services Offered by the Manitoba Education Library

The Manitoba Education Library has copies of many of the suggested films for this course that may be more difficult for teachers to obtain (the library's call number is indicated in the filmography where applicable). In addition, the library provides video streaming to all Manitoba K–12 teachers, educators, and schools.

Streaming services include:

- CBC Documentaries: produced by CBC Learning
- CBC News in Review: educational news broadcasts on Canadian and world issues (2008–present, available through subscription)
- Video Preview Clips from the Manitoba Education Library's DVD and VHS collections: These clips can be accessed for previewing and planning purposes prior to use in classrooms

For further information, please consult the library:

Library Contact Information:
Telephone: 204-945-7830
Toll-Free: 1-800-282-8069 (ext. 7830)
Email: iruref@gov.mb.ca

Website: www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/mel

Course Planning and Design

As indicated in the section "Pedagogical Foundations and Approach," teachers are encouraged to plan and design the implementation of the course based on their professional judgment, available resources, and student interest. Course design may be based on models such as the following:

- a chronological structure, based on key historical developments in 20th-century world history (refer to the sample course planner for an example)
- a reverse chronological structure, beginning with a current topic and working backward to the events that led to the present context
- a thematic organization, using films of different genres, periods, or countries that address a particular theme or idea
- a film history model, highlighting key examples of films from early black-and-white silent film to recent cinematic productions

Regardless of the way the content is organized, teachers are urged to plan the schedule of viewing so as to include a limited number of films for in-depth study (8 to 10), as well as a wide range of supporting films or film excerpts. Teachers may use as a starting point the titles suggested in the filmography or other titles selected for their instructional value as interpretive depictions of 20th-century history or as illustrations of exceptional cinematic quality. Regardless of the structure used to organize course materials, teachers should try to avoid the imposition of a hierarchy of historical significance and should encourage explicit discussion about the criteria for determining the importance of historical topics selected for the course.

When planning film viewing for the course, it is important to include examples of films created for various purposes, rather than basing the selection solely on student interest or on historical content. This means introducing, early in the course, the concept of film genres and conventions and initiating a discussion about the pragmatic and aesthetic purposes of cinema. It may be useful to return to this discussion of the purposes of cinema at regular intervals throughout the course.

> **Documentary film** tends to have a pragmatic purpose, seeking to inform, to describe, to explain, or to convince.
>
> **Dramatic film, including historical fiction,** on the other hand, has a primarily aesthetic purpose. It seeks to express emotions, to retell a story, to represent experience creatively, to provoke a reaction, or to entertain.
>
> Students should be invited to consider and discuss, for every selected film, the purpose or intent of the film and the key message it communicates to the viewer.

The following planning tools are provided as examples to help teachers plan film viewing for the course so as to include a wide variety of film genres and styles.

Sample course planning chart for teachers			
Cinematic technique	Narrative elements	Dramatic elements	Historical elements
View excerpts Selection of films/scenes	*View entire film* Focus question	*View excerpts* Selection of films/scenes	*View entire film* Historical topics/themes
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
Assignments / learning tasks			
■ Illustrate film vocabulary with film clips ■ Viewing notes ■ Cinema vocabulary/ glossary	■ Ongoing film journal ■ Schematic chart of narrative elements ■ Short plot summary	■ Film reviews ■ Film critiques ■ Film comparison documentary/ drama on a selected historical theme	■ Historical accuracy analysis ■ Historical essay on selected topic ■ Reflection on historical thinking question or theme (refer to films)

Planning Film Viewing: Optimal Screening Conditions

Scheduling Film Viewing

Course schedules vary from school to school, but ideally teachers are able to plan the uninterrupted viewing of a feature-length study film, with a short preparation and post-viewing discussion, within a two-hour period (most feature films are about 90 minutes). In many cases, the film viewing will have to be divided into two sessions, with a pre-selected dividing point, and allow for short pre- and post-viewing discussions. Students may watch an entire film a second time as required, in order to complete a written assignment such as historical research or film analysis. The teacher may also choose to invite a second viewing response discussion, using fast-forward and pause buttons, to focus attention on certain elements of the film. Students will also view short films, as well as secondary films selected, to support the study of a particular film or historical theme. Film excerpts may be used to illustrate basic principles of film language, or to observe divergent treatment of themes or topics. This ensures that students are exposed to as broad a selection of films as possible, while concentrating some focused time on film study assignments based on a core selection of in-depth study films.

It is strongly recommended that film screening of the selected study films be carried out on a large screen in order to duplicate as closely as possible the movie theatre context. Collectively watching a film on the big screen is part of the cinema experience—in fact, most films are made to be seen on a big screen.

Establish Viewing Protocols at the Beginning of the Course

Early in the course, it is important to establish with the students a set of clear viewing protocols related to interruptions, questions, repeat viewings, film excerpts, pre-research tasks, and film-viewing tasks. Some teachers prefer to interrupt viewing for questions of information and clarification; others do not. Regardless of the preferred protocols, interruptions during an initial screening should be kept to a minimum. Requiring extensive note-taking during an initial screening should also be avoided. In most cases, it is useful to provide students with a simple viewing guide as an outline for observations and questions, or to suggest a generative question to guide students' initial responses in their screening journals or in discussion.

The course recommendation is to plan film viewing using a three-phase process, especially for the 8 to 10 selected study films. After each film screening period, this means planning should permit a minimum for 10 minutes of immediate response time, either through discussion or journal writing. This response time should also be included in situations where the film needs to be viewed over two or three sessions, with carefully selected breaking points.

Innovative Planning for Viewing

Teachers may be innovative in developing a plan for scheduling film viewing that supports the three-phase process while permitting flexibility and enriching the student experience of cinema. This may include strategies that include elements such as involving students in pre-viewing or comparative viewing, planning cinema awards / recognition events or film festivals during noon hours or off campus, arranging to attend or plan community film festivals or film screenings in local cinemas, or inviting local filmmakers to speak to the class. Class time may be budgeted by organizing screenings by class sub-groups by film genre or theme with the subsequent sharing of ideas. Certain learning tasks, such as the comparative viewing of readily available popular films, may be assigned as homework rather than being included in class viewing time. Students may decide to organize and plan a school-based cinema club, or to promote film viewing through the creation of movie trailers or posters. In addition, it is useful to make available to students illustrated books on cinematic history or criticism in order to support their study of photographic technique, composition, and style.

Notes

It is important to inform students of the need to respect copyright law in the use of copyrighted materials outside of the classroom or in the inclusion of audience members who are not classroom students.

Since it is advisable that students view at least one feature film in a cinema setting, a part of innovative planning may include contacting a local theatre manager to request a special screening for students. Local theatres sometimes offer different programming and the opportunity to see older films or films that may not have a major theatre release. If it is not possible to view a film in a theatre setting, teachers are encouraged to discuss the difference between cinema-going and the private home theatre experience, and to invite students to reflect on the cinema experience as part of the discussion about mass media in 20th-century society up to the present. Community-based film festivals may often provide a collective cinema opportunity, sometimes including the additional experience of meeting the filmmaker. Some of the Winnipeg-based film festivals also offer outreach programs in rural and northern communities.

Some examples of local film festivals available in Manitoba are as follows:

- Freeze Frame International Film Festival takes place in Winnipeg in March and offers screenings in French and English for high school students. The festival has a touring component to rural and northern communities. Most films have film study guides with pre- and post-screening activities. For more information, visit <www.freezeframeonline.org/>.
- The Winnipeg International Jewish Film Festival is hosted annually and features international films. Information is available through the Rady Jewish Community Centre at <http://radyjcc.com/index.cfm>.

- The Winnipeg Film Group is an artist-run education, production, exhibition, and distribution centre committed to promoting the art of cinema. WFG also runs the Winnipeg theatre Cinémathèque, and organizes film festivals featuring Manitoba filmmakers, documentary films, and Indigenous films. For more information, contact <www.winnipegfilmgroup.com/>.
- Cinémental is an annual francophone film festival, generally run in October or November, offering screenings of French films (sometimes with subtitles) and including educational programming. For further details, visit <www.cinemental.com/accueil_en.html>.
- Winnipeg Real to Reel Film Festival features a selection of films of various genres as well as panel discussions with filmmakers. For more information, contact <www.winnipegfilmfestival.com/>.
- Winnipeg Aboriginal Film Festival organizes a film festival for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit filmmakers, generally in November. For further details, visit <www.ncifm.com/winnipeg-aboriginal-film-festival/>.
- In upcoming years, the film festival will be planned in collaboration with the Adam Beach Film Institute. For further details, visit <www.adambeachfilminstitute.com/>.
- REEL Canada has resources to promote bringing Canadian film and filmmakers to schools, including facilitating school-based film festivals. For further details, visit <www.reelcanada.com>.
- The Global Justice Film Festival is generally held in November at the University of Winnipeg. For more information, visit <http://globaljusticefilmfestival.ca/>.
- Manitoba Association of Rights and Liberties sponsors a human rights film festival (generally in March). For details, contact <http://marl.mb.ca/content/filmfestival>.

Sample Course Planning Chart for Teachers 2

Cinematic technique		Narrative elements	Dramatic elements	Historical elements
Name of film, genre, country	*View excerpts* Selection of films/scenes 1. 2. 3. 4.	*View entire film* Focus question 1. 2. 3. 4.	*View excerpts* Selection of films/scenes 1. 2. 3. 4.	*View entire film* Historical topics/themes 1. 2. 3. 4.
Assignments / learning tasks				
Illustrate film vocabulary with film clips Viewing notes Cinema vocabulary/ glossary		Ongoing film journal Schematic chart of narrative elements Short plot summary	Film reviews Film critiques Film comparison documentary/drama on a selected historical theme	Historical accuracy analysis Historical essay on selected topic Reflection on historical thinking question or theme (refer to films)

General Note-Taking Grid for Film Viewing

Refer also to viewing grids proposed in the Analytical Viewing Practice or to the Note-Taking Guide for Historical Film for additional examples. Refer to other sample viewing guides suggested in *Reel Conversations* (Teasley and Wilder).

It is recommended that students focus on a limited number of important elements during an initial viewing. Where possible, note the scenes that illustrate observations.

Film title:	Director, year, country:
Film genre/important details:	If an excerpt, record scene timing:
Literary (narrative, storyline):	Historical theme or event:
Dramatic (acting, decor):	Theme/values:
Cinematic (photography, lighting):	Music/soundtrack:
Preliminary overall impression:	

Note-Taking Guide for a Historical Documentary Film

Film title	Director, Year of release	Country of origin	Language(s) Subtitles? Voice-over?
Historical Content Theme/Time period/ Event	Facts mentioned	Historical figures in the film	Errors noted
Observations about historical realism/accuracy*			
Questions about historical authenticity			
Message of this film (opinions, values, theme) Balance or bias?	Cinematic technique (images, lighting, soundtrack)	Narrative elements: Key elements of the story told in this film	Dramatic elements (acting, costumes, dialogue)

* *Note on historical accuracy*: Cinema often sacrifices accuracy for the sake of drama, even in documentary, by compressing the action or by changing or omitting factual detail. Often, the political and historical realities take a secondary role to making the story more personal or to transmitting an ideological perspective (i.e., the "dramatic license" of Oliver Stone's 1991 controversial film *JFK* is an example).

Three Phases of Film Response

Regardless of the tasks assigned for each film study, it is recommended that students become familiar with and practice a three-phase process of viewing and responding to film. Students will gradually become more autonomous and innovative in planning and carrying out learning tasks in each of the three phases. Assessment instruments should target each of the three phases, depending upon the learning focus for each selected film.

1) Before viewing

In this phase, students anticipate the historical subject, the dramatic approach, and the narrative structure or story of the film. For a historical drama, students may be given historical questions or topics on which to conduct pre-research, or they may be assigned conventional historical source to consult for studying the historical theme or topic. Students may also carry out pre-research into the film, the director, or the context of the film's production. Teachers may wish to provide students with explicit instruction about elements of cinema technique, style, and/or historical content. It is important that certain films be contextualized before viewing, especially examples of propaganda films, films that may have a significant or unusual role in cinematic history, or films that have a contentious or controversial social influence. Preparation is also important for films that include a representation of political or ideological beliefs that students may not be familiar with (e.g., for *Dr. Strangelove*, the concepts of the Cold War, the nuclear arms race, and Mutual Assured Destruction; for *The Lives of Others*, the separation of East and West Germany, the Communist totalitarian state, and the role of the Stasi secret police; for *Persepolis*, the authoritarian regime of the Shah of Iran, anarchism, communism, the Iranian Revolution of 1979, and the Islamist state.

Some examples of pre-viewing tasks include the following:

- Group discussion of knowledge of the historical subject or theme of the film
- Research into the filmmaker, film genre, role in film history, or historical context of the film's production
- Discussion and predictions about the approach and main message the filmmaker will attempt to convey
- Selection of one aspect of the film on which to focus observations (this should vary from film to film, and may be assigned to groups of students)
- Reference to a film about a topic that students know and proposing elements to watch or listen for with a film comparison in mind
- Preparing a list of historical elements of fact to verify, observe, or watch for in the film
- Reading a film review that does not include a spoiler and that gives something to consider in the initial viewing

- Posing a question about historical significance and having a discussion about why the film may be considered to deal with a historically significant event

2) During viewing

This is the phase of the concentrated, attentive experience of film viewing. During this phase students may focus on a limited number of elements of content and technique using guiding questions or viewing templates. Viewing may or may not be interrupted as needed for clarification or comment. Teacher and students should take note of scenes that may require a second viewing. A second viewing may be carried out in whole or in part as needed, or may be assigned as an individual follow-up task.

Viewing suggestion: In the case of a feature-length dramatic film, ideally the film should be viewed in one sitting without interruption. If two sittings are necessary, the film should be divided at an appropriate point. In any case, a period of at least 10 to 15 minutes should be ensured for the processing of an immediate response to the film, whether in a journal entry or in a small or large group discussion.

Examples of activities during the screening phase are as follows:

- Note-taking using a viewing guide or template which specifies elements to watch for or to listen for
- Spontaneous recording of outstanding details during viewing
- Periodical analytical viewing practices in which students are assigned—individually or in groups—a focus element of the film to observe (e.g., dramatic elements, narrative elements, historical elements, or elements of cinematic technique)

Notes

It is advisable to vary the elements observed in the analytical viewing practice so that students gain experience in all of the areas, as a comprehensive film critique should ultimately deal with all elements of cinema.

3) After viewing

After the screening, there should be time allotted for the initial response to the film, followed by time to process, analyze, and evaluate it. In this phase, it is important that students have the opportunity to discuss the film and to exchange ideas in response to viewing. These responses may be guided or self-directed, so as to allow students to observe the interactive nature of cinema. Viewers will notice, understand, extrapolate, and conclude different things about each film.

Following the initial response to the film, there is a need to allocate time for the viewer to "step back" or to disengage from the viewing experience, in order to critically consider the film as a product of mass media or to deconstruct the film though analysis. This may be done through reflection and/or additional research tasks after screening, guided by generative questions about the film's accuracy, its artistic and dramatic qualities, or its technical elements,

depending upon the teaching purpose of the particular film selection. These tasks may often include second screenings of entire films or sections of films. Throughout this phase, the exchange of ideas remains important. Students may be encouraged to make connections to other films they have seen or to elicit and debate divergent responses or ideas about a film.

Examples of tasks during this phase include the following:

- Film review (documentary, historical fiction, drama)
- Film critique or analysis (documentary, historical fiction, drama)
- Debates about the generative questions regarding film and history
- Performance tasks such as film awards and recognition or film festivals
- Historical thinking essays
- Follow-up historical research or research into media questions or themes
- Analysis or comparison of film genres or styles

Suggested Guidelines for the Film Screening Journal

It is recommended that students write regular entries in a Film Screening Journal throughout the course and that this be a part of the ongoing assessment *as* and *for* learning. The habit of writing viewing responses can help students to clarify and enrich their thoughts so as to become more purposeful, critical viewers. Some journal entries may require a more formal response to a film as guided by a particular task or question; other entries may require a short spontaneous response after viewing a film or film clip. It is useful to develop some initial guidelines to help students develop a consistent practice of thoughtful journal entry writing. The following are some suggested approaches to the screening journal component of the course.

- Cinema exploits many audio-visual and aesthetic elements, as well as many social conventions, values, and emotional responses. It is not usually possible to effectively take note of all these particulars in one screening. For this reason, it is not advisable to require lengthy or extremely detailed note-taking during the initial viewing of a film. Students may be provided with a model note-taking grid or may be invited to focus on observing particular elements during the initial screening (refer to film viewing practice for a model).
- It may be useful to provide students with generative questions that stimulate deep thinking in response to specific elements of the movie. Encourage students to record any insights or questions as part of their film response, which can plan for a second viewing of the film or of excerpts as required.
- After each feature film, allow some time for writing or discussion to process students' initial responses to the film. This discussion or writing may be guided by a generative question or it may be a spontaneous response to the viewing.
- Oblige students to avoid journal entries that are simply summaries of the film's plot.
- Provide regular comments to students on their journal entries.
- For every screening response, insist that students record the film citation details and the date of the screening. Ask them to indicate whether it is a second viewing and, if it is an excerpt, to indicate the relevant scene selection.
- Screening responses should include details about the historical topic or theme depicted in the film (e.g., the names of significant historical figures and the relevant time period and place).
- Encourage students to note exceptional or outstanding points about the film, its director, or its production (e.g., multiple awards, controversies it created, or its significance in cinematic history).
- Explain to students that in a screening journal it is appropriate to express individual opinions using the first person or "I". Encourage them to make connections to their personal experience or to other films, books, plays, or works of art they have seen. Above all, invite students to focus their initial

screening response on what is most memorable or what stands out in the film by referring to precise scenes, words, images, or sounds.

- Periodically require a film review or film critique following a screening. Recommend a partial or complete second viewing as required to focus on particulars in the film that support the analysis of the film. Provide students with examples of well-written film reviews and critiques that model analysis, critical thinking, and evaluation.
- Insist that students provide specific references to films in every screening journal entry as well as in more formal assignments (such as film reviews, film critiques, film comparisons, or historical analyses and reflections).
- Encourage students to avoid popular film critic writing (e.g., "thumbs-up" language), as well as the expression of personal opinions using emotive language unsupported by argument (e.g., "it was boring"; "I didn't like the acting"; "I don't like silent films"). Invite students to make connections or comparisons to other films or literary or artistic works in response to the film.
- Set aside a regular time to allow students to share with the class short journal entries of their choice.
- Encourage students to reread their journal entries periodically and to self-assess the progress of their thinking and observations.

Suggested Historical Topics

Whether this course is designed using a thematic approach or a chronological approach, one of its goals is to provide students with a general understanding of some of the most remarkable developments of 20th-century world history. The following is a chronology of many of the defining events of the 20th century that have been interpreted though cinema. The list is not intended to be exhaustive nor comprehensive, but is proposed to assist teachers in planning the course based on an overview of some of the key phenomena of 20th-century history: its signature revolutions, its conflicts and accomplishments, its sweeping social, political, and ecological transformations, and its ongoing impact on life in the contemporary world.

Possible Topics in 20th-Century History

- *First World War, 1914–1918*
- *Armenian genocide, 1915–1916*
- *Russian Revolution and the end of Tsarist regime, 1917*
- *Prohibition in America, 1920s–30s*
- *Great Depression, 1929–1940*
- *Gandhi Salt March for Indian Independence, 1930*
- *Chinese Civil War and Communist Revolution in China, 1946–1949*
- *Second World War, 1939–1945*
- *Holodomor or Ukrainian Genocide, 1932–1933*
- *Holocaust or Shoah, 1933–1945*
- *Indian Independence and India-Pakistan partition, 1920s–1947*
- *Golden Age of Hollywood and American dominance of cinema, 1920s–1960s*
- *Nuclear arms race (Manhattan Project), begins 1942*
- *Establishment of United Nations, 1945*
- *United Nations Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man, 1948*
- *Stalinist authoritarian rule in the Soviet Union, 1941–1953*
- *European decolonization of Asia and Africa, 1947 through the 1950s*
- *Cold War, 1945–1991*
- *Establishment of the State of Israel, 1948*
- *Israeli-Palestinian conflicts, 1946–present*
- *Apartheid in South Africa, 1948–1994*
- *American civil rights movement, 1955–1968*
- *Vietnam War, 1959–1973*
- *Mao Zedong and the Cultural Revolution in China, 1966–1976*
- *Cuban Revolution, 1959*
- *Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962*
- *Latin American liberation movements, 1960s–1999*
- *Indian Residential schools period ends in Canada, 1976; federal government apology, 2008*

- *Indigenous rights and cultures movements, 1950s–present*
- *Rise of the modern environmental movement, 1960s–present*
- *Social revolution, women's rights, sexual revolution, 1960s–1970s*
- *UN Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty comes into force, 1970*
- *Northern Ireland nationalism and the Troubles, 1968–1998*
- *Khmer Rouge and Cambodian genocide, 1975–1979*
- *Islamic Revolution in Iran, 1979*
- *Bhopal industrial gas leak, 1984*
- *Declaration of the State of Palestine by the PLO, 1988*
- *The Berlin Wall comes down, November 9, 1989; fall of Communist governments in Eastern Europe, 1989–1990*
- *First Gulf War, 1990–1991*
- *Ethnic cleansing Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1992–1995*
- *Rwandan genocide, 1994*
- *Taliban takes rule of Afghanistan, 1996*
- *Establishment of the International Criminal Court, 1998*
- *Belfast Agreement ends Northern Ireland Troubles, 1998*
- *September 11, 2001, Islamist attack in New York*
- *Invasion of Afghanistan by U.S. and allies, 2001*
- *Second Iraq War, 2003*
- *Earthquake and Indian Ocean tsunami in Asia and nuclear accident in Japan, December 2004 Deepwater Horizon oil spill Gulf of Mexico, 2010*
- *Canada endorses the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2010*

Cinema as a Witness to Modern History
Filmography—Recommended Study Films

This filmography proposes a selection of film titles for possible inclusion in the course, based on recommendations made by teachers who have used film in the social studies classroom, as well as on recent research into the effective use of cinema as an instructional tool. The list is not exhaustive and is not an officially approved list of course resources. Teachers are free to select other titles or new releases not included in the filmography, based on the guidelines for film selection.

The films proposed in this list are selected on the basis of artistic excellence, the influence or role of the film in cinematic history, its recognized status or innovative quality, its pertinence to significant events in world history, or its reliance on historical research, documentation, or experience. Teachers may determine that some of the suggested titles are not appropriate for use in their classroom due to considerations of audience or community applicability (i.e., previous learning, student maturity, sensitivities) or considerations of teaching applicability in terms of content or course design.

A template for filmography additions is provided for teachers to use as a model for recording any additional titles they may wish to include in their course planning.

A Bridge Too Far	Dir. Richard Attenborough. (DVD) 1977. USA/UK. Historical drama. Classification PG. 175 min. MGM Studios (1998). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 940.5421 B75 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N3PLaZsFmtk **Historical focus: World War 2**
Apollo 13	Dir. Ron Howard. (DVD) USA. Historical drama. Classification PG. 140 min. MCA Universal Home Video (1998). Two Oscars for Best Sound and Best Film Editing. Oscar nomination for Best Picture. **Historical focus: Space race (U.S. 1970)**
All Quiet on the Western Front	Dir. Louis Milestone. (DVD) 1930. USA. Historical drama, black and white. Classification PG. 152 minutes. MCA Universal (2007). Two Oscars for Best Picture and Best Director. Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D F Rem **Historical focus: First World War**
Ararat	Dir. Atom Egoyan. (DVD) 2002. Canada/France. Historical drama. Classification 14A. 111 min. **Historical focus: Armenian genocide (1915)**
A Special Day (Una giornata particolare)	Dir. Ettore Scola. (DVD) 1977. Italy/Canada. Drama. Classification PG. 110 minutes. New Star Video (2002). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D F Spe **Historical focus: Second World War, fascism in Italy and Germany**

(The) Atomic Café	Dir. Kevin Rafferty. (DVD) 1982. USA. Documentary/ Drama, black and white. Classification PG, foul language and mature theme. 86 minutes. eOne Films (2002). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 355.0217 A86 **Historical focus: Cold War, McCarthyism in U.S. propaganda**
A Passage to India	Dir. David Lean. (DVD) 1984. UK/USA. Drama. Classification PG. 163 min. Sony Pictures Home Entertainment (2001) **Historical focus: Decolonization, Indian independence**
A Very Long Engagement (Un long dimanche de fiançailles)	Dir. Jean-Pierre Jeunet. (DVD) 2004. France/USA. Drama. Classification 14A, not recommended for children. 133 min. Warner Studios (2005). **Historical focus: First World War**
The Battle of Algiers (La battaglia d'Algeri)	Dir. Gillo Pontecorvo. (DVD) 1996. Italy/Algeria. Historical drama. Classification PG. 120 min. Criterion Collection (2004). **Historical focus: Algerian independence 1962, decolonization**
Battleship Potemkin (Bronenosets Potemkin)	Dir. Sergei Eisenstein. (DVD) 1925. Soviet Union. Historical drama, silent, black and white. Classification PG, violence. 86 minutes. (1998). Odessa Steps sequence available on YouTube with English captions (7 min.): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMWMq4AEyjU https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TgWoSHUn8 **Historical focus: History of cinema, Soviet montage technique, Soviet propaganda film**
(The) Birth of a Nation	Dir. D.W. Griffith. (DVD) 1915. USA. Historical drama, silent, black and white. Classification 14A, violence and disturbing content. 187 minutes. Image Entertainment (1998). **Historical focus: History of cinema, editing technique, American propaganda**
(The) Boy in the Striped Pajamas	Dir. Mark Herman. (DVD) 2008. UK/USA. Historical drama. Classification PG, mature theme. 95 min. Miramax Home Entertainment (2009). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D F Boy **Historical focus: World War II, Holocaust**
(The) Bridge on the River Kwai	Dir. David Lean. (DVD) 1957. UK/USA. Drama. Classification PG. 167 minutes. Sony Pictures Home Entertainment (2008) **Historical focus: World War II, Japanese front**
Casablanca	Dir. Michael Curtiz. (DVD) 1942. USA. Drama, black and white. Classification PG. 139 min. Warner Home Video (1999). **Historical focus: World War II, Resistance**

City of Gold	Dir. Colin Low, Wolf Koenig, 2000. Documentary. Classification PG. 21 min. Public domain film available on National Film Board of Canada website: https://www.nfb.ca/film/city_of_gold/ **Historical focus: Klondike Gold Rush, Canadian documentary cinema**
Das Boot	Dir. Wolfgang Petersen. (DVD) West Germany. Historical drama, black and white. Classification PG, violence. 149 min. Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment (2004). Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i-8TtwnSS6Q https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=97Gr4WKEkS0 *Recommended viewing excerpt: 0:13:2 to 0:15:30 Two hand-held shots of the German submarine.* **Historical focus: World War II, history of cinema**
Doctor Zhivago	Dir. David Lean. (DVD) 1965. USA/Italy/UK. Historical drama. Classification 14A, mature theme. 200 min. Warner Home Video (2010). **Historical focus: Russian Revolution, end of tsarist regime in Russia**
Dr. Strangelove	Dir. Stanley Kubrick. (DVD) 1964. USA/UK. Comedy. Classification PG. 95 min. Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment (2004). **Historical focus: Cold War, nuclear arms race**
Empire of the Sun	Dir. Steven Spielberg. (DVD) 1987. USA. Drama. Classification PG. 153 min. Warner Home Video (2001). **Historical focus: Second China-Japan War 1937–1945**
Est-Ouest (East/West)	Dir. Regis Wargnier. (DVD) 1999. France/Russia/Ukraine/Bulgaria/Spain. Historical drama. 125 min. Sony Pictures (2000). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 947.084 E87 **Historical focus: USSR under Stalinist rule**
Exodus	Dir. Otto Preminger. (DVD) 1960. USA. Historical drama. Classification PG. 208 min. MGM Home Entertainment (2002). **Historical focus: creation of the state of Israel**
Europa Europa	Dir. Agnieszka Holland. (DVD) 1990. Germany. Drama. Classification PG. 112 min. Fox Video (2007). **Historical focus: World War II, rise of Nazism**
L'espoir	Dir. André Malraux. (DVD) 1945. France. Historical drama, black and white. Classification PG. 70 min. Les Documents Cinématographiques (2003). **Historical focus: Spanish Civil War, rise of fascism in Spain**
Fat Man and Little Boy	Dir. Roland Joffé. (DVD) 1989. England. Drama. Classification PG. 127 min. Paramount (2004). **Historical focus: Nuclear arms race, Manhattan Project**

The Fog of War	Dir Errol Morris. (DVD) 2003. USA. Documentary. Classification 14A. 107 min. Sony Pictures Classics (2004). Oscar in 2004 for Best Documentary. Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 92 McN **Historical focus: Cold War, Vietnam War**
Forrest Gump	Dir. Robert Zemeckis. (DVD) 1994. USA. Drama/ Romance. Classification PG. 141 min. Paramount Pictures (2006). **Historical focus: Cold War, Vietnam War, social revolution 1960s**
Full Metal Jacket	Dir. Stanley Kubrick. (DVD) 1987. USA. Historical drama. Classification 14A, Graphic violence. 116 min. Warner Home Video (2001). **Historical focus: Vietnam War, history of cinema anti-war film**
(The) Gold Rush	Dir. Charlie Chaplin. (DVD) 1925. UK. Comedy/Historical drama, black and white. Classification G. 69 min. Warner Home Video (2003). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D F Gol **Historical focus: Gold Rush, history of cinema beginnings of talking film**
Gandhi	Dir. Richard Attenborough. (DVD) 1982. UK. Biography/ Historical drama. Classification PG. 190 min. Columbia TriStar Home Video (2001). **Historical focus: Independence movement India, decolonization**
(The) Grand Illusion (La grande illusion)	Dir. Jean Renoir. (DVD) 1937. France. Historical drama. Classification PG. 114 min. Criterion Collection (1999) **Historical focus: First World War, history of cinema anti-war film**
The Grapes of Wrath	Dir. John Ford. (DVD) 1940. USA. Drama, black and white. Classification PG. 128 min. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment (2004). Two Oscars in 1941 for Best Director and Best Actress in a Supporting Role. Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D F Ste **Historical focus: The Great Depression**
(The) Great Dictator	Dir. Charlie Chaplin. (DVD) 1940. UK. Comedy, black and white. Classification G. 125 min. Warner Home Video (2003). Oscar nomination for Best Picture. Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D F Gre **Historical focus: Second World War, rise of Nazism, history of film (Chaplin)**
Genocide Revealed (Holodomor)	Dir. Yurij Luhovy. (DVD) 2010. Canada. Documentary. Classification 14A. 75 min. Yurij Luhovy (2011). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 947.70841 G45 **Historical focus: forced Ukrainian famine 1932-3**

Good Bye Lenin!	Dir. Wolfgang Becker. (DVD) 2003. Germany. Historical drama. Classification PG. 118 min. Séville Pictures (2004). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D F Goo **Historical focus: Cold War, fall of the Soviet Union**
Good Night and Good Luck	Dir. George Clooney. (DVD) 2005. Drama. Classification PG, mature theme. 93 min. Distribution Select, 2006. Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 070.195 G65 **Historical focus: Cold War, McCarthyism in U.S.**
Grierson	Dir. Roger Blais. (DVD) 1973. Canada. Biography/ Documentary. Classification PG. 58 min. National Film Board of Canada (2000). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: 0111¸ **Historical focus: History of documentary cinema, National Film Board**
(The) Hand (Ruka)	Dir Jiri Trnka. (DVD) 1965. Czech Republic. Drama, puppet animation, silent. 18 min. Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cS4Th36zN_g **Historical focus: Stalinist period in Soviet Union, history of cinema (animation)**
Home	Dir. Yann Arthus-Bertrand. (DVD) 2009. France. Documentary. Classification PG. 118 min. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment (2009). Films, teacher guide, and trailer available online: www.yannarthusbertrand.org/en/films-tv/home **Historical focus: environmental impact, history of cinema (photography)**
Hotel Rwanda	Dir. Terry George. (DVD) 2004. UK. Historical drama. Classification 14A, Not recommend for children, violence, disturbing content. 122 min. MGM Home Entertainment (2005). **Historical focus: Rwanda genocide 1994, U.S. perspective**
To Live (Huo zhe)	Dir. Yimou Zhang. (DVD) 1994. China. Historical drama. Classification PG, Not suitable for young children. 126 min. MGM Home Entertainment (2003). **Historical focus: Chinese Cultural Revolution**
If You Love this Planet	Dir. Terre Nash. (DVD) 1982. Canada. Documentary. Classification PG. 26 min. Available online, National Film Board of Canada (2006). https://www.nfb.ca/film/if_you_love_this_planet/ Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 327.1747 I40 **Historical focus: Nuclear arms race**
(An) Inconvenient Truth	Dir. Davis Guggenheim, 2006. USA. Documentary. Classification G. 100 min. Paramount (2006). Oscar for Best Documentary. Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 363.73874 G64 **Historical focus: Environmental impact**

Invictus	Dir. Clint Eastwood. (DVD) 2009. USA. Historical drama/ Biography. Classification PG. 134 min. Warner Bros. Pictures (2010). **Historical focus: Apartheid in South Africa and Nelson Mandela**
JFK	Dir. Oliver Stone. (DVD) 1991. USA. Historical drama. Classification PG, Language warning. 206 min. Warner Home Video (2003). Two Oscars for Best Cinematography and Best Film Editing. Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 973.922 J43 **Historical focus: Cold War period, U.S.–Cuban relations**
Judgment at Nuremberg	Dir. Stanley Kramar. (DVD) 1961. USA. Historical drama. Classification PG. 186 min. Audio Cine Films (2004). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 341.69 J83 **Historical focus: World War II, consequences of Nazism**
Kandahar	Dir. Mohsen Makhmalbaf. (DVD) 2001. Iran. Historical fiction/Semi-documentary. Classification PG. 85 min. New Yorker Video (2003). **Historical focus: Islamic fundamentalism, Taliban and regime in Afghanistan 1996–2001**
Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance	Dir. Alanis Obomsawin. (DVD) 1993. USA. Documentary. Classification PG. 119 min. Online, National Film Board of Canada (2008). https://www.nfb.ca/film/kanehsatake_270_years_of_resistance/ Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 971.404 A43 **Historical focus: Indigenous rights, Oka 1990; history of cinema (Canadian indigenous filmmakers)**
(The) Killing Fields	Dir. Roland Joffé. (DVD) 1984. England. Historical drama. Classification PG, Graphic violence. 141 min. Warner Home Video (2001). **Historical focus: Cambodia and Khmer rouge regime**
(The) Kite Runner	Dir. Marc Forester. (DVD) 2007. Germany. Drama. Classification 14A, Violence. 127 min. DreamWorks (2007). Based on the *New York Times* best-selling novel by Khaled Hosseini. Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D F Hos **Historical focus: Taliban rule in Afghanistan**
(The) Last Emperor	Dir. Bernardo Bertolucci. (DVD) 1987. Italy. Historical drama/Biography. Classification 14A, Graphic violence. 163 min. Criterion Collection (2008). Won nine Oscars in 1988 including Best Picture, Best Director and Best Cinematography. **Historical focus: End of Imperial China and Chinese Revolution**

(The) Lives of Others (Das Leben der Anderen)	Dir. Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck. (DVD) 2006. Germany. Drama. Classification 14A. 137 min. Sony Pictures Home Entertainment (2006). **Historical focus: Cold War, life under the USSR authoritarian regime**
(The) Longest Day	Dir. Ken Annakin & Andrew Marton. (DVD) 1962. England/Austria. Historical drama. Classification G. 178 min. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment (2006). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 940.5421 L65 **Historical focus: World War II, Normandy landings**
Lawrence of Arabia	Dir. David Lean. (DVD) 1962. England. Historical drama/Biography. Classification PG. 216 min. Columbia TriStar Home Video (2002). Won seven Oscars in 1963 including Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Cinematography. Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 92 Law **Historical focus: decolonization of Africa, Arab history**
Les ordres	Dir. Scott Burton. (DVD) 2008. Canada. Documentary. Classification PG. 48 min.
Lacombe Lucien	Dir. Louis Malle. (DVD) 1974. France. Historical drama. Classification PG. 138 min. Criterion Collection (2006). **Historical focus: World War II and Resistance to German occupation**
Life is Beautiful	Dir. Roberto Benigni. (DVD) 1997. Italy. Comedy/Drama. Classification 14A, Controversial social content. 118 min. Miramax Home Entertainment (1999). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D F Lif **Historical focus: Holocaust, rise of fascism in Italy**
La grande vadrouille (The Big Runaround)	Dir. Gérard Oury. (DVD) 1966. France. Comedy/ Historical drama. Classification 14A. 120 min. Maple Pictures (2002). **Historical focus: World War II, German occupation of France**
Le ballon rouge (The Red Balloon)	Dir. Albert Lamorisse. (DVD) 1956. France. Short, fantasy. Classification G. 34 min. Criterion Collection (2008). Available online: www.openculture.com/2012/06/the_classic_1956_oscar-winning_childrens_film_ithe_red_ballooni.html **Historical focus: History of cinema, power of allegory in film**
Little Big Man	Dir. Arthur Penn. (DVD) 1970. USA. Historical drama. Classification PG. 139 min. Paramount Home Entertainment (2003). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D F Ber **Historical focus: History of cinema, indigenous peoples in film**

Love, Hate & Propaganda (Amour, haine & propagande)	Dirs. Ryszard Hunka (part 1), Susan Teskey (part 2), Lucie Gagnon and Mireille Ledoux (part 3), Léon Laflamme (part 4), Julian Sher (part 5), Jo-Ann Demers (part 6). (DVD) 2010. Documentary series. Classification PG. eOne Entertainment (2012). Part 2: "1939/1940: Selling War" Part 3: "1941: Meet the Enemy" Part 4: "1942/1943: Truth and Total War" Part 5: "1944/1945: Hiding the Horrors" Part 6: "1945: Changing the Story" Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 940.5488 L69 v.3 **Historical focus: World War II, propaganda in war**
Malcolm X	Dir. Spike Lee. (DVD) 1992. USA. Biography/Historical drama. Classification 14A, Violence. 202 min. Warner Home Video (2010). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 92 X **Historical focus: Civil rights movement in U.S.**
Modern Times	Dir. Charlie Chaplin. (DVD) 1936. UK. Comedy, black & white. Classification G. 87 min. Criterion Collection (2010). **Historical focus: Industrialization in beginning of 20th century, history of cinema (silent film)**
Monsieur Batignole	Dir Gérard Jugnot. (DVD) 2003. France. Historical drama. Classification PG, Nudity. 100 min. Séville Pictures (2003). **Historical focus: World War II, German occupation of France, Holocaust**
Manufactured Landscapes	Dir. Jennifer Baichwal. (DVD) 2006. Canada. Documentary. Classification G. 90 min. Mongrel Media (2007). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 779.3651 M35 **Historical focus: environmental impact, history of cinema (photographic documentary)**
Merry Christmas (Joyeux Noël)	Dir. Christian Carion. (DVD) 2005. France. Historical drama. Classification PG. 116 min. Sony Pictures Home Entertainment (2006). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 940.4144 J69 **Historical focus: First World War**
Metropolis	Dir. Fritz Lang. (DVD) 1927. Austria. Drama/Sci-Fi. Classification PG, Mature theme. 119 min. Alpha Video (2002). *Note:* It is recommended that teachers show certain excerpts of the film only (see Film Study: Metropolis) **Historical focus: Ideologies of the 20th century, History of cinema (German surrealism)**
The Mortal Storm	Dir. Frank Borzage. (DVD) 1940. USA. Drama. Classification PG. 100 min. Warner Archives (2009). **Historical focus: Second World War**

Munich	Dir. Steven Spielberg. (DVD) 2005. USA. Historical drama. Classification 18A, Brutal violence. 164 min. MCA Studios (2006). **Historical focus: Black September, assassination of Israeli athletes at 1972 Munich Olympics**
Motorcycle Diaries	Dir. Walter Salles. (DVD) 2004. Brazil. UK: FilmFour. Drama/Biography. Classification 14A. 126 min. Alliance Atlantis (2005). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 918.0433 D51 **Historical focus: Latin American revolutionary movements**
My Winnipeg	Dir. Guy Maddin. (DVD) 2007. Canada. Documentary. Classification 14A, Nudity. 80 min. Seville Pictures (2008). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D F My **Historical focus: History of cinema, Manitoba auteur film maker**
Nanook of the North	Dir. Robert J. Flaherty. (DVD) 1922. USA. Documentary, silent. Classification G. 79 min. Criterion Collection (1998). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 971.00497 N35 **Historical focus: History of cinema (documentary film), indigenous peoples**
The Necessities of Life (Ce qu'il faut pour vivre)	Dir. Benoît Pilon. (DVD) 2008. Canada. Historical drama. Classification PG. 102 min. ACPAV (2009). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D F Inu **Historical focus: Indigenous peoples (Canadian Inuit)**
Night and Fog (Nuit et brouillard)	Dir. Alain Resnais. (DVD) 1955. France. Documentary/ Short. Classification 18A. 31 min. Criterion Collection (2003). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 940.5318 N53 Available online: www.disclose.tv/action/viewvideo/185403/Night_and_Fog_1955/ **Historical focus: Holocaust, History of cinema (documentary)**
Nuremberg: The Nazis Facing their Crimes (Nuremberg—Les Nazis face a leur crimes)	Dir. Christian Delage. (DVD) 2006. France. Documentary. Classification R, Disturbing content. 93 min. Ciné Fête (2006). **Historical focus: World War II, International Criminal Court, Holocaust, History of cinema (documentary)**

October (Ten Days that Shook the World)	Dir. Grigori Aleksandrov. (DVD) 1928. Russia. Historical drama. Classification PG. 103 min. Shostakovich. October 1917. 1998. Manitoba Education Library Call Number: 1441 Public domain film, available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k62eaN9-TLY **Historical focus: Russian Revolution, History of cinema (propaganda)**
Pacific 231	Dir. Jean Mitry. (DVD) 1959. France. Short film. Classification PG. 9 min. Public domain film, available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rKRCJhLU7rs **Historical focus: History of cinema (musical soundtrack)**
Paris 1919: Inside the peace talks that changed the world (*Paris 1919: Un traité pour la paix*)	Dir. Paul Cowan. (DVD) 2009. Canada. Documentary. Classification PG. 94 min. BFS Entertainment & Multimedia (2009). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 940.3141 P37 **Historical focus: World War I**
Passchendaele	Dir. Paul Gross. (DVD) 2008. Canada. Historical drama. Classification 14A, Gory scenes. 115 min. Echo Bridge Home Entertainment (2010). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 940.431 P38 **Historical focus: World War I**
Paths of Glory	Dir. Stanley Kubrick. (DVD) 1957. USA. Historical drama. Classification PG. 87 min. Fox Searchlight (1999). **Historical focus: World War I**
Peacing It Together	Dir. Erik Paulsson and Nova Ami. (DVD) 2008. Canada. Documentary. Classification PG. 120 min. Peace It Together Society (2009). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 303.66 P42 **Historical focus: Israeli-Palestinian conflicts**
Pigeon	Dir. Anthony Green. (DVD) 2004. Canada. Short film/ Drama. Classification PG. 11 min. **Historical focus: Holocaust, World War II, German occupation of France, useful for analytical viewing practice**
Persepolis	Dir. Vincent Paronnaud and Marjane Satrapi. (DVD) 2007. France/Iran. Animation/Biography/Historical drama. Classification PG, Not recommended for young children. 96 min. Sony Pictures (2007). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 955.054 P47 **Historical focus: Islamic Revolution in Iran, 1979; history of cinema (animation)**

Platoon	Dir. Oliver Stone. (DVD) 1986. USA. Historical drama. Classification 14A, Graphic violence. 120 min. MGM Home Entertainment Inc (2001). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D F Pla **Historical focus: Vietnam War**
The Plow that Broke the Plains	Dir. Pare Lorentz. (DVD) 1936. USA. Documentary. Classification G. 120 min. Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQCwhjWNcH8 **Historical focus: Great Depression**
Prom Night in Mississippi	Dir. Paul Saltzman. (DVD) 2009. Canada. Documentary. Classification PG. 90 min. Educational DVD and teacher's guide available: http://canada.promnightinmississippi.com/educational-dvd **Historical focus: Civil rights movement in U.S.**
Raspad	Dir. Mikhail Belikov. (DVD) 1990. Russia. Documentary/ Drama. Classification 14A. 95 min. **Historical focus: Environment, industrial disaster Chernobyl 1986**
Reds	Dir. Warren Beatty. (DVD) 1981. USA. Biography/ Historical drama. Classification 14A, violence. 195 min. Paramount (2006). **Historical focus: Russian Revolution**
Schindler's List	Dir. Steven Spielberg. (DVD) 1993. USA. Biography/ Historical drama. Classification 14A. 197 min. Universal Studios (2004). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D F Ken **Historical focus: Holocaust**
Shake Hands with the Devil	Dir. Roger Spottiswoode. (DVD) 2007. Canada. Historical drama. Classification 14A. 112 min. Microfilms Inc (2005). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 92 Dal **Historical focus: Rwandan genocide**
(The) Right Stuff	Dir. Phillip Kaufman. (DVD) 1983. USA. Historical drama. Classification PG. 193 min. Warner Home Video (1997). **Historical focus: Space race**
The Round-up (La Rafle)	Dir. Rose Bosch. (DVD) 2010. France. Historical Drama. Classification 14A. 125 min. Seville (2001). **Historical focus: World War II, Holocaust**
(The) Singing Revolution	Dir. James Tusty & Maureen Castle Tusty. (DVD) 2006. USA. Documentary. Classification G. 97 min. Docurama Films (2008). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 947.98085 S55 **Historical focus: Soviet period, end of USSR, Estonian independence**
(The) Third Man	Dir. Carol Reed. (DVD) 1949. UK. Mystery, black and white. Classification PG. 104 min. Criterion Collection (1999). **Historical focus: Cold War and Soviet period**

(The) Thin Red Line	Dir. Terrence Malick. (DVD) 1998. USA. Historical drama. Classification 14A, Extreme violence. 170 min. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment (2001). **Historical focus: World War II, Pacific front**
Thirteen Days	Dir. Roger Donaldson. (DVD) 2000. Australia. Historical drama. Classification 14A. 145 min. Alliance Films (2003). **Historical focus: Cold war, Cuban missile crisis**
Those Magnificent Men and Their Flying Machines	Dir. Ken Annakin. (DVD) 1965. UK. Drama. Classification PG. 137 min. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment (2003). **Historical focus: technology and transportation at beginning of 20th century**
Tkaronto	Dir. Shane A. Belcourt. (DVD) 2007. Canada. Drama. Classification PG. 105 min. Kinosmith Inc (2009). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D F Tka **Historical focus: Indigenous films, legacy of colonialism**
To Be or Not to Be	Dir. Ernst Lubitsch. (DVD) 1942. Germany. Comedy. Classification PG. 99 min. Criterion Collection (2013). **Historical focus: World War II, Nazi occupation Poland**
To Kill a Mockingbird	Dir. Robert Mulligan. (DVD) 1962. USA. Drama. Classification PG. 130 min. Universal Home Entertainment (2012). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D F Lee **Historical focus: Great Depression in US**
Triumph of the Will	Dir. Leni Riefenstahl. (DVD) 1935. Germany. Documentary. Classification 14A. 120 min. Synapse Films (2006). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 943.086 T75 **Historical focus: World War II, Nazism, history of cinema (propaganda)**
Twelve Angry Men	Dir. Sidney Lumet. (DVD) 1957. USA. Drama. Classification PG. 96 min. Criterion Collection (2011). Manitoba Education Library Call Number: D 812.54 R68 p Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RelOJfFIyp8 **Historical focus: McCarthyism, racism, Cold War values in US, history of cinema (classic black and white film)**
Viva Zapata	Dir. Elia Zanuck. (DVD) 1952. Turkey. Historical drama. Classification PG. 113 min. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment (2013). **Historical focus: Latin American revolutionary movements**

Watermark	Dir. Jenifer Baichwal and Edward Burtynsky. (DVD) 2013. Canada. Documentary. Classification PG, Mature theme. 90 min. **Historical focus: Environmental impact, History of cinema (photographic documentary)**
Why Shoot the Teacher	Dir. Silvio Narizzano. (DVD) 1977. Canada. Drama. Classification PG. 102 min. AudioVision Canada (2004). **Historical focus: Great Depression (Canadian perspective)**
Z	Dir. Costas Gavras. (DVD) 1969. Greece. Historical drama. Classification PG. 127 min. Criterion Collection (2009). Won Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film. Available online: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLC42DD1FD2A37D022 **Historical focus: Authoritarian rule in Greece, pacifism**
2001: A Space Odyssey	Dir. Stanley Kubrick. (DVD) 1968. USA. Mystery/Sci-Fi. Classification PG. 160 min. Warner Home Video (2001). **Historical focus: Technology and future, space exploration, History of cinema (notable film)**
Zoom	short film composed of still images from the book Zoom by Istvan Banyai, useful to illustrate camera distance: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMhUujrN4iU ReZoom, images from the book Zoom by Istvan Banyai, useful to illustrate camera distance: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_qLMUkSc1WA **Media literacy films to illustrate photography terms**
55 Days at Peking	Dir. Nicholas Ray. (DVD) 1963. USA. Las Rozas, Historical Drama. Classification PG. 154 min. South Korea (2003). **Historical focus: Boxer Rebellion in China 1900**

References

Film Classifications obtained from

- Manitoba Film Classification Board: http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/mfcb/
- "Twentieth Century Revolutions" by S. Mintz & S. McNeil (2013). www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

Notes

APPENDICES

Doctor Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb. Dir. Stanley Kubrick, USA, 1964. Comedy/Satire. Classification PG. 95 min. DVD, Columbia.

Historical Themes/Topics

War and peace in the 20th century: Cold War, nuclear arms race, atomic energy, social values and climate of 1960s

Historical Context

According to many historians, rapid advances in science and technology during the 20th century have contributed to making it one of the most destructive eras in world history. Arguably, in a bare-bones approach, history can be characterized as a continuing series of violent attacks between groups of humans. Typically, war is studied in terms of geographic and political realignments. However, something happened to warfare in the 20th century that has changed our collective understanding of war and peace in western society.

The ability to understand and harness atomic energy is characteristic of the advancements in science and technology in the 20th century. It reflects the attempt among modern scientists to understand the smallest particles that are the building blocks of matter, whether in particle physics, microbiology, genetic research, or the development of the microchip.

The development of the atomic bomb allowed humans to develop weapons of mass destruction. For the first time in history, human beings have the power to wipe out entire civilizations in seconds. At the same time, the increasing destructiveness of warfare is communicated with immediacy using modern

communications technologies. The fact that mass communications include

> real images of real people suffering has played a role in developing a modern sensibility of the "other." Faced with images of the destruction of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, North Americans saw children and families as well as whole neighbourhoods destroyed in the blink of an eye. Suddenly, the enemy had a human face.
>
> It could be argued that with exposure to "real" images of the destructiveness of war combined with increased levels of public education, international travel, and mass communications, there is a growing consciousness of universal human rights and, more recently, of the notion that humans are part of the planet and they must care for their environment.
>
> With increased scientific knowledge and technological capacity comes a new measure of responsibility. It may be said that science and technology are the very heart of modern responsibility. In what sense can the harnessing of nuclear energy be seen as a sort of "coming of age" story of the 20th century, and what are the ethical consequences of this?
>
> **Teaching note:** The study films selected for this course highlight ethical questions related to war, peace, and the human condition. By the end of the course, students should be able to draw some conclusions and make some interpretation of the impact of war over the past century. Their reflection should consider many aspects of war: geography, economics, and political and social movements. Students may be guided to consider questions such as the following: Is the 20th century fundamentally different than previous centuries? Is it more violent than previous eras?

Cinematic Significance

- Stanley Kubrick (1928–1999) is an important filmmaker in the history of film.
- The film provides a masterful example of a black-and-white film.
- It has a rich cinematic language that can provide accessible lessons in visual literacy (e.g., camera shots and angles, techniques, and style).
- The film is a black comedy, which is an excellent example of satire.
- The film style allows students to compare elements of film genre (i.e., documentary, war films). The "war room" as depicted in the film became an iconic image, used as a figure of speech and copied in other films. President Reagan (a movie star turned President of the U.S.), on his first tour of the White House, reportedly asked to see the "war room." When he was told there wasn't one, he replied that there must be a war room, as he had seen it in Kubrick's film.
- Dr. Strangelove, released in 1964, was the first commercially successful political satire about nuclear war. Students need to consider the context of time and place in their analysis of the film's satire (e.g., the nuclear arms race, the Cold War, the Bay of Pigs crisis). They may conduct research on "MAD"—mutually assured destruction—which was considered at the time a legitimate military theory based on the concept of nuclear deterrence.

Students may be invited to observe how Kubrick illustrates the absurdity of this reasoning. Given the political reality of the time, the subject of the end of the world was not at all funny, but very frightening. Discuss the role of satire in entertainment and in dealing with stressful historical circumstances. Refer to the following website for further background on the film: www.filmsite.org/drst.html

Before Viewing

- Before viewing this film, students should be familiar with the meaning of satire and should recognize that the goal of satire is never simply to entertain, but also to convey a moral position or point of view (refer to Charlie Chaplin's satire of Hitler in *The Great Dictator*).

  Teaching note: Satire makes fun of human vice or folly, holding it up to judgment. Although satire is a form of comedy, its intent is not simply to be humorous, but to use wit to attack something of which the author disapproves.

  Students may be invited to choose and share examples of satire in literature or film. As a group, they can analyze various techniques used by writers and filmmakers to ridicule the character, idea, or group depicted (e.g., exaggeration, parody, caricature, etc.).

- *Dr. Strangelove* is a satirical film. Unlike a film such as *Merry Christmas*, where historical information about a little-known event of the First World War is best reserved for discovery after viewing the film, the satire of *Dr. Strangelove* cannot be fully appreciated without first having acquired knowledge about the historical topics it addresses. Since satire uses comedy to parody real facts and events, it is important that there be some research beforehand on the historical context. Without this prior historical knowledge, the impact of the film's satire is weakened.

Suggested historical topics for pre-research

1. The atomic bomb and the hydrogen bomb

   How and when was the atomic bomb invented? What was the Manhattan Project? What were the contributions of Einstein and Oppenheimer to the development of the atomic bomb? What is the difference between the atomic bomb and the hydrogen bomb?

   - Explain the theory of nuclear deterrence and assess whether it makes sense.
   - Sketch a brief timeline of key American nuclear testing events and turning points (i.e., time, place, event, consequences).
   - During the Second World War, for what reasons did the Allies decide to use the atomic bomb in Japan?

- What were the long-term and short-term consequences of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Consider the political and human impact.
- What is the significance of the beginning of the atomic era in human civilization?
- Conduct research on military nuclear accidents (submarines or aircraft carrying nuclear bombs).

Historical note: It has been estimated by Greenpeace and other organizations that since 1950, there have been 51 nuclear warheads lost at sea due to nuclear accidents. Since the end of the Cold War, nuclear nations continue to possess arsenals of operational weapons and the danger of nuclear accident persists. Analysts of military history have described the period of the Cold War as a time of vertical nuclear proliferation (in effect, a race of stockpiling between two nuclear superpowers), as opposed to the more recent horizontal proliferation (the acquisition of nuclear arms by an increasing number of countries). Students may carry out additional research on nuclear arms after the Cold War (e.g., topics such as the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and its signatory and non-signatory states, current nuclear-armed states, environmental issues surrounding the disposal or destruction of nuclear weapons, etc.).

2. The Cold War
   - What are the origins of the Cold War? How did the allies of the Second World War (U.S., Great Britain, and Russia) become long-term political enemies? Students may create a chart of causes and consequences.
   - Students may construct a chronology or timeline of the escalation points in the Cold War. Historical note: Include developments such as the construction of the Berlin Wall, the establishment of the Iron Curtain, the installation of Russian missiles in Cuba, the Bay of Pigs crisis in Cuba, the Vietnam War, etc.
   - How did the United States and the USSR become nuclear powers? Students may each select a key development to research and present (e.g., Einstein-Roosevelt letter, Manhattan Project 1942–1945, etc.). The letter from Einstein to FDR can be found at <www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/primary-resources/truman-ein39/>.
   - German academics and scientists were retrieved by the U.S. and the USSR to work on rocket programs. What role did they play in the arms race between the two superpowers?

   Note: Students may research the biography of the German scientist Werner von Braun and his involvement in the American space program after 1945. They will note the similarity between Dr. Strangelove and Werner von Braun (i.e., German accent, scientific/military research background, even the injured arm). For more information, refer to <http://history.msfc.nasa.gov/vonbraun/>.

During Viewing

- This may be a good occasion to assign specific viewing tasks to different students re: cinematic technique, acting, historical elements, satire, and humour. Consult viewing guides for suggestions.
- Invite students to observe the documentary style of filming in the Air Force command base and note how it appears to be very realistic (cinema vérité style) and the cuts to close-up shots of the cramped interior of the B-52 bomber and back to long, static shots of the Pentagon's huge underground war room.
- Invite students to identify and record the realistic elements of this film based on their pre-research. Initiate a discussion about the realistic and absurd elements in the film and their respective roles.

Teaching note: Student groups may be assigned viewing tasks "Realistic Elements" and "Absurd Elements" and compare their observations after viewing.

After Viewing

Initial response

- Discussion questions/screening journal questions: How does this film make you feel? What are the first impressions that remain with you after viewing?
- In this film, are there "good" and "bad" characters? What distinguishes them? How does the film use humour in its portrayal of characters? Record the names of the main characters and the impressions they create.
- In this film, is there a central message? What is this message and how is it expressed? Are there other secondary messages?
- Take note of scenes that had a strong satirical or humorous effect. What do these scenes depict?

Media literacy: response and reflection

- Analyze the role of the scenes that stood out the most for you in the film. What do you notice in the images, sounds, and character portrayal? What kinds of camera shots are used?
- Describe and comment on how music is used in this film (e.g., the opening theme, the tune linked to the B-52 bomber, the ending song).
- Describe all the elements of the film that are absurd, far-fetched, or exaggerated. How do these elements support the satiric message of the film?

Information note: Observe the names of the characters (i.e., Strangelove, Jack D. Ripper, Mandrake, Turgidson, Kissoff), the caricatured acting and expression, the accents and comical dialogue of the characters, the irony in the comedic treatment of military procedures, the army slogan "peace is our profession," etc.

- The themes of sex and death are predominant throughout the film. Gather observations of the images, words, and situations that highlight these two themes, and discuss how they are related.

Teaching note: The theories developed by German neurologist Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) had a profound effect on thinking in the 20th century. Freud believed that human psychology was ruled by two opposing desires: the life drive (survival instinct, sexual instinct, creative force) and the death drive (the instinct to return to a state of calm, or death wish). Students may be guided to observe many elements in the film that express these paradoxical instincts (e.g., the opening scene of the airplanes refueling as a metaphor for the sexual act, the sexual obsession of General Ripper and his "precious bodily fluids," the juvenile sexuality of General Turgidson, Strangelove's polygamist scheme to repopulate Earth, the obsessive interest in arms and destruction, the seeking of annihilation set against the desire to survive, the final scene of riding the atomic bomb, note the film's subtitle "how I learned to love the bomb,", etc.).

- How can satire be compared to simple comedy or parody or burlesque? Find examples of each in film and compare their characteristics.

Teaching note: Parody uses comic techniques to convey a moral message. Often it is used to express a moral outrage so strong that it cannot be expressed directly.

- Describe the scenes in the film that are treated in straight documentary style or that contain some elements of documentary style. What is the role of these quasi-documentary scenes in the film?

Teaching note: Stanley Kubrick is well known for his meticulous research (see other Kubrick films such as *2001: A Space Odyssey* or *Barry Lyndon*).

Some examples of documentary-style scenes: the refueling of the aircraft in the opening scene; the scenes of bomb explosions; the scenes on the attack of the military base by other American forces, scenes in the interior of the B-52 bomber. These scenes serve to support credibility, but also are used to highlight the absurdity of the situation.

The recreation of the interior of a B-52 cockpit was so detailed that the FBI conducted an inquiry into Kubrick's information sources. Observe the scrupulous arguments depicted in the dialogue scenes (e.g., among the president, Russian Prime Minister Turgidson, the ambassador, and Doctor Strangelove; between General Ripper and Mandrake; between Mandrake and Colonel Bat Guano).

Notice also the cinematic techniques used in various scenes: in the B-52 bomber, the film editing is rapid, with a succession of close-up shots; in other dialogue scenes such as in the war room, the shots are long and do not move around as the actors carry out the movement.

Historical thinking: response and reflection

- Create a diagram of the cause-and-effect chain that leads from the initial trigger of the crisis to the final atomic disaster. Assess the extent to which this sequence of events may be seen to be plausible.
- Compare how communist and capitalist ideologies are represented in the film and by which characters.
- Compare the representation of men and women in the film. How does the portrayal of the genders contribute to the satirical tone of the film? What does the portrayal of gender roles in the film tell us about the distribution of power in the 1960s?
- Do you think that the subject of atomic warfare would have been better dealt with in a serious film? Or do you believe that the satirical treatment of the topic, or the use of black humour, is a more effective way to awaken the public to the danger of atomic warfare?

Information note: This discussion may be organized as a debate between two opposing sides, supported by arguments that refer to both the impact of cinematic techniques and historical information acquired in pre-research.

- What does the film express about the filmmaker's historical interpretation of the Cold War, the nuclear arms race, and the threat of nuclear annihilation?
- In what sense does this film reflect the values of the 1960s? (Students could compare the film with other films from this period, or carry out a brief research into social values and change in the 1960s.)

Other films on the atomic bomb

- *Atomic Café*. Dir. Jayne Loader, Kevin Rafferty, Pierce Rafferty, 1982, Finland. Documentary. (Using U.S. propaganda films from the Cold War period.)
- *Hiroshima mon amour*. Dir. Alain Resnais, 1959, France.
  (Feature film, not an easy film for students, adult topics.)
- *If You Love this Planet*. Dir. Terre Nash with Helen Caldicott, 1982, National Film Board. Canada. Documentary (Oscar winner).
- *Trinity and Beyond*. Dir. Peter Kuran, 1994, U.S.
  (Documentary on the history of the atomic bomb, includes archival footage of American nuclear test sites.)
- *The Fog of War*. Dir. Errol Morris, U.S.
- *Fail-Safe*. Dir. Sidney Lumet, U.S., drama/science fiction, 1964. Based on the novel by Eugene Burdick.

Notes

Persepolis. Dir. Marjolaine Satrapi, France/U.S.: France 3 Cinema, 2007. Animation, black and white with colour sequences. Classification PG, not recommended for young children. 95 min. DVD, Sony Home Entertainment.

Historical Themes/Topics

Rule of the Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, 1941–1979 and Westernization policy; the Islamic Revolution in Iran, 1979; Iran–Iraq War, 1980–1988.

Historical Context

This film is essentially about the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979. The themes are revolution, ideology, and oppression. In particular, the film deals with the impact of the Islamic revolution on women and children. Students should do some pre-research on the period of protest and civil unrest against the Shah's authoritarian rule, the rise of Islamic nationalism, and the events leading to the Islamic revolution. They need to know the following terms used in the film: *Marxism, Leninism, nationalism, socialism, anarchism, proletariat, revolution, repression, ideology, Westernization, Islam, fundamentalism, feminism*, etc. They need to acquire background knowledge about Iran-U.S. relations under the Shah, the causes of the Islamic Revolution, the Iraq/Iran War (1980–1988), and the role of women during this period.

Note that this film has caused controversy at various points in several Arab countries. Refer to the following news reports:

http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/02/13/iranian-official-singles-out-persepolis/

www.guardian.co.uk/film/2012/jan/27/persepolis-trial-tunisia-postponed

Before Viewing

Cinematic significance

Persepolis is an animated film for adults. Although there have been feature animation films for adults before *Persepolis*, none were as personal and political as this film. The film is adapted from Marjane Satrapi's graphic novel in four volumes, in which the author tells her life story in an authentic but imaginary style. In collaboration with French director Vincent Paronnaud, Satrapi decided to use a new medium to tell the story of *Persepolis* using the language of cinematographic technique. The film uses the medium of cinema very successfully, using traditional animation technique—that is, creating thousands of still images without digital intervention—and preserving the original characteristics of Satrapi's books. The film moves the story along continuously, though a variety of superb and very realistic characters and many strongly emotional or humorous moments. The effect is the telling of an event in modern history from the personal perspectives of the people who lived through it. It demonstrates the power of cinema in facilitating historical perspective-taking.

Suggested topics for pre-research

- On a contemporary map, locate Iran and its neighbouring countries. Compare with a historical map of the same region to locate Persia and its borders. Brainstorm ideas about the strategic elements of Iran's location.
- Find out about the natural resources of Iran. What might be the strategic impact of this on recent history in Iran?
- Find out about religious and ethnic groups in Iran and the relationship between Iran and other Muslim states.
- Find out about the film's title, *Persepolis*. Why do you think Satrapi chose the name of the ancient capital of Persia as its title?
- Find out about Mohammed Reza Pahlevi (Shah of Iran from September 1941 to February 1979) and his cultural and political impact. What powers upheld his regime? What was life like for Iranians under the Shah's regime?
- Research the beginnings of the Iranian revolution, its leader, and his previous history (Shi'i imam Ayatollah Khomeini and his 14 years in exile in France). Investigate the meaning of the concept of *theocracy* as it relates to Khomeini's rule.
- Research the impact of the revolution and the Islamic Republic on Iranians, especially women and children.
- Research the causes and consequences of the war between Iran and Iraq (1980–1988). Find out about relations between Iran and the West—in particular, Europe and USA during this period (e.g., Iranian hostage crisis from 1979–1981).

Suggested Sources

Film Education (UK) has suggested teacher notes and background information on the film at <www.filmeducation.org/persepolis/teachers-notes.html>.

The History Channel also includes useful information on the Iran-Iraq War at <www.history.com/topics/iran-iraq-war>.

During Viewing

Screening note: This film lasts 95 minutes and should be viewed in two separate sections. A recommended viewing schedule is Chapters 1–13 as the first part (up to Marjane's departure to Vienna from Iran), and Chapter 13 to the end in the second viewing session.

During the viewing, students may take note of the elements of the film that are familiar and the elements that are foreign to them.

Students may make an inventory of the realistic and imaginary elements in the film.

After Viewing

Initial response

Students may enter responses to one or more of the following questions in their screening journals:

- What feelings and impressions remain with you right after screening?
- Are there any "good" and "bad" characters in this film? Who are they and what distinguishes them?
- What do you think of the personality of Marji? Do you find her to be realistic? Can you relate to her?
- What do you think is the main message of this film? Is it a political message or a message about human nature?
- Describe the scenes you found most compelling, and explain why they are important in the film.
- Do you think that the true subject of this film is Marji's personal life or the story of her country? How are the personal story and the political story related and combined in the film?

Media literacy: response and reflection

- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using animation to tell this story. Do you think it would have been more effective with real actors? (This activity can take the form of a debate with two sides.)

- This film is presented both in colour and in black and white. How do these two styles interact in the film and what do they represent?
- The original graphic novel by Marjane Satrapi does not present the story with any flashback in time, but follows a linear timeline throughout the four volumes. What effect does the use of flashback have in the film?

Teaching note: Invite students to compare the graphic novel to the animated film. The use of colour (scenes in the present) and black and white (scenes in the past) introduce an element of nostalgia or melancholy, and invite the viewer to step back from the main character's biography.

- Marjane Satrapi and Vincent Paronnaud insisted that well-known actors perform the voice-overs (without accents) in each of the languages in which the film was screened. Why do you think they did this?

Teaching note: Animated films from a child's perspective encourage the viewer to connect to the characters. Satrapi stated in interviews about making the movie that she wanted the story to remain universal, so that Westerners would not dismiss it as a "merely Arab" tale, in a pejorative sense. The use of voices of known actors without foreign accents helps the viewer identify more with the character and gives the story a more universal character.

Historical thinking: response and reflection

- Compare the impact on the Iranian people of the Shah of Iran regime with the impact of the Islamist regime.
- Draw a concept map that shows how the various ideologies represented in the film relate to one another. Which ideologies were opposed to the Shah's regime? Which ideologies were opposed to one another?
- Because the director is Iranian, the film depicts the daily life of people in Iran from an insider's perspective. How does this approach help you understand the perspective of the people of Iran during the time of the Shah and during and after the Islamic Revolution? (historical perspective)
- How does this film help to break down stereotypes about modern Iran and Iranian people?
- If we were to consider this film as an interpretation of a history, what does the film tell us about the filmmaker's point of view regarding the Iranian revolution?

Beyond the Film

Children's films and censorship

The freedom of expression of filmmakers and artists in the Islamist state of Iran was strictly subjected to censorship. Film directors quickly discovered that films for children were less subject to scrutiny by the authorities. As a result, a number of filmmakers set about creating films for children, and

their work impressed the critics and moviegoers alike by their cinematic quality. Although the storyline of these films was often simple, they had great psychological depth. As in *Persepolis*, we see a very honest reflection of everyday life in these children's films, a dimension sometimes missing in the official adult films of the same period.

In the same way, in Eastern Europe during the period of communist rule, the arts—including cinema—were subject to censorship. For an example of a short animation film that deals with the theme of oppression in Soviet ruled countries, see *The Hand*.

As a part of a study of the theme of state oppression versus individual freedom, students may also view *The Lives of Others* about life in communist East Berlin (1984).

Further research (film as art)

- Students may read the graphic novels on which the film is based and compare the effects of the message in both media.
- Students may carry out research into miniature Persian stamps, paintings, and illuminated manuscripts, and observe the effect of this cultural tradition on visual elements on the film's aesthetic look.
- The black-and-white aesthetic of the film is also highly influenced by German expressionism of the early 20th century. Students may want to compare the visual effects with excerpts of films such as Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927) or films by F.W. Murnau, such as the classic vampire silent film *Nosferatu* (1922), *Faust* (1926), or *The Testament of Doctor Mabuse* (1933). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-WnY_ZmT9E

Students may ask themselves whether the film's title, *Persepolis*, may have been influenced by *Metropolis*.

- Students may watch other Iranian films, such as the following:

  Abbas Kiarostami, *Where is the Friend's Home?*
  www.imdb.com/title/tt0093342/

  Bahram Beizai, Bashu, *The Little Stranger*
  www.imdb.com/title/tt0096894/

  Jafar Panahi, *The White Balloon*
  www.imdb.com/title/tt0112445/

  Or more recent Iranian films by popular and influential Iranian filmmaker Mohsen Makhmalbaf.

Notes

Manufactured Landscapes. Dir. Jennifer Baichwal, photography by Edward Burtynsky. Canada: National Film Board, 2007. Photographic documentary. Classification PG, 70 min. DVD. Genie Awards 2007: Best Documentary.

Historical Themes/Topics

Environmental impact, industrialization, history of documentary film

Cinematic Significance

Since the beginning of the 21st century, full-length documentary film—once thought to be outdated—has seen a renaissance in theatres. In the 1980s and 90s, the documentary form had become almost exclusively restricted to television, because it provided cable distributors with a wide variety of content that was relatively inexpensive to produce. The programs also had the advantage of supplying Canadian content on a wide variety of topics to cable distributors in accordance with CRTC regulations. On the negative side, this meant that documentaries were formatted in half-hour or one-hour programs with frequent interruptions for advertising. Additionally, television broadcasters restricted the creative control of documentary producers, even in the case of "auteur" genre documentaries produced by the National Film Board.

An unexpected change has taken place in recent years, with a number of feature-length documentary films attracting public attention in cinemas, initially through film festivals such as Hot Docs in Canada (available at <www.hotdocs.ca/>) and later in commercial cinemas with a wider audience. New avenues were opened by films such as Michael Moore's *Roger and Me* (1989), or his polemical *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004), the Canadian film *The Corporation* (2004), or the American film *Supersize Me* (2004), and particularly the controversial Oscar-winning film *An Inconvenient Truth* (D. Guggenheim, Al Gore, 2006). In

many cases, these documentaries were more interesting for their content than for their cinematic art. Most were low-budget, using few resources for sets and amateur equipment for cameras, lighting, and sound. (*An Inconvenient Truth*, for example, appears to be more a slideshow than a documentary film.) But the important element in this film is to discuss global warming, the arms build-up in the U.S., and the role of multinational corporations: these subjects permit the documentary to do what it does best, which is to offer an alternative view, to express a counter-opinion, and to engage in and provoke social debate.

In Canada, the National Film Board responded by producing more of this style of documentary, either independently or in co-production with other companies, having found a new audience for a genre that seemed to be in danger of disappearing.

Manufactured Landscapes, directed by Jennifer Baichwal, has some similarity in appearance to *An Inconvenient Truth*. In both films, there is a man giving a lecture, supported by photographs. But that is where the similarity ends. In the Al Gore film, the photography supports the points the lecturer is making; in *Manufactured Landscapes*, the narration supports the photography. Edward Burtynsky is, above all, a photographer and his complex message is best expressed through images rather than through words. Although its implicit message is clear, the filmmaker steers away from making an overt ideological statement and its tone is radically different from the polemical character of *An Inconvenient Truth*.

Before Viewing

Pre-research

- Students may engage in research about the history of documentary film and the various styles of documentary. (Refer to the section on film genres for background and suggested resources.)

  Teaching note: Students will note that in Canada, as in many countries, documentary film is the source of a national cinematography. In many countries, documentary originated as a means of recording actions of war and was used as a form of propaganda to convince the public to support the war effort. Students may wish to carry out research into the role of John Grierson, the first director of Canada's National Film Board, and his approach to documentary. Students may also view the NFB film *Nanook of the North*, which is sometimes said to be the first documentary. This film is greatly admired by John Grierson as a model of documentary film.

  Students may also view excerpts of early documentary NFB war films to observe how documentaries can do more than simply reflect reality; they can influence the public's perception of reality. Students may select and discuss examples of documentary films that clearly express a political or social judgment or an alternate version of the facts that seeks to open the eyes of the public to a lesser-known reality.

- Invite students to select and view a news report that deals with one of the subjects in *Manufactured Landscapes*, and to discuss differences of style and content between a news report and a documentary.

  Teaching note: A news report pertains more to journalism than to documentary film. News reports are produced rapidly, generally for television or online viewing, and are less concerned with reflection on the reality they present. Often, news reports express no opinion at all, but focus solely on the facts. Television channels generally prefer news reports to documentary, as they are less controversial, more suited to short and rapid transmission of information, and generally have a more predictable style.

- Invite students to research examples of human projects over the course of history that have radically transformed the landscape of Earth. Conduct a discussion on the question of whether the "manufactured landscapes" of modern history are significantly different from those of the past.

  Teaching note: Students may collect images of historical constructions such as the Egyptian pyramids, Greek and Roman architecture, Mayan and Aztec temples and cities, the Great Wall of China, Machu Picchu, Angkor Wat, etc., and compare these to examples of modern transformations of the natural environment, such as the Three Gorges Dam, the Panama Canal, the Suez Canal, the Hoover Dam, the International Space Station, or other human constructions that alter the environment significantly.

- Generate a discussion with students about questions of aesthetics and ethical ambiguity. This may be supported by inviting students to find examples of powerful photographic images that evoke a sense of beauty while dealing with subjects that are sometimes catastrophic or tragic. Students may consider perspectives of the ethical responsibility of the mass media with respect to "witnessing history" impartially, seeking an emotional response or compelling a certain ideology. Invite students to view a website or book of photos by Burtysnky, imagining his images as the very large installations they are.

  Possible source of images in this discussion:

  - Edward Burtynsky
    www.edwardburtynsky.com/
  - French photographer Yann Arthus-Bertrand
    www.yannarthusbertrand.org/en
  - Photographs of the Deepwater Horizon oils spill in the Gulf of Mexico
    www.theguardian.com/environment/2010/oct/10/deepwater-horizon-edward-burtynsky-photographs

- Invite students to conduct research on industrial development in Asia and how China became the greatest manufacturing country in the world economy.

Teaching note: Students may conduct further research into the historical changes in China that led to its massive industrialization and its growing role in the world economy in the latter part of the 20th century. As the Chinese economy became more capitalistic, and with the return of highly industrialized and entrepreneurial Hong Kong to Chinese rule in 1997, factories began to proliferate in China. Growth in the manufacturing sector was further supported by the lower pay scales of Chinese workers compared to Western industrialized countries, and an increased demand for manufactured goods (e.g., televisions, electronics, computers, cars) in the growing Chinese middle class. In this climate of rapid industrial growth, primary resource and energy exploitation became very significant, and environmental standards took a back seat to rapid and large-scale development.

Resources

- BBC News Asia. China Profile: A Chronology of Key Events
  www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13017882
- BBC News Asia. Hong Kong Profile: A Chronology of Key Events
  www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-16526765

During Viewing

- Invite students to take note of the images and scenes in the film that are most powerful, and to focus on their first impressions of the message that Edward Burtynsky is trying to convey in his photographs. Encourage students to note details in the still photos as well as the video.
- Ask students to note the use of high-angle shots, lateral camera movements, and camera zooms in and out. Students may take viewing notes under two columns, *Still Photography* and *Video*, in order to observe and compare the elements of both media and how they may complement one another.

  Media literacy teaching note: This film can capture the viewer by the ambiguous beauty of its photography and its contemplative rhythm, among other artistic elements that led to its recognition with numerous awards. Nevertheless, it is weak in terms of its storyline or narrative structure, which is a familiar element not only in fictional film but also in documentary. This film does not have a progression from beginning to end, as students are accustomed to seeing in Hollywood-style cinematic productions. Because of this lack of narrative development, it is important to prepare students to observe carefully and to focus on the photographic images, and possibly to break down the viewing into shorter segments.

After Viewing

Initial response

- Conduct a debriefing discussion to allow students to express the feelings evoked by the film's images and the impressions that remain with them after viewing, including still images, video, and soundtrack.
- Invite students to observe how the director Jennifer Baichwal combines her filming with the still photographs of Burtynsky. How does the film complement the perspective of Burtynsky? What does the film do that the still photographs cannot do?

  Teaching note: Encourage students to think about the process of making this film, using the very large scale, very detailed still photos of Burtynsky (generally his photos are displayed in a very large format). On the one hand, Baichwal wants to respect Burtynsky's vision, but without making her documentary film into a simple compilation of still photos. (Many people think this film is Burtynsky's because of the prominence of his images, just as many people think that Al Gore is the director of *An Inconvenient Truth*.) This is a film about photography, and Baichwal uses film to show what the art of photography can do when complemented by the art of film. What do film and still photography have in common and how are they different from one another? Students may be invited to pick excerpts of the film that illustrate the contrasts of movement versus stillness, sound versus silence, directed viewing versus free viewing, the passage of time versus frozen in time, etc.
- As a filmmaker, Baichwal takes an approach that replicates Burtynsky's photography, moving our view from the very large to the very detailed stories contained in the large image. She moves seamlessly from the initial impact of the macro-view to plunge us into the multiple details of the micro-view of the scene. To do so, she uses camera movement dramatically, from high-angle shots to lateral travelling, to zooming in to examine a scene, to zooming out to the large picture. The first scene of the film—several minutes of a sustained lateral travelling shot of the Chinese factory—has a "Burtynsky" effect, guiding the spectator's gaze from right to left over the entire scene and inviting a response to its impact. The musical score has a relentlessly industrial but somewhat hypnotic tone, moving us onward through the images without narration or instruction.
- Encourage students to observe the editing process used in the film—in particular, the very fluid transitions from the moving image to the still photograph.

  Media literacy teaching note: The cinematographer uses camera movement (zoom or travelling) to bring us into the world of the still photo, inviting us to meditate on its details, and then moves us back out again into the moving image and the human elements of the scene. The film may be seen as a sort of continuing dialogue between scale and detail (macro and micro), destruction and beauty, stillness and movement.

- Generate a discussion about the film's narration, inviting students to consider how the lack of didactic explanation serves to highlight the impact of the images. Invite students to consider whether the filmmaker appears to be condemning or praising any of the elements she is depicting.

  Media literacy teaching note: Burtynsky's message is expressed through his photos, and these photos express a contradictory reality: an impression of beauty alongside the realization of environmental devastation. The fundamental ambiguity of this message is part of the reality of global citizenship in modern times. Near the end of the film, we hear Burtynsky state his point of view: he does not judge the human activity, even though he knows that his images support an environmentalist perspective. He invites us to consider a different way of thinking about human progress and development with respect to the environment. He urges us to avoid a black-and-white approach to questions of industrialization versus environmental impact. His vision is more an artistic (rather than judgmental) view of human attitudes toward progress, development, the production of consumer goods, and the price we pay for these activities with respect to the planet. This message haunts his images and invites us to think of the human condition and its ambiguous nature. Baichwal's film adds to this message the human dimension: people sorting through electronic waste in China, workers on the roads surrounding the huge Three Gorges Dam project, people stripping commercial fishing boats, factory workers seeking to accelerate production, etc. The Burtynsky photos provide a reference point that gives us a symbolic idea of the scale of the landscape in which these human activities are taking place. There is no condemnation of these actions; there is simply a portrayal of their humanness in the context of their damaging effects.

Historical thinking: response and reflection

- Generate a discussion about whether Edward Burtynsky's photographs constitute a valid secondary source of historical information. Invite students to consider the advantages and disadvantages of the artistic interpretation of a historical theme or subject.

  Teaching note: Photography, as well as documentary film, can create misunderstanding when dealing with a historical subject. Both focus the attention on a selected portion of reality, and both can give the impression of great objectivity. Nevertheless, photography and cinema can only present a single fixed perspective of a subject, depending upon the choice of angle, the distance from the subject, and the framing of the shot. These factors can greatly influence the viewer's point of view. In the case of a documentary, even the editing process is a subjective choice of the filmmaker, and can have an effect on how the message is received by the viewer. Both are visual documents that are well suited to presenting a perspective of reality but not necessarily to the objective presentation of reality. Having said this, Burtynsky`s images are compelling because they are systematically shot from a perspective of reality that people rarely

have the chance to see (e.g., the factory scenes in China, the Three Gorges Dam, the dismantling of ships in Bangladesh).

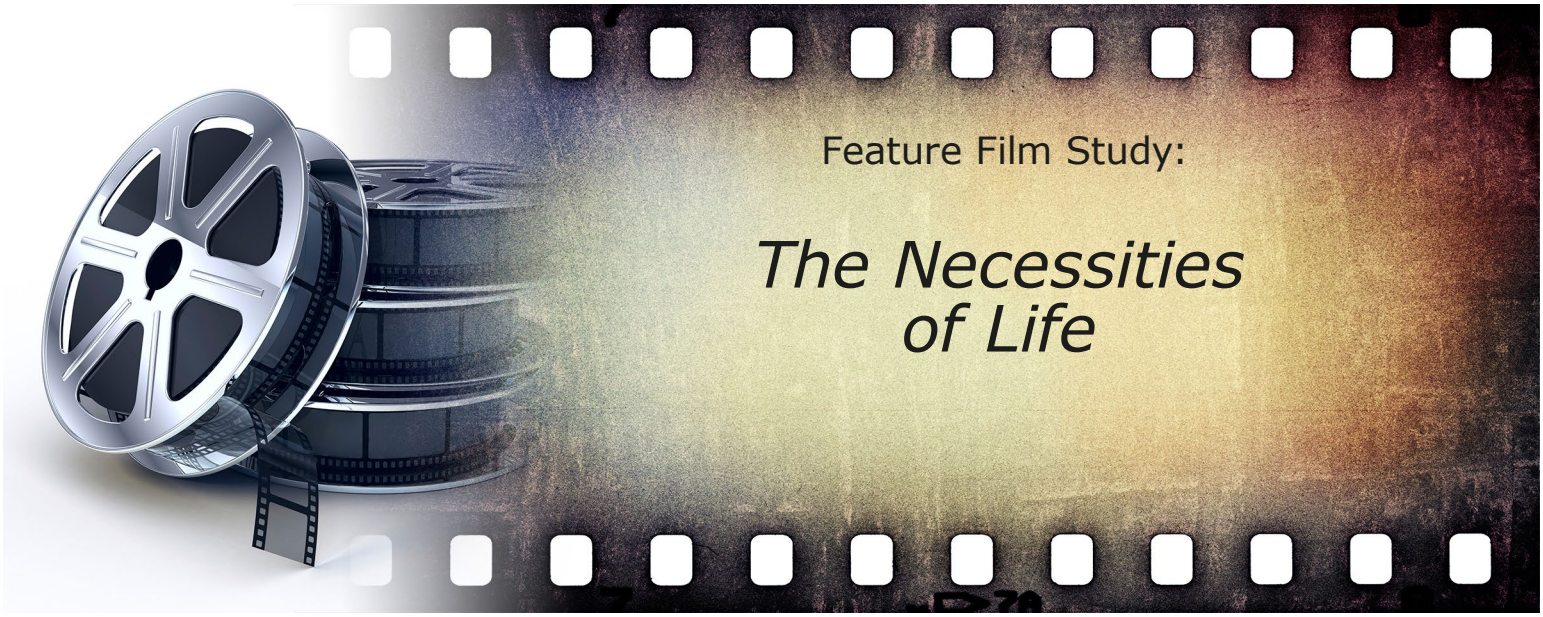
- Organize a debate between two teams of students with opposing points of view:
  - Team A defends the advantages of technical development and argues that a certain amount of damage to the environment is inevitable. It is the price we have to pay for the production of material goods, and all human beings want material goods.
  - Team B maintains that human beings have a responsibility to protect the natural environment at all costs, and that we should ban any development that has a destructive impact on nature.
- After the debate, open the discussion to find a zone of compromise wherein development and the protection of nature are both acknowledged and can possibly even complement one another.
- Invite students to collaborate to analyze Burtynsky's work as a social artifact (primary source), supported by research into the historical and social context of the creation of this film.

Beyond the Film

Students may be asked to view and respond to the following films in order to compare style, photography, or message:

- *An Inconvenient Truth* (Davis Guggenheim, 2006)
  http://documentaries-plus.blogspot.ca/2013/12/an-inconvenient-truth.html
- *Home* (Yann Arthus-Bertrand, 2009)
  Teacher Guide available online:
  www.homethemovie.org/en/education/home-education
- *Watermark* (Edward Burtysnky, 2013)
  www.edwardburtynsky.com/site_contents/Films/Watermark_Film.html

Notes



The Necessities of Life (Ce qu'il faut pour vivre). Dir. Benoît Pilon. Canada: Seville Pictures, 2008. Biography. Classification General, 102 minutes. French and Inuktitut (English voice-over). DVD, APTN (2008).

Historical Themes/Topics

Inuit culture and European contact, displacement of Inuit peoples, tuberculosis epidemics in the North

Historical Context

The Inuit are one of three constitutionally recognized Indigenous peoples of Canada. Traditional Inuit culture, adapted to survival in the North, is unique to the region and differs from other Indigenous cultures. Early in Canadian history, some Inuit people had sporadic initial encounters with European culture (e.g., with the Norse in the Labrador and Newfoundland region, in 1576 with Martin Frobisher in the search for the Northwest Passage, and later in the 19th century with Europeans in northern whaling stations). However, because the lands of the North were of little interest to European settlers, the impact of modern European ways of life was not felt until fairly late—in effect, only in the early 20th century. Until that time, the Inuit were one of the few remaining nomadic peoples of the northern hemisphere, with a distinct oral tradition and set of life practices. The early European explorers named them *Eskimo* (meaning "eaters of fish"), a Western appellation that is today rejected by many Inuit groups. The name *Inuit*, which means *the people* (plural), is how they referred to themselves in their own language (*inuk* is the singular form). Today, their population is only about 50,000 in Canada, which is partly a result of the radical impact of Western culture on their way of life, health, and posterity.

The Inuit made political choices that differed considerably from those of other Indigenous peoples. In the time of first contact, the Inuit did not sign treaties with the European arrivals; however, in 1976, they began negotiations with the federal government for the creation of a self-governing territory in the eastern and central Arctic called Nunavut ("our land"), with specific agreements about the management of natural resources, the hiring of local workers, and the sharing of profits. The territory of Nunavut was established in 1999. Similarly, an Inuit regional government (Nunavik) was negotiated in northern Quebec, with approximately 9000 inhabitants.

These more recent successes have not erased the ill treatment of Inuit populations in the past: entire communities were displaced from their traditional regions without any consideration for their basic needs and access to the resources required for their survival. Inuit persons were assigned numbers instead of names (this practice is referred to in the scene in the boat at the beginning of the film), and at times communities suffered crises from illness and starvation. In spite of this, some individuals had very positive relationships with the Inuit communities, including, among others, the explorers Elzéar Bernier and Alfred Tremblay, who were Arctic mariners assisted and supported by the Inuit in their travels in the early 20th century.

About the Film

The film *The Necessities of Life* (Ce qu'il faut pour vivre) takes place in the 1950s when a tuberculosis epidemic was taking place in the North. Contact with Europeans had brought along with it tuberculosis (sometimes called consumption), a disease that spread particularly rapidly in Inuit populations where there was little immunity to the illness. In the 1950s, more than one-third of Inuit people had tuberculosis (TB). The principal treatment for TB was in-patient care in a sanatorium, which involved displacing patients for an extended period of time to a city in the South. It is this experience that is depicted in the film.

The film depicts Inuit culture from the point of view of Quebec in the 1950s. It deals non-judgmentally with the impact of intercultural contact, without resorting to sentimentality and without creating simplistic dualistic characterizations of good versus evil. Illness is the sole real enemy of all the characters. The dialogue and the direction show the course of history unfolding, with the traditional nomadic life of the Inuit hunter in the process of disappearing. Technological and scientific advances are spreading, and change appears to be inevitable. The impact includes positive as well as negative repercussions (e.g., the TB treatment of Tivii is successful, and the telephone allows him to speak to his wife).

The film moves slowly and has a contemplative and almost solemn mood. It combines the Inuit world view of Tivii, as the filmmaker conceives it, with that of a world that is completely different. The result is a cultural shock so strong that Tivii loses his desire to live: he feels lost and overwhelmed by a strange world. The society into which he is transplanted is completely foreign to him,

including the language, customs, and even the relations between men and women. In the second part of the film, he meets the boy Kaki and, in effect, returns to life. He finds a reason to survive by offering to teach Kaki to become a hunter.

Suggested research topics before viewing the film

- The creation of Nunavut
- Inuit culture and life; cultural change as a result of connections to the South
- Displacement of Inuit populations for sovereignty motivations
- Arctic exploration by Europeans
- North Pole expeditions supported by Inuit guides
- Historical and strategic importance of the North to European countries (resources, DEW line, defense and transportation, Arctic sovereignty questions, etc.)
- History of tuberculosis (consumption) in Canada and its impact on the Inuit population

Resources

- Tuberculosis History in Canada
  www.lung.ca/tb/tbhistory/
- Museum of Health Care, TB in Canada
  http://museumofhealthcare.ca/explore/exhibits/breath/tb-in-canada.html
- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, Canada's Relationship with the Inuit: A History of Policy and Program Development
  www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100016900/1100100016908
- Listening to Our Past, The Creation of Nunavut
  www.tradition-orale.ca/default.html

Viewing the Film

Recommended viewing segments

This film has very strong visual qualities, but its rhythm is slow and contemplative. The following scenes are recommended for viewing with students:

- 00:00 to 09:54—Beginning in the Arctic, in the boat and arrival in Quebec.
- 36:13 to 49:16—Return and illness of Tivii, arrival of Kaki
- 1: 09:21 to 1:19:20—The story with the strings
- 1:28:53 to the end (1:38:00)—End, death of Kaki and return to the Arctic

Cinematic technique

The 1950s, as depicted in this film, borrows from the clear lines of the French cartoonist Hergé. This was the period of the great success of Hergé's *Tintin* cartoons (the young nurse offers a Tintin album to Kaki in the film). The cartoonist's aesthetic is one of very pure, clear drawing lines, with flat colours and no shadows. It is a world in two dimensions, flat and clear and clean. In a sense, the film imitates the spirit of such a style without copying it.

The 1950s are represented as a time when, contrary to the more rebellious 1960s, people did not question the ways of the world and the progress of the society in which they lived. They took on their world view and lifestyle without much self-consciousness and in a somewhat naïve way. Things appeared to be relatively simple and were taken for granted. Benoît Pilon recreates this world with his framing and lighting and his carefully applied and orderly style, letting the viewer move slowly to see everything in the plane of view. The camera movements are precise and symmetrical. The technique expresses a very orderly world that is organized and logical, which is characteristic of the urban world view of Canadians of this period. While this world evidently had order and logic from the point of view of the Quebecois characters, for Tivii, it was the source of enormous and deep confusion. Illness is the other element that refuses to respect the controlled orderly world: tuberculosis introduces chaos and death, the incomprehensible reality of the death of a child.

Quebec cinema

It is important to note that Benoît Pilon is from Quebec and is not himself an Indigenous filmmaker. This is his first film and it is not at all typical of cinema in Quebec, in the sense that the protagonist is Inuit rather than Quebecois. Quebec cinema developed in the latter 20th century with the Quebec market in mind—that is, films that reflect the reality, life, identity, and language of Quebec. This strategy has led to enormous success inside Quebec, but on the other hand it has been generally met with indifference in anglophone Canada, as well as elsewhere in the world. With some few exceptions (e.g., Denys Arcand, Denis Villeneuve), Quebec filmmakers have generally not been able to successfully enter other markets. At the same time, Benoît Pilon's work has been very well received by critics and by the general public.

Students may wish to compare this film to some other noteworthy examples of Quebec cinema that deal directly or indirectly with historical topics, such as *Mon oncle Antoine* or *Les orders*.

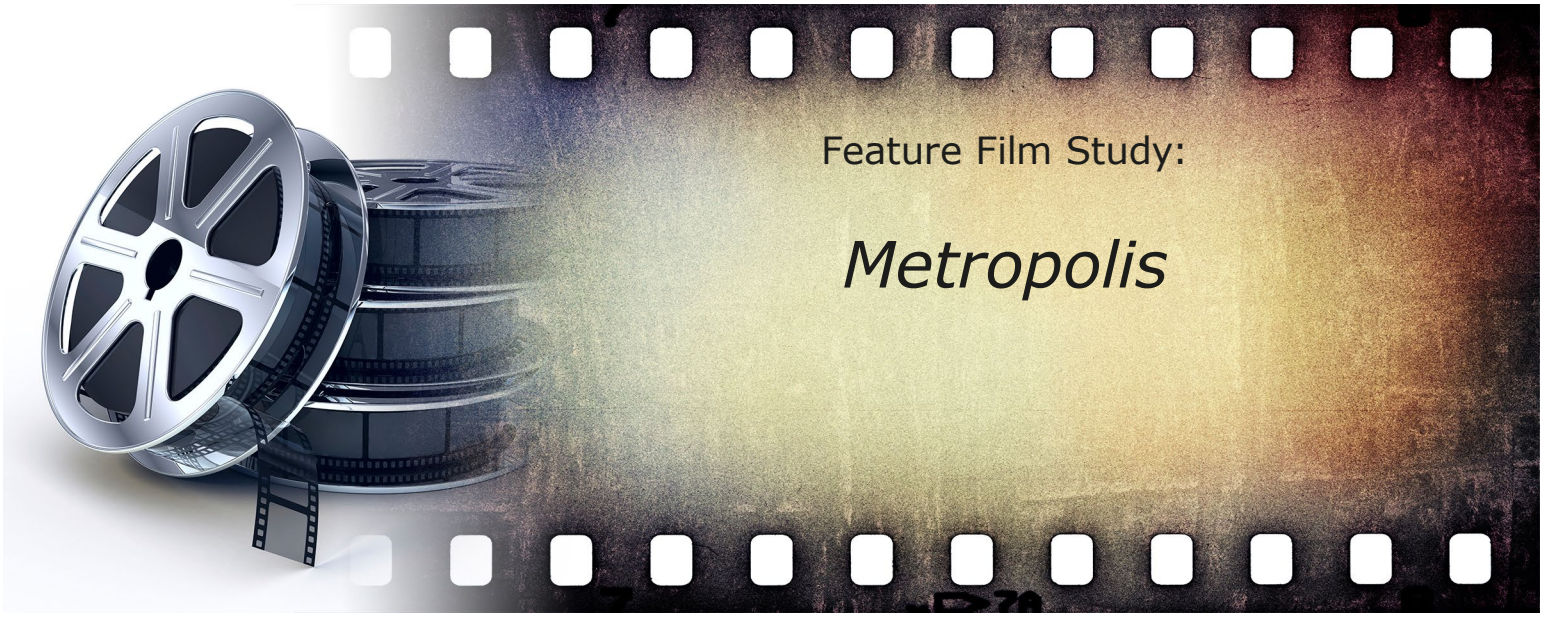
Other Films about the Inuit

Atanarjuat, the Fast Runner. Dir. Zacharias Kunuk. Canada, APTN, 2001.
This film represents Inuit tradition from within, depicting a legend told by an Inuit filmmaker.

Coppermine. Dir. Ray Harper. Ottawa, ON: National Film Board of Canada, 1992.

This is a visual documentary of an Inuit community in the grip of an epidemic of tuberculosis in 1929.

Notes



Metropolis. Dir. Fritz Lang, Germany, 1927. Black and white, silent. Classification G. 153 min. DVD, KinoVideo.

Historical Themes/Topics

Envisioning the future, the working class, impact of industrialization, and revolution

Cinematic Significance

Fritz Lang was a very prolific filmmaker in his time. Some of his films had a significant impact on the history of cinema as an art form and on the social climate of 1920s Europe, as well as on the memory and sensibility of millions of film viewers over the decades. This impact is not only due to the quality of the films themselves, but also because of Lang's underlying visionary impulse and his exploration of the unconscious mind. In this sense, his films are part of the surrealist movement, which was born in 1924 in Paris with André Breton's *Manifeste du Surréalisme*. Influenced by the emergence of the field of psychology and a growing interest in social liberation and freedom, surrealism became a broad artistic revolution that sought to merge reality and dream, the conscious and the unconscious mind.

Metropolis, like *The 1,000 Eyes of Dr. Mabuse* (1960, Lang's last film), represents German expressionism at the turn of the 20th century, which emphasized personal expression and rejected strict rules of style in the arts, film, and architecture. But the connection to surrealism is clear in many elements of the film, which combine to create a "kitschy" scenario, somewhat vulgar and melodramatic: the Freudian unconscious as the robot-temptress who fascinates men with her sexual appeal; the political revolution as the workers revolt;

the rejection of authority; the surreal visual elements inspired by Cubism, Bauhaus architecture, and artists such as Kandinsky.

Synopsis of the Film

Metropolis is a city of the future in which a privileged caste dominates a mass of slaves who are subjected to endless production in underground tunnels. A revolt is brewing among the workers, but the young Maria appeases their anger. To oppose Maria's influence, the chief of the city uses a female robot built by the academic Rotwang in the image of Maria. He wants to push the workers to revolt in order to oppress them further. However, his son is in love with the real Maria and opposes the female robot, who sparks a real catastrophe in the city. Everything is solved through reconciliation between the workers and the City Chief (in Marxist terms, labour and the means of production). Later, Fritz Lang is said to have declared that the final harmonious reconciliation between the master and the masses was a false conclusion, which he did not really support.

Historical Context

Strictly speaking, *Metropolis* is more a science fiction film than an historical film. However, to analyze the film historically is, in a sense, to plunge oneself into the consciousness of Germany of the 1920s. The interwar period was a time of alarming inflation in Germany, as it became increasingly isolated economically from the rest of Europe. The Weimar Republic had been established in 1919 to replace the crumbling imperial regime. The Republic, which was democratically elected, was being pulled in opposite directions by a variety of extremist factions from both the left and the right ends of the political spectrum. Following the order that was earlier imposed by Bismarck on the German Empire, the signing of the humiliating Treaty of Versailles at the end of World War I, and the cloud of the Russian Revolution, many Germans saw this as a period of economic, political, and moral chaos. The screenplay, written by Théa Von Harbou (the wife of Fritz Lang), shows a preoccupation with the problems of this period and deals with the issues using the science fiction genre.

The theme of the workers' revolt is at the centre of the film. It was a period of many populist ideologies in Europe, each group seeking to seduce the imagination of the workers and the many unemployed. On the left were the anarchists, labour unionists, communists, and socialists; on the right were the emerging but still somewhat hidden movements of the fascists in Italy and Nazis in Germany.

Metropolis shows the crowd of workers as an anonymous mass of people, oppressed and easily manipulated by one group or another. The real Maria entices the crowd toward Christian compassion and negotiation, while the false Maria urges them toward destructive violence. The workers are represented as children, subject to strong and uncontrollable emotions and

unable to consider the consequences of their actions (e.g., in their rage, they forget their children in the tunnels where they were left to drown).

Only certain individuals appear to be mature, complete human beings in the film: the Grand Master Joh Fredersen; his son; Maria; the wise man, Rotwang; and, to some extent, Grot and Josephat, the former right arm to Federsen.

The crowd scenes are expertly filmed and are said to have greatly impressed Goebbels and Adolf Hitler. In 1933, Goebbels declared his admiration for Fritz Lang and offered him a position as commissioner of cinema in Germany. Lang—who did not approve of Nazism—left Germany for good at that point (his mother was Jewish, a fact that Goebbels possibly did not know, but which made Lang vulnerable to future persecution). He exiled himself to France and later Hollywood, where he continued to pursue his career in film. Nevertheless, the imagery of *Metropolis* impressed Hitler so strongly that he strove to reproduce its reality in the large Nazi rallies (as mocked by Chaplin in *The Great Dictator*). Note that in *The Great Dictator* there is a scene where the crowd is crawling up the stairs that is almost identical to a scene in *Metropolis*.

A Note on Silent Film

Metropolis and Chaplin's *The Gold Rush* are recommended films for viewing to represent the period of silent film, the first period in the history of cinema. In this early cinema, film communicated only through images accompanied by live music. At its start, the language of cinema was, thus, communication through images—a primarily visual means of communication—in which lighting, composition, facial expression, and gesture, complemented by a few explanatory subtitles, told the entire story. Early cinema counted a great deal on pantomime, makeup, exaggerated movements, and body positions in order to convey a message (such as the witch-like, vicious posture of the female robot). In the eyes of today's spectators, these conventions can seem outdated and strange, and may even create confusion (e.g., the very emotional scene between a heavily made-up Freder and Josephat may be perceived as a homosexual scene, which may or may not have been the filmmaker's intention).

In addition, German expressionism tended to use exaggeration to communicate a message in order to create a very strong emotional reaction. (Expressionist painters were inspired by the strong, contrasting lines and colours of Van Gogh and preferred a palette of deep and sometimes clashing colours. They tended to use strong diagonal lines slicing across the vertical and horizontal planes to create a more shocking effect, to go beyond realism.)

Before Viewing

Historical pre-research

- Conduct research on German Expressionism in art (1920–1933) during the inter-war period: www.moma.org/explore/collection/ge/

Consider examples of the later influence of this style on American horror films.

- Conduct research on the end of the German Empire and the period of the Weimar Republic. Pay particular attention to the rise of extremist movements during this period (communism, fascism, Nazism) and the social and economic issues of the time in Europe.
- Conduct research on the impact of industrialization and assembly line production on the working classes and labour conditions in Europe at this time.
- Find out about *populism* and research examples of populist movements in history. What is the ideological opposite of populism?
- Compare communism, trade unionism, anarchism, fascism and Nazism. From which social classes did these movements draw their followers?

  Teaching note: Consider that these movements, although ideologically opposed, often sought to seduce the working class, as they were populist movements as opposed to movements that privileged a restricted upper class (such as the nobility or the aristocracy, plutocracy).

- Conduct research on Fritz Lang and his role in the history of cinema.

During Viewing

Recommended scenes for viewing (based on restored KinoVideo DVD):

Because of the length of this film, it is recommended that students view only some excerpts. To put the viewing in context, a synopsis of the film is provided.

- Scenes 1 to 9 (approx. 20 min.)
- Scenes 12 to 18 (approx. 15 minutes)
- Scenes 21 to 23 (approx. 10 minutes)
- Scene 26 (approx. 3 minutes)
- Scene 29 (approx. 3 minutes)
- Scenes 30 to end (approx. 16 minutes)

- Observe the visual representations of the effects of industrialization. Describe how the effects are portrayed.
- Observe the soundtrack and note its effects.
- Look for representations of various ideologies or "isms" in the film: communism, anarchism, fascism, socialism, labour unionism.
- Note some scenes that strike you as extremely unrealistic, or more realistic. Do any of the scenes remind you of more modern science fiction films?
- Make connections to historical events of this period: the Russian Revolution 1917, the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919, the rise of the Nazis in Germany, etc.

After Viewing

Initial response

- How did this film make you feel? What impression remains with you after viewing?
- How would you classify the genre of this film, and why? What is its tone or mood?

  Teaching note: we can see this film as a philosophical fable or lesson that uses the science fiction genre as a way of expressing its message. The filmmaker appears to use a fictitious society to condemn the practices of real industrialized societies. Note that Fritz Lang is an exceptional filmmaker but his universe is totally lacking in humour, unlike Chaplin (*The Great Dictator*) and Kubrick (*Doctor Strangelove*) who convey a moral judgment using humour and satire.

- Are there "good" and "evil" characters in this film? What distinguishes them?

  Teaching note: There is no ambiguity in the moral message of this film: the crazy inventor and his robot are clearly evil; Fredersen is evil at first but is redeemed through his love for his son; Josephat also redeems himself. Maria and Freder are clearly "good," yet their good intentions are weak and somewhat unimpressive. In typical Fritz Lang style, it is the "evil" characters who are the most interesting.

- What is the message of this film?

  Teaching note: The official message of the film is clearly articulated at the end: if modern society is to live in peace and harmony, its leaders need to treat the working classes with compassion (Christianity): the Head and the Hands are reconciled by the mediation of the Heart.

  Nevertheless, this simplistic message is contrasted by strongly imaginative scenes that seem to contradict it: we recall the arrogance and coldness of the Grand Master as a sort of fascinating calmness. We see the dehumanization of the crowd not only in their mindless work but also in their infantile and often violent behaviour. We recall the savage sexual image of the female robot more vividly than the "saintliness" of the real Maria.

Media literacy: response and reflection

- Choose some scenes that stay with you and explain why they had an impact on you. Describe the strongest visual elements of the film.

  Teaching note: Some artists have the gift of finding the perfect image to mark people's imagination—for example, the strong visual images in Chaplin or Hitchcock films. In *Metropolis*, the visuals have impressed many artists (including Madonna and Lady Gaga in their music videos). The robot image in the film is said to have inspired C-3P0 in *Star Wars*

and the city name *Metropolis* is used in the story of *Superman*. Consider the visual impact of the scene of the workers changing shifts on the elevator, the scene with Molloch, and the scene with Freder and the giant clock needles.

- The film is a sort of allegory that makes frequent references to Christianity. In a group, make an inventory of these cultural references.

  Teaching note: References include the Tower of Babel, the early Christians hiding in the catacombs in Rome, the symbol of the cross, the reference to a Messiah or compassionate mediator, the authoritative Father-God, the Gothic cathedral, the seven deadly sins, etc.

- Compare *Metropolis* to Chaplin's film *The Great Dictator*.
- Research examples of the influence of *Metropolis*'s visual effects on various contemporary music videos (e.g., Queen, Madonna, Whitney Houston, Lady Gaga). What do you think are some of the reasons for this continuing influence?

  Gallery of visual elements in *Metropolis*:
  www.acephotos.org/t636901/metropolis-photo-gallery-1.html

- Research the soundtrack history of *Metropolis* (original score by Gottfried Huppertz, the 1974 electronic score, the 1984 rock soundtrack, the 2000 techno score, and new orchestral versions since the beginning of the *Metropolis* restoration project in 2008). Refer to <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/*Metropolis*_(film)#Other_soundtracks>.

Historical thinking: response and reflection

- If we were to consider the film as a source of historical information about the time and place in which it was produced, what does it tell us about the historical context? What does it reveal about the perspective of German citizens of that period?
- Fritz Lang has been accused of creating in *Metropolis* a film that implicitly justified the basis of the Nazi ideology. What might be the reasons for this interpretation, and do you think it is justified?
- Make an inventory of all the elements of the film that refer to its real historical context (i.e., Europe of the 1920s).
- Describe the class structure of the world of *Metropolis*.

Beyond the Film

- Compare elements of the film to a more recent science-fiction film.

  Teaching note: Adjusting for inflation, the budget to create *Metropolis* would cost about $300 million in 2013. The film production of the time did not have access to digital special effects, and involved some 37,000 extras.

The Lives of Others. Dir. Florian Henckel Von Donnersmarck, Germany, 2006. Colour, German (English subtitles), Classification 14A, 137 min., DVD, Sony Pictures Entertainment.

Historical Themes/Topics

Authoritarian regimes—oppression and resistance; Cold War; life in East Germany under Communist rule

About the Film

The Lives of Others begins in 1984, the symbolic year made famous in the futuristic book by George Orwell. The novel *1984* is likely the best preparatory reading to help students understand how totalitarian ideology can come to dominate the citizens of a state while purporting to act in their best interest—that is, how ideology can be used to justify the abuse of power and the suppression of individual and collective freedom. Orwell's book examines in particular how the media—and language itself—can be used to monitor and control every aspect of the private lives of individuals in the name of the state. The society of *1984* was inspired by Nazism and totalitarian communist states.

The communist states established in post-war Eastern Europe, in Mao's China, and in North Korea, all represent oppressive single-party states in which freedom is limited, similar to the Big Brother scenario in George Orwell's dystopic novel. Students may conduct pre-research into the political reality of single-party authoritarian states in 20th-century history, in order to understand the nature of totalitarian ideology and its effects on the everyday lives of people.

Before Viewing

Historical pre-research

Students may carry out initial research into one of the following developments in the history of East Germany and the Cold War:

- Why and how did Germany come to be divided into two states: West Germany, a capitalist economy (Federal Republic of Germany); and East Germany, a communist economy (Democratic Republic of Germany)?
- When and why was the Berlin Wall built, and what did it come to represent?
- What types of restrictions were placed on citizens of East Germany and why were these restrictions enforced?
- Who was Erich Honecker and what was his role in East Germany?
- What was the meaning of "glasnost," and what were its causes and its consequences?
- How and when did the unification of Germany come about in 1990?

Historical Context: Timeline of the German Democratic Republic and Key Points in the Cold War

Date	Event
7 May 1945	VE Day Germany signs surrender to Allied Forces; Germany is divided into multinational occupation sectors.
1948	The Berlin Blockade (24 June 1948–12 May 1949) is the first international crisis of the Cold War.
1949	The government of the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) is formed on 20 September 1949. On 7 October 1949, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) is established as a socialist state in the Soviet occupation zone of East Germany and East Berlin.
1950	The formation of NATO and the Warsaw Pact solidify the division of Europe into east and west blocs.
1950–53	The Korean War, with the involvement of communist China, escalates East-West tensions.
1956	Soviet troops invade Hungary.

Historical Context: Timeline of the German Democratic Republic and Key Points in the Cold War	
Date	Event
1956	Britain, Israel, and France invade Egypt during the Suez crisis.
1959	Cuban Revolution and installation of Fidel Castro's communist government.
1961	Building of the Berlin Wall, barrier surrounding East Berlin, and symbol of the Cold War is completed on 13 August 1961.
1962	The Cuban missile crisis brings the world to the brink of nuclear war.
1970s	Tensions begin to relax in the 1970s, especially following German chancellor Willy Brandt's policy of reconciliation (ostpolitik).
1980s	Mikhail Gorbachev's reform policies (glasnost, perestroika) in the Soviet Union greatly reduce Cold War friction.
1989	The Berlin Wall is opened by East Germans on 9 November 1989.
1990	Collapse of the communist system and tearing down of Berlin Wall and reunification of Germany, end of Cold War.
1991	The Soviet Union ceases to exist.

Pre-research: totalitarian ideology and the role of secret police

- What was the "Stasi"? What was its primary role, and what means did it use to ensure that it carried out that role? Why did this organization come into being? What were the underlying values and beliefs of its operations?

  Teaching note: Students may conduct research into use of secret police or political police in the regimes of the Eastern Bloc after World War II (e.g., the KGB in the Soviet Union, the Stasi in East Germany, the Securitate in Romania, the SB in Poland, StB or State Security in Czechoslovakia, the AVH or State Protection Authority in Hungary, etc.). Compare the role of these security forces to that of the 'Thought Police' in *1984*. Note that the

use of secret police by modern states is highly connected to reinforcing the power of single-party states in many areas of the world, including dictatorial regimes in South America. These forces operate in secret to protect and strengthen the power of a regime and are not subject to the rule of law.

Discussion question: In a democratic society such as Canada, what types of barriers (institutions, laws, principles) exist to protect citizens' private lives and personal rights and freedoms from the intrusion by state police?

- Are there countries today with political police or secret police agencies that can severely limit the freedom of citizens?
- In the period following the Second World War, the ideological conflict between capitalism and communism intensified and became more radical. Create a comparative chart of the key characteristics of each of these ideologies or belief systems and their supporting arguments.
- In the West, the *intelligentsia* (educated intellectuals who make a living in the realm of ideas, culture, or the arts) came to support in large part a socialist ideology that was highly critical of capitalism. During the Cold War, western intellectuals and artists were often targeted for having Communists sympathies, while in the Eastern bloc, they were seen as resistant to the authority of the state, and many were imprisoned, exiled, or subjected to severe government censorship. Students may conduct research into examples of this sort of state control exacerbated by the Cold War (e.g., McCarthyism and the Hollywood blacklist, the Gulag in the Soviet Union).

  Background note: The Gulag or penal internment camps of the USSR, which came into being as corrective labour camps to punish anti-Soviet activity and reinforce state power, were greatly intensified by Stalin in the period after the Second World War. By the end of the 1950s, Stalinist policy had been rejected and the Gulag labour camps dissolved. The discovery of the Gulag system and revelations of Soviet repression of political prisoners led to widespread criticism—and fear—of communist ideology. In the West, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, a member of the Soviet Army and later a political prisoner under Stalin, author of *The Gulag Archipelago*, became a symbol of the excesses of Stalinist policy. Although the USSR had officially rejected Stalinist totalitarian policies in the late 1950s, many Western intellectuals came to abandon their support for socialist ideology as a result of the discovery of Stalin's oppressive policies. Students may wish to view the film *The Way Back* by Peter Weir (2010) for a view of the Gulag system and its consequences.

During Viewing

- Observe and note visual elements that describe the two main characters, the policeman Wiesler and the writer Dreyman. Note the contrasts in their appearance, style, lifestyle, friends, and activities.

  Teaching note: Some examples of contrasting elements:

- The writer's apartment is full of objects, books, papers, not in order; Wiesler's apartment is empty, orderly, sterile.
- Wiesler's world is made of right angles (hallways, square rooms, rectangular buildings, angular furniture); the writer's world is full of organic and living shapes and spaces, including plants and trees.
- Wiesler is always carefully clothed in a very orderly, almost military fashion; Dreyman wears loose casual clothing, no tie, with his shirt often untucked.
- Dreyman has a warm intimate relationship, with a woman he loves and who loves him; Wiesler lives alone and uses the services of a prostitute.
- Wiesler has no friends; Dreyman has friends.

After Viewing

Initial response

- What feelings did this film evoke in you? What impression or mood remains with you after viewing?
- With a partner, create a comparison chart of the world of Wiesler, the policeman, and Dreyman, the writer, based on the notes you gathered during the viewing of the film. Consider categories such as art, style, relationships, friendships, women, clothing, activities, etc. Students may also create a visual collage representing the contrasting worlds of the two characters.

  Teaching note: The director creates a clear visual contrast between these two characters, yet eventually the world of the writer (without his awareness) absorbs the policeman and brings him to change. As he observes the humanity and warmth of Dreyman's life, Wiesler begins to regain bit by bit the humanity he needed to deny in order to be an effective Stasi agent.
- Select scenes that made a deep impression on you. Explain why these scenes affected you and describe their importance in the film.
- In this film, is there a message? Is it strictly a denunciation of the political regime of Erich Honecker, head of the Communist regime in East Germany until 1989? Or does the film also have a message about the human condition?

Media literacy: response and reflection

- The film projects an atmosphere of oppression. Create a list of the narrative elements and cinematic elements that serve to create this atmosphere.

  Teaching note: Narrative elements: The voyeurism of the Stasi agents, their hidden watching and knowledge of the most intimate details of others' private lives; the threats that are constantly weighing on the

characters, the fear that any one could possibly be a spy, the feeling that there is nothing that can be assured of as being private.

- Cinematic elements: The use of many high angle shots, as in a bird's eye view, sometimes quite beautiful, but always looking down from above as if spying. The camera never shows the sky, or a wide space with a vanishing point, until the last few minutes of the film. Sky shots give an impression of openness and safety, while high angle shots in tight spaces create a sense of closing in.
- Select a scene from the film and imagine how an American action filmmaker might have represented it. What does this tell you about the choices made by the filmmaker and their effects on the message conveyed?

  Teaching note: It is easy to imagine, for example, when ex-minister Hempf meets Dreyman after the reunification of Germany, how the scene could have ended with a fist in the face of Hempf. Instead of this, Dreyman simply says "To think that people like you at one time led an entire country." Consider the effect of this statement.

Historical thinking: response and reflection

- If we consider this film as an interpretation of historical information, what does it tell us about the perspective of the filmmakers about the events and the period it represents?
- Do you think that the subject of this film could have been treated in the same way if it were produced immediately following the fall of the Berlin Wall rather than in 2006? Why?

  Teaching note: It is difficult to imagine that a Stasi operative could be seen as a positive figure or hero in German cinema until several years after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Some critics were very hesitant about accepting the positive portrayal of a Stasi agent. The same reticence applied to the release of *Goodbye Lenin* (Germany, 2003), which was a more humorous treatment of the theme of oppression in the period around the dismantling of the Berlin Wall.

- This film is based on questions of ethical principles and corruption. Consider the various steps of the discovery by Wiesler that his superiors (Grubitz and Hempf) are morally corrupt. What was Wiesler's deep motivation that, to him, justified the "immoral" acts of his work?

  Teaching note: Wiesler sincerely thought that his work was to use all means available to contribute to fighting the enemies of his country, his government, and his people. He truly believed that "the end justifies the means," with the object being the protection of the state order and, presumably, the collective well-being. As a meticulous technician of interrogation and inquiry, he never questioned the legitimacy and the soundness of his actions until his work brought him to observe the life of Dreyman, a man who also loved his country.

- Setting aside the ethical dimension, do you think that the files and records kept by the Stasi would have historical value? They preserve, in effect, detailed primary source information about the day-to-day activities of thousands of citizens over several years. Discuss.
- What evidence from primary sources is mentioned in the film, which the director may have known about or consulted before making the film?

  Teaching note: In an interview of the director, it is mentioned that this is the only film to be have been partially filmed (the last scenes) in the building of the Stasi archives, which were opened to the public in 1991.

Beyond the Film

Students may be invited to view other films depicting the abuse of power and the invasion of privacy and civil liberties by the state, such as the Chinese film *To Live* by Zhang Yimou, or *The Conversation* by Francis-Ford Coppola (USA, 1974) or *All the Presidents' Men* by Allan Pakula and Robert Redford (USA, 1976), about the Watergate campaign to sabotage political rivals of President Nixon in 1973 through the use of wiretaps. Consider the impact of this type of activity, in this case, not in a totalitarian regime but rather in a state that considers itself to be a champion of personal liberty. The Watergate scandal created an American climate of protest and paranoia that is evident in U.S. films of that period.

Another possibility for analysis of this film would be a comparison with Franz Kafka's *The Trial*, which depicts a dehumanized society in which a maze of bureaucracy, documents, spying, and government controls threaten individual rights and liberties. Although fictional, the universe of *The Trial* bears many similarities to the real universe of *The Lives of Others*.

- Compare this film with the tragic-comic film *Goodbye Lenin* (Wolfgang Becker, Germany, 2003), which also takes place in East Germany at this time, but treats life during the period of Erich Honecker in a lighter fashion.
- Carry out research into the beliefs, ideology, and influence of political figures (e.g., Vladimir Lenin, Josef Stalin, Erich Honecker) in the context of the Democratic Republic of Germany up to the dismantling of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

  Teaching note: In the final scene of *Goodbye Lenin*, we see a helicopter taking away a statue of Lenin in East Germany. The dismantling of memorials to Lenin, the father of Soviet communism, was typical of the period around the end of the Soviet Union and its influence on communist satellite countries. Note that although Stalin was initially influenced by the beliefs of Lenin, later Lenin and other communists severely opposed his totalitarian practices in the Soviet regime.

Erich Honecker was a German politician and adherent of Leninist beliefs, who was jailed in Germany during the Nazi regime because of his communist views. After the war, he fled the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) from 1971 until 1989. After German reunification, Honecker first fled to the

Soviet Union but was extradited to Germany by the new Russian government. Back in Germany, he was imprisoned and tried for high treason and crimes committed during the Cold War, including orders to border guards to shoot any person trying to cross the East German border into West Germany. During the trial, Honecker became ill and was released from prison. He died in exile in Chile about a year and a half later.

- View the film *Burnt by the Sun* (Nikita Mikhalkov, Russia, 1994), which deals with life in early Stalinist Russia. Compare the atmosphere and treatment of political oppression and paranoia.
- View the film *Brazil* (Terry Gillian, Great Britain, 1985) or the film version of *1984* (Michael Radford, Great Britain, 1985) about life in a bureaucratic totalitarian order. Note that often these films deal with the ethical will and integrity of individuals in the face of oppression.

The Great Dictator. Dir. Charlie Chaplin, U.S., 1940. Comedy/satire, Black and white/silent with English intertitles. Classification G. 126 min. DVD, Foxvideo.

Historical Themes/Topics

Rise of Hitler and Nazism in Germany, dictatorship, anti-Semitism, Second World War

Cinematic Significance

At the time of the creation of *The Great Dictator*, Chaplin was already famous worldwide as "The Little Tramp," a comic figure who wore the same style of moustache as Hitler. In this film, the Little Tramp is transformed into the Jewish barber, and placed in contrast to a parodied figure of Hitler.

The Charlie Chaplin film *The Great Dictator* is a film with a definite political message. As such, the film does not simply seek to depict the period, but to bear witness to the unfolding of certain historic events of that period. It would be useful to view the documentary film *The Tramp and the Dictator* (Kevin Brownlow, 2002) for background information on the making of the film, its historical significance, and interpretations of its message. Some viewers have been critical of the overt political message of the film, while others criticized the use of humour to depict the horrors of Nazism. The perspective of some critics, such as science fiction writer Ray Bradbury, is that humour is very important to human survival and that the use of satire in the film served more effectively as moral support for those who opposed Hitler and the Nazi ideology than did the serious propaganda films of the time. In fact, during the Blitzkrieg or intensive "lightning war" of German bombing in 1940, *The Great Dictator* was being viewed in the cinemas of London.

The final scene of the film, in which Chaplin abandons his film character and delivers a counter-propaganda speech and plea for peace, was highly criticized for diminishing the artistic integrity of the satire. However, in spite of this and other criticisms, the film was to become one of the greatest successes of Chaplin's career.

About Charlie Chaplin

At the time of the production of this film, Chaplin was working in the U.S. and was already famous as a filmmaker and comic actor. The question of American involvement in the war had a very important economic dimension at the time of the release of this film (1940). At the time, even in the realm of cinema, Italy and Germany remained lucrative markets for American film. Hollywood studios attempted to pressure Chaplin to abandon this film project, which he had undertaken in 1938. Chaplin had to finance the project with his own money, and it took 559 days of production, which was considered a very long time to make a film at that time. It should be noted, however, that U.S. President F.D. Roosevelt personally encouraged Chaplin to produce the film.

The script for *The Great Dictator* was written around 1938, and it was filmed in 1939, placing it right at the time of the rise of fascism and Nazism in Germany and Italy, but just before Hitler's invasion of Poland and the beginning of Nazi extermination policies. While the film was in production, the British government announced that it would prohibit its showing in the United Kingdom in keeping with its appeasement policy concerning Nazi Germany. However, by the time the film was released in October 1940, the UK was at war with Germany, and the film was welcomed in part for its obvious propaganda value. Needless to say, the film was banned in Germany and in all the countries occupied by Germany during the war.

In his 1964 autobiography, Chaplin stated that he would not have been able to make such jokes about the Nazi regime had the extent of the Nazi horrors been known, particularly the death camps and the Holocaust. After the scope of Nazi atrocities became apparent to the world, it took another 20 years before any other films dared to satirize the era.

Charlie Chaplin continued to grow in fame in the U.S. and abroad, but later ran into political problems with the House Unamerican Activities Committee (HUAC). In 1952, Chaplin left the U.S. for what was intended to be a brief trip home to the United Kingdom for the London premiere of Limelight. J. Edgar Hoover, the director of the FBI, learned of the trip and negotiated to revoke Chaplin's re-entry permit so he could not return to the U.S. because of his alleged left-wing political views. Chaplin decided not to re-enter the United States, and then made his home in Switzerland. He wrote in his autobiography: ".....Since the end of the last world war, I have been the object of lies and propaganda by powerful reactionary groups who, by their influence and by the aid of America's yellow press, have created an unhealthy atmosphere in which liberal-minded individuals can be singled out and persecuted. Under these conditions I find it virtually impossible to continue my motion-picture

work, and I have therefore given up my residence in the United States." (Chaplin, 1964, *My Autobiography*, p. 154)

Before Viewing

Suggested historical topics for pre-research

- It is important that students begin by gathering some information about the historical context in which this film was produced.
  - What was happening in the world in 1940? Who were the key historical figures? What ideologies were prevalent?
  - What was happening in the world of cinema at that time?
  - Why produce a comedy film during this period? How was this done?
- Students should conduct preliminary research into the ideologies that played a role in German aggression in the course of the Second World War. For historical benchmarks, refer to the key points in the rise of Nazi power and international aggression listed in the historical background at the end of this film study.
  - What is fascism? What is totalitarianism?
  - What is Nazism or national socialism? How did it originate and take hold of the people of Germany during this period?
  - What was the official Nazi party policy with respect to the treatment of Jews in Germany at this period? On what beliefs was this racialism based?

    Teaching note: The persecution of Jews is at the very heart of this film. The parallel stories of the little Jewish barber and the mustachioed dictator give this film its structure. According to the documentary film *The Tramp and the Dictator*, it is uncertain whether or not Chaplin was Jewish, but Nazi anti-Jewish propaganda literature targeted him as a "pseudo-Jew" and included him in a list of prominent Jewish bankers, activists, academics, journalists, and artists said to be forming an international network aimed at world domination. Many of the people on this list were exterminated by the Nazi regime. The Nazis used news images of Chaplin in some well-known anti-Semitic propaganda films. While Chaplin was working on the film, representatives of the Jewish community in the U.S. approached him to ask him to abandon the film for fear of making life for Jews in Europe more difficult. Chaplin responded that he did not believe that the situation for Jews in Europe could get any worse than it already was.
- Who is Charlie Chaplin? How well known was he in 1940?

  Teaching note: In 1940, Charlie Chaplin was the most famous actor in the world. His character of the Little Tramp (in France, known as Charlot) was well known and adored in countries across the world. Silent films

had permitted Chaplin to win over an international following without any language barriers. Note that *The Great Dictator* was the first movie in which Chaplin spoke, or his first "talkie."

- What was the position of the U.S. with respect to Nazi Germany? When did the U.S. decide to enter the Second World War?

  Teaching note: The U.S. remained "neutral" for a long time following the rise of Nazism and the outbreak of war in Europe. The attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 by Japanese forces, allies of Germany, finally led to the American decision to enter the war.

- Were there Nazi sympathizers in the U.S.?

  Teaching note: The Nazi party in the U.S. was active after the Great Depression. In the documentary *The Tramp and the Dictator*, we see images of gatherings in support of Hitler that included as many as 20,000 people.

- What were the effects of the Great Depression on industrialized nations such as Germany, Italy, France, England, and the U.S.?

  Teaching note: Encourage students to analyze the connections between the collapse of economies, unemployment, poverty, social and political disorder, and the rise of radical political ideologies in developed countries, on the left toward communism, as well as on the right toward fascism. The ensuing devaluing of democratic principles led to single-party nationalistic states led by totalitarian leaders who were seen as strong providential figures (e.g., Hitler, Mussolini, Franco).

During Viewing

Teachers may decide to present a synopsis of the film and show only some parts of the film. It may be useful to assign to small groups of students the task of observing 2–3 particular historical, dramatic, or cinematic elements during the initial viewing (refer to the sample screening guides). Allow time for the second viewing of parts of the movie as required.

It may also be helpful to have students view archival clips of Hitler's speeches before or after the initial viewing of the Chaplin film in order to observe Chaplin's caricature of Hitler's oratorical style, language, and mannerisms.

Principal sequences in the film:

- The globe scene at the beginning depicting Hitler's megalomania and his dream of world domination by a pure Aryan race (about 7 minutes) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YqyQfjDScjU
- The scene of the Nuremberg-style conference with the microphone writhing before Hynkel's ravings, or the scene of the barber and Hannah walking through the ghetto with Hynkel's anti-Semitic invective in the background (about 2 minutes)
- The scene at the train station where Hynkel and Napaloni meet or the office scene where the two dictators are together (about 3 minutes)

- The final speech by the barber (about 6 minutes)

After Viewing

Initial response

- How does this film make you feel? What impressions remain with you immediately after viewing?
- In this film, are there "good" and "bad" characters? What distinguishes them? What is your opinion of the opening text that represents a view of the historical period?

  For example: This is the story of the period between two world wars—a period when insanity cut loose, liberty took a nose dive, and humanity was kicked around somewhat.

- What are your impressions of the little Jewish barber played by Chaplin? Do you empathize with him?
- In this film, is there a central message? What is the message? Is it clearly expressed? What is your response to the final speech of the little barber at the end of the film?
- How do you feel about the use of humour to deal with a serious historical subject? Exchange ideas about this with your peers.

Media literacy: response and reflection

- Carry out a second viewing of the scene where Hynkel's troops destroy the barbershop, providing some guiding questions for students. This may be also compared to a similar scene in *Life is Beautiful*.)
- When Hynkel's troops force open the door and destroy the barbershop, what does the camera focus on? Why is this cinematographic technique used? What is its effect?

  Teaching note: Chaplin is careful to avoid melodrama here. The camera remains focused on the bird cage (as a symbol of Jews in the ghetto), then it moves to the barber and his fiancée Hannah on the roof. We only hear the shouts of the soldiers and the explosion of the bomb, without seeing it. We then see the burning house and the reaction of the two characters. The choice of the filmmaker in this case strengthens the scene: by showing less, he says more.

- Select some scenes that left an impact on you. Compare with another viewer's selected scenes and exchange ideas about why these particular scenes affected you. Discuss the role of each of these scenes in the film.

Historical thinking: response and reflection

- Engage in a discussion about the pro-democracy anti-war message delivered in the last five minutes of the film.

Teaching note: This long "Look up, Hannah" speech, an out-of-character personal plea from Chaplin, became quite famous, and even controversial. It was considered by some critics to be overly sentimental and not in keeping with the film's character. Others consider it to be a true message of peace from a man whom the whole world would listen to, at an appropriate time in history. Chaplin was asked to repeat the speech on national radio, and the text of the speech is widely available today online. Consider the message of the speech in relation to later political difficulties Chaplin had with the U.S. government.

- Make a list of the elements in the film that evoke or represent historical realities of the Germany of the First World War and just before the outbreak of the Second World War (persons, events, developments, uniforms, symbols, etc.). Make an inventory likewise of the fictional elements. Analyze the effects produced by the juxtaposition and interplay of the fictional/comic and clearly historical elements.
- What is the role played by Commandant Schultz in the story and what does he represent?

  Teaching note: Commandant Schultz, the Tomanian (German) hero and veteran of the First World War, represents the sort of opposition Hitler encountered within a certain military aristocracy during the period between the wars. Refer to the film *Valkyrie* (2008), which depicts a July 1944 plot by German army officers to assassinate Hitler and use the national emergency plan to take control of the country. See also the writings of German officer Ernst Junger (e.g., *On the Marble Cliffs*). Although he represents a militaristic and nationalistic point of view, he nonetheless did not support Hitler and Nazism.

  The same role applies to the character of Schultz, who is also not Jewish. This allows Chaplin to portray both good and bad characters without creating a simplistic moral dualism by making all good characters Jewish and all bad characters German.

- Conduct a debate in opposing teams regarding the following statements:
  - The use of humour in this film is an excellent tool for denouncing the dangers and the horrors perpetrated by Nazism.
  - The use of humour to depict the horrors perpetrated by the Nazi regime is inappropriate, disrespectful, and ineffective.
- Chaplin apparently stated after the release of the film that had he known the real extent of the atrocities carried out by Hitler and the Nazis, he would likely never have made *The Great Dictator*. Why do you think he stated this, and what does such a statement indicate about the ethical dimension of historical understanding—in particular, with respect to events such as the Holocaust and the rise of Nazism?
- Research the historical and political context of Chaplin's life and the production of this film. Do you believe that Chaplin was taking a serious artistic and political risk in releasing a satire of Hitler in 1940?

- View the documentary *The Tramp and the Dictator:* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhp5PGsDp-A

Beyond the Film

- Conduct further research on the life and times of Charlie Chaplin and his impact on the history of cinema.

  Teaching note: Refer to Kevin Brownlow's documentary, *The Unknown Chaplin* (1983). Read the fiction book by Daniel Pennac *The Dictator and the Hammock* and analyze how it may be seen to be based on the story of Hitler and Chaplin.

- **Film comparison:** After viewing *Life is Beautiful*, describe elements that the actor Roberto Benigni has in common with Charlie Chaplin and the film *The Great Dictator.*

- Create a visual catalogue of images in the film that are a caricature of Nazism and fascism of the period.

  Teaching note: The film often parodies the Third Reich's official taste in art and architecture and the imposition of its standards on German artists of the time. Note, for example, elements such as the following: the extremely long distance between the front door and Hynkel's desk; the painter and sculptor trying to create the official image of the dictator, while he never stays posed for more than a few seconds at a time; the statue of Venus de Milo with a fascist salute, and Rodin's *The Thinker* sits likewise with his arm raised. Some of the signs in the shop windows of the ghettoized Jewish population in the film are written in Esperanto, a language that Hitler condemned as a Jewish plot to destroy German culture. Garbitsch, who constantly counsels and advises Hynkel, seems to be the one guiding him. This is an allusion to the rumours that Goebbels was the actual ruler and Hitler only a puppet leader.

Historical background: key points in the rise of Nazi power and international aggression

Date	Event
1919–1933	Rise of the Nazi party following the end of World War I and through the period of the Great Depression.
1925	Benito Mussolini assumes the title Duce of Italy and promotes a single-party dictatorial state.
January 1933	Hitler is appointed Chancellor of Germany.

Historical background: key points in the rise of Nazi power and international aggression	
Date	Event
March 1933	Establishment of Dachau, one of the first Nazi concentration camps to which political opponents of Nazism were sent.
August 1934	Hitler declares himself Reich Chancellor or *Reichsführer* and President of Germany.
1935	Hitler establishes anti-Semitic policies, Nazi propaganda, and youth indoctrination. The propaganda film *Triumph of the Will* by filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl is commissioned.
1936	Berlin hosts the Olympics and showcases Nazi power to the world. Hitler commissions the creation of the film *Olympia* for the purpose of Nazi propaganda.
March 1938	Hitler annexes Austria.
November 1938	Kristallnacht or "Night of Broken Glass", intensification of anti-Semitic measures in Germany and Austria.
September 1939	Germany invades Poland. Great Britain and France declare war on Germany. Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Canada follow. This is commonly seen as the beginning of the Second World War.
September 1940	Germany, Japan, and Italy sign the Tripartite Pact and officially found the the Axis powers.
April 1940	Germany invades Denmark and Norway.
May 1940	Germany invades Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands.
June 1940	France cedes to Germany; France will remain under German Occupation until 1944.

Historical background: key points in the rise of Nazi power and international aggression	
Date	Event
1941	Construction of Nazi death camps and beginning of the systematic extermination of Jews.
June 1941	Germany and its Axis allies declare war on the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.
December 1941	Japan declares war on the United States of America, Great Britain, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the Union of South Africa.

Teaching note: The chain of causes and consequences is far more complex and involves many more countries than those mentioned here. Students may be encouraged to use a world map to visualize the domino effect and web of events that rapidly implicated most of the international community in the conflict.

Students may refer to historical sources including websites such as the following:

- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, The Holocaust and World War II, Timeline
  http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007653
- World War 2, Timeline
  http://www.world-war-2.info/timeline/
- The Holocaust Explained
  http://www.theholocaustexplained.org/

Notes

Life is Beautiful. Dir. Roberto Benigni, 1997. Rome, Italy: Cecchi Gori Group Tiger Cinematografica. Comedy/Drama. Classification 14A, Controversial social content. 118 min. DVD, Miramax Home Entertainment (1999).

Historical Themes/Topics

Holocaust, rise of fascism in Italy

About the Film

Benigni was surprised at the worldwide success of his film *Life is Beautiful,* which was all the more astonishing given the premises on which it was founded— premises that push the limits of what is tolerable.

In an interview, Benigni declared the following: "When this idea took hold of me, like an illumination, a revelation, I immediately recoiled. It was a reaction of fear, as though in self-defence. But I held to the idea, it kept me from sleeping, it was a sentiment so strong that the fear dissipated." Benigni is a breaker of taboos. With this story, Benigni, in the character of Guido, plays with danger by telescoping in the same story the ultimate horror of the Nazis' final solution and the complete innocence and naiveté of a child playing a game. It is an explosive combination.

Others have tried to combine childlike humour with the theme of the Holocaust, but never with as much success. For example, the French artist, Roland Topor, himself a Polish Jew whose family went into hiding during the Nazi regime, wrote a short story about a Jewish child during the Second World War who believed that the yellow cross given to identify him as a Jew was the sign that he has become "the sheriff" of his neighbourhood. This work was highly criticized. (Likewise, Yann Martel's novel *Beatrice and Virgil*, a Holocaust

allegory using animals as central figures, has been criticized as being offensive and trivializing the Holocaust.)

The impact of the film is no doubt related to its historical context. One might easily assert that this film would not have been accepted or produced even 10 years earlier, when the pain and suffering of the concentration camps was still unbearable and still fresh in the collective memory. It may also be argued that in 50 years, when all the concentration camp survivors are long dead, the immediacy of the horror will have weakened. In this sense, one might see *Life is Beautiful* in itself as a historical turning point in the general perception of the Holocaust and the beginning of a change in the collective memory of the event. (Note: The film was in fact criticized for its treatment of the Holocaust; however, ultimately it seems its inspirational and hopeful character is what has triumphed in the general perception.)

Before Viewing

Suggested topics for preparatory research

- Who was Mussolini and what was the Fascist movement in Italy? Carry out research about the rise of Fascism in Italy and try to imagine the lifestyle changes that occurred during this period for all Italians, and especially for Italians of Jewish descent. (perspective taking)
- What were the relations between Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany, before 1939, and after 1939?
  Teaching note: Encourage students to compare the emergence of very similar ideologies in Italy (fascism) and in Germany (Nazism). Both ideologies took hold during a national period of social and political chaos. As depicted in Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator*, there was also a sort of a personal rivalry between Hitler and Mussolini, as they were both personalities with exceedingly large egos. Their leadership styles were also very similar: enflamed rhetoric in their public speeches; a taste for mass demonstrations, often not very tasteful but with a distinct style; the cult of the "superior race"; obsession with largeness and grandeur; and the use of pomp and ceremony.

  In 1936, Hitler and Mussolini formed a strategic military alliance, the Rome-Berlin Axis. In 1939, Japan joined the Axis powers; Italy, Germany, and Japan formalized their alliance with the signature of the Tripartite Pact in 1940. These three nations, at varying points joined by some other European countries (e.g., Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Finland), formed the main military adversaries of the Allies during the Second World War.
- In the totalitarian regimes of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy, how were non-conformist or minority groups (e.g., Jews, communists, homosexuals) viewed?

  Historical note: Fascism, in the same way as Nazism and communism, began as a populist ideology, or a grassroots movement that appealed to

the people. (In contrast, the single-party authoritarian state of General Franco, which took hold in Spain from 1939 to 1947, relied on the traditional social structure of the Spanish power elite.) These populist movements offered to the masses of workers and the poor (mostly unemployed) the promises of a glorious future where they would take their rightful place in society. Arising out of the period of economic and social crisis following the end of the First World War and into the 1930s, these movements offered a vision of a restructured society and renewed prosperity to the working class. In the case of both fascism and Nazism, government became single-party states dominated by a single authoritarian figure. In many communist states, a similar authoritarian model was imposed.

In the case of Nazism in Germany, a policy rapidly emerged of ascribing blame to groups that were identifiably different, such as Jews, homosexuals, Communists, the disabled, and the Romani people (often called "gypsies"). The exaggeration or invention of differences between "the People" and "the Other" became the tools of a mass propaganda machine. In Italy as in Germany, anti-Jewish policies were popularized and enforced by reviving anti-Semitic sentiments that were already present in some quarters, as well by the identification of a scapegoat for the economic and social troubles of the time. (In Italy, the Jewish community was well integrated into Italian life when the fascists first came to power in 1922; anti-Jewish racial laws began to be imposed in 1938.) In Germany, the ideology was tied to the notion of a superior Aryan race, and the supposition that other races are inferior. In Italy, fascist ideology was tied to an extreme Italian nationalism and militarism. Benigni recounts that he found in his research about growing anti-Semitism in Italy during this period that it was often students who, exalted by the idea of belonging to a superior race and seduced by Fascist ideology, perpetrated and supported anti-Jewish acts.

- Were there ever concentration camps in Italy? Students may carry out research to find images of the architecture and structure of the camps to compare with the camp as depicted in the film.

  Historical note: There were four concentration camps in Italy: three of these were transit camps, where Jews were assembled before being sent to extermination camps. The *Risiera de San Saba*, a former rice mill outside the city of Trieste, was equipped with a crematory and was operated by Nazis. Although Roberto Benigni has said that he did not base his depiction on any particular camp, it is clear that the factory style installations of this camp were used as a model for the film's setting.

During Viewing

- The film clearly lends itself to being viewed in two parts (before the concentration camp and in the concentration camp). Allow for discussion and debriefing after each part.

- It has been stated that this film is not a realistic depiction of the history of the time. With this is mind, observe and note any elements of realistic history in the film. Also note any questions you might have about the realism of any historical element portrayed in the film.
- Note scenes that strike you as you view the film, recording some of the key details of what you see and hear.
- Keep track of scenes that recall other scenes in the film or that contrast the first part of the film (before the concentration camp) to the second part (in the concentration camp).
- Observe any scenes that are particularly revealing about the character of Guido. What techniques does the filmmaker use in these scenes?
- Keeping the film title in mind, pick out elements that seem to support its message.
- Did you notice any completely unexpected scenes or events in the film?

After Viewing

Initial response

- How does this film make you feel? What is the main impression that remains with you after viewing?

  Teaching note: Encourage students to share their responses, as they will find that different people respond differently to this film. To some viewers, the (relatively) happy ending offers comfort and reassurance, since the boy Giosuè and his mother survive and are reunited. However, for others, the difficult nature of the second part of the film is for some viewers almost unbearable.

- Is this film realistic?

  Teaching note: If students carefully view this film more than once, they may be struck by how it is bathed in an atmosphere of unreality, much like a fairy tale or fable. This unreality is reflected in the stylistic elements of the setting and décor, which call to mind the settings of Chaplin films such as *The Great Dictator* or *Modern Times*, or even some elements of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*. This impression is reinforced by scenes such as those in the concentration camp where the prisoners are marching along as zombies, much like the workers in *Metropolis*. They may also note elements of unreality and dream in the décor that resembles the style of films by Fellini.

- Benigni has openly stated that there is nothing intended to be realistic in this film. He maintains that there is nothing more powerful than evoking terror. As Edgar Allen Poe observes, when we come to the edge of a cliff and do not look, the horror is immeasurable. If we show the horror, it becomes what we show. Benigni observes that, based on what he saw, heard, and felt in the accounts of concentration camp prisoners, nothing could approach

the reality they experienced (see primary sources). Since nothing could truly capture their experience, he realized it would be pointless to try to depict it "realistically." How could he be realistic about a horror that was unspeakable?

- In this film, are there "good" and "bad" characters? What distinguishes them?

  Teaching note: Clearly, Guido, his family, and friends are the good characters and the fascists are the evil characters. In the first part of the film, the fascists are shown as pretentious and somewhat ridiculous characters, much like the burlesque characters of Chaplin's old comedies, which were a source of inspiration to Benigni. But in the second half of the film, everything falls into tragedy. We see that the Italian fascists are ridiculous versions of a much more dangerous entity: the Nazis. Here, comedy gives way to tragedy. The German soldiers are cold and cruel. However, Dr. Lessing, Guido's former customer at the Grand Hotel, is somewhat different. He likes Guido and treats him with consideration. Nevertheless, in the camp, he is obsessed with his games and does not even see the horrors in which he is participating and to which the Jews, including Guido, are being subjected. He seems to represent a sensitive, educated man, but one who has turned a blind eye to any sense of morality.

- What do you think of the character of Guido? Do you relate to him? Would you have been capable of doing what he did for his son?

  Teaching note: The character of Guido is an exceptional being and somewhat unreal. On the one hand, he is human; on the other hand, he seems almost not human or even superhuman. Guido is a Jew, fully integrated into Italian society, who profoundly loves his life. He has a strong sense of family and friendship; he loves his neighbours and does not seek to harm anyone. He falls madly in love with Dora and proceeds to win her over with personality, charm, imagination, and humour. He then has a wonderful relationship with her as his wife and with his young son Giosuè. He is affectionate and caring and would do anything to protect his son's innocence and his life. And we find ourselves moved by this concern.

  At the same time, Guido is a superhuman character in that it is virtually impossible to imagine that any human being is capable of doing what he does to protect his son. This would require a will of steel and the capacity to face the worst kind of adversity without crumbling. These are the kinds of characteristics we see in the heroes of fairy tales or fables. Even in the first part of the film, we see that Guido has a special role in society: he goes beyond the normal in his devotion to fantasy and imagination. Wherever he goes, he introduces an element of fancy. He is capable of imposing his own vision and his own rules of the game on reality: this is evident, for example, in the scene with the key and the hat. At times, his audacity is incredible, such as in the scene in the school. Up to this

point, Guido is in the world of Chaplin's Little Tramp character. It is in the concentration camp that he passes into the tragic side of reality.

Benigni has always maintained that *Life is Beautiful* is not a realistic film. Guido is the same character throughout and never changes, true to himself in all circumstances, much like the characters in fairy tales. He retains the same characteristics no matter what happens, and he is a bit of a wily trickster, always talking, always pretending, never realistic, never serious, even in the face of tragedy.

Media literacy: response and reflection

- Benigni has said that this film is a tragi-comedy. Find some examples that illustrate that this is the case.

  Teaching note: There are numerous examples: one of the most evident is the scene in which a German officer calls for a translator. Guido volunteers, and with remarkable aplomb he announces the rules of the game he has invented for his son rather than translate the camp rules (which he could not translate because he does not understand German). This scene would be typically comic if it were part of a film such as Gérard Oury's *The Great Stroll* (La grande vadrouille), which makes fun of the Germans during the war. However, in this case, the scene takes on a tragic dimension as we share in the realization of Guido and the other prisoners that this is not a game.

  More than perhaps any other film, this film plays upon the contrast between what some characters know (Guido, the other prisoners) and what another of the main characters does not know (Guido's son). This complicity of knowledge between the viewers and the adult characters in the film is unique in the history of cinema in its intensity and its implications. It engages the viewer in a very profound way, because the viewer, even more than Guido himself, knows exactly what the horror of this camp is.

- In this film, is there a message? What is it? Is there more than one message?

  Teaching note: Benigni has said that one of the messages of the film is that "Laughter saves us, seeing the other side of things, the unreal and amusing side of things, or succeeding in imagining it—this helps us to not be destroyed, not be crushed, helps us resist the worst and still sleep at night, even when it will be a very long night. In this sense, we can make people laugh and not do harm to anyone."

  Another message is that the love of parents for their children is immeasurable, powerful, and a kind of salvation. This kind of love can not only save an individual, but it can also bring salvation with respect to the realities of history, to the human condition.

  Finally, students may observe the message contained in the title of the film itself: that ultimately, life is beautiful, and even the most terrible tragedies cannot take away that fundamental beauty of life.

- Students may read the transcript of an interview with Roberto Benigni, and respond to his statements as they analyze the film and its intent:
  - Refer to *Euroscreenwriters*, Interview with Roberto Benigni: http://zakka.dk/euroscreenwriters/interviews/roberto_benigni_512.htm

  In this film, pick out some scenes that have contrasting atmospheres or moods, and explain these differences.

  Teaching note: There are many examples of contrast in the film (e.g., the scene where Giosuè is hiding in his parents' house—a happy scene—and the scene in the camps where he is hiding in the letterbox, until the arrival of the Americans liberating the camp).

Historical thinking: response and reflection

- If we were to consider this film as a source of historical information, what can it tell us about the events it depicts? What does it tell us about the beliefs and values of the director with respect to these events? In what sense—-if any—can the film be considered to be a valid interpretation of history?
- View a documentary about the period of Nazism and the Holocaust and pick out any historical inaccuracies or misrepresentations they may reveal in this film.
- Are there any elements in this film that make a direct reference to events in the rise of fascist and Nazi ideologies and anti-Semitic policies in Germany and in Italy? (Refer to *Historical background: key points in the rise of Nazi power and international aggression* for a timeline of some key events of the period.)
- Compare this film to *Schindler's List*. How are their messages similar? How are they different? Which film made you reflect more on the historical realities of this grievous period in history?
- Suggested debate topics in teams:
  It is impossible—or wrong—to use humour when we are dealing with a subject such as the Holocaust.
  OR
  In a situation of extreme suffering or cruelty, only humour can save us from despair.

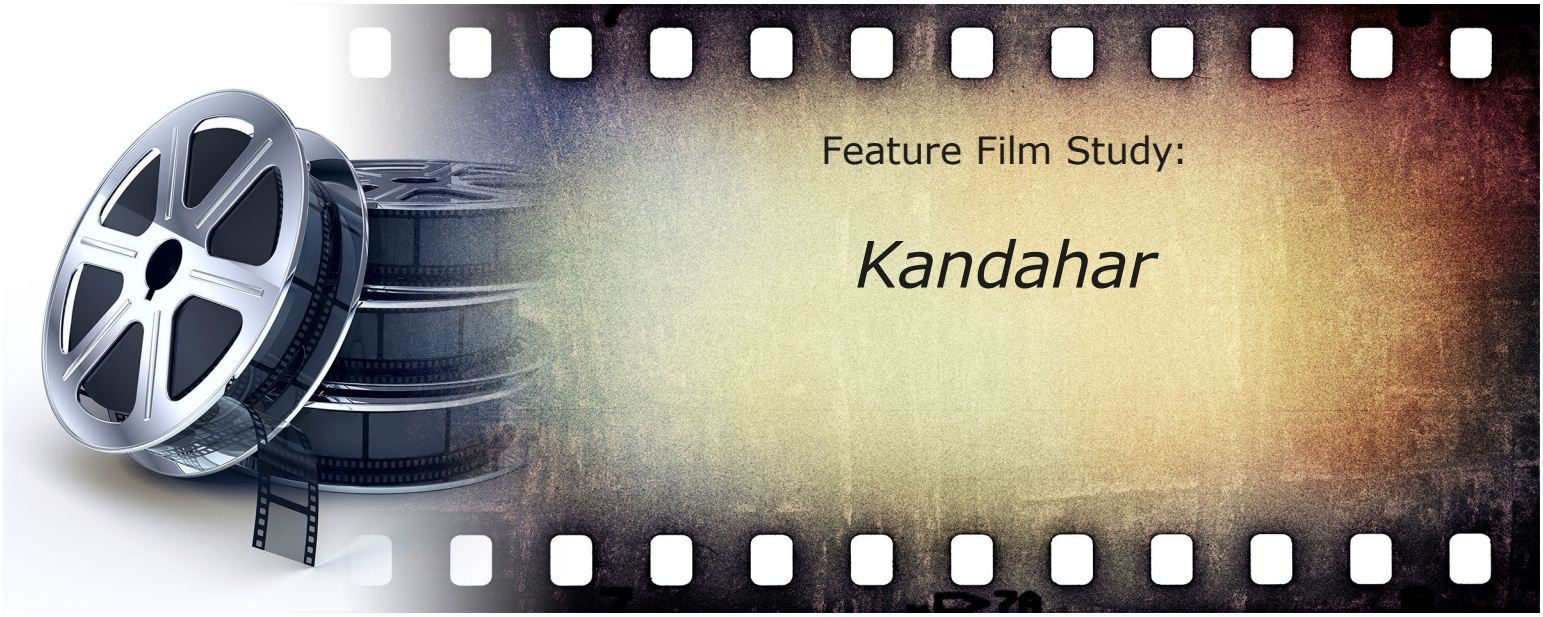
Beyond the Film

- Support films for comparison purposes before or after viewing:
  - *The Great Dictator*, Charlie Chaplin
  - *A Special Day*, Ettore Scola
  - *Monsieur Batignole*, Gérard Jugnot
  - *Night and Fog* (Nuit et brouillard), Alain Resnais
  - *Schindler's List*, Steven Spielberg

- Selected interviews of Holocaust survivors and witnesses, in the nine-hour documentary *Shoah*, dir. Claude Lanzmann (1985, France)
- *Europa Europa,* Agnieszka Holland

Readings:

- *Night*, Elie Wiesel.
  An account of a Holocaust survivor and Nobel Peace Prize winner.
- Excerpts from *If This Is a Man* by Primo Levi (autobiography)
  Primo Levi is one of the great Italian authors of the 20th century, and an Auschwitz survivor.



Kandahar. Dir. Mohsen Makhmalbaf, 2001. Iran. Paris, France: Bac Films. Historical fiction/Semi-documentary. Classification PG. 85 min. DVD, New Yorker Video.

About the Film

Kandahar (Dari-Persian: قندهار Qandahar) was directed by Mohsen Makhmalbaf in 2001. It is an Iranian film set in Afghanistan when it was under the control of the Taliban. The film is non-fiction but contains fictionalized elements. It tells the story of an Afghan-Canadian woman who returns to Afghanistan to find her sister who was forced to stay while the rest of her family escaped.

While *Kandahar* was filmed mostly in Iran, it was also filmed in Afghanistan itself. Most people in the cast are not professional actors and played themselves. *Kandahar* won the Federico Fellini Prize in 2001.

Before Viewing

Historical pre-research

The following are suggested questions to guide student research before screening the film.

- Observe the location of Afghanistan on a world map and list its bordering countries.

  Teaching note: Iran, Pakistan, China, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan are the bordering countries. It is generally accepted that the suffix "stan" is an ancient Persian or Farsi word meaning *country, land,* or *place*; Afghanistan would then mean "place of the Afghans."

Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan were all part of the former Soviet Union, and became independent countries in 1991 when the USSR dissolved.

- What are the key characteristics of the physical and human geography of Afghanistan?

  Teaching note: Students may do a quick web search to locate data and photography of the terrain using reputable sites (National Geographic, CIA World Factbook, United Nations). The territory includes rugged mountain ranges and desert in the south region near Pakistan: a difficult terrain to control with few travel routes through the mountains. The population is diverse and includes many ethnic groups and languages. The majority of the population is Muslim. Many ethnic groups find refuge in isolated mountainous areas and are protective of their culture; these remote areas are often controlled by local warlords. This situation has led to continued conflict among ethnic groups and factions.

- Historically, what has been the strategic significance of this country's location?

  Teaching note: Although landlocked, Afghanistan is important geopolitically as it is centrally located in the Asian continent. Over many centuries, it was a part of of the Silk Road overland passage between the East and the West. in the 19th century, Afghanistan was a buffer state between the Russian empire and the British empire.

- Develop a timeline sketch of key events in Afghanistan in the late 20th century up to the present.

  Teaching note: In the late 20th century, Afghanistan became a site of confrontation between Muslim fundamentalism and communism (from the USSR to the north). In 1973, the Russians established a communist government in Afghanistan. In 1979-80, Soviet troops invaded the country in order to protect Soviet power and to suppress Western influence. Armed resistance to the communists was organized (the Mujahideen) and supported by Muslims in many nations. The CIA, to consolidate American interests in the region during this period of the Cold War, actively sustained this resistance to Soviet rule.

Some key points in the modern history of Afghanistan

1979	The Soviet Army invades and props up the communist government.
1989	The Islamic Revolution overcomes the Soviets and the Russian army retreats from the country. The communist regime in Asia is weakening. Afghanistan remains a site of continued civil war between communists and Islamists.
1992	Collapse of the Soviet regime. The country is divided among many religious and ethnic factions, and many Mujahideen commanders establish themselves as local warlords.

1994	The Taliban, an extreme religious and military group that emerged from the conflict, launches an offensive to conquer the country, supported by Pakistan.
1996	The Taliban takes the capital Kabul and seizes power. Osama bin Laden leads an extremist anti-Jewish and anti-U.S. group that carries out attacks on American interests in a variety of countries (Tanzania, Kenya, Yemen) and the attack of 11 September 2001 in New York.
2001-02	The U.S. and allies including Canada begin a military intervention to defeat the Taliban regime. This results in the installation of a transitional government, whose power in the region continues to be questioned and challenged.
2003	NATO takes control of the United Nations-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to support governance, policing, security, support of the Afghan National Army, anti-insurgency military action, reconstruction, and eradication of opium trade.
2004	Afghanistan has its first democratic elections. There are continued pockets of resistance by Taliban insurgents, but warlords establish a regional division of control over the country.
2009	The second elections are held with ISAF support; there is poor voter turnout, as well as threats and incidents of violence and reports of electoral abuse.
2011	Canada's military involvement in Afghanistan ends in July 2011.
May 2012	NATO summit endorses a plan to withdraw foreign combat troops by the end of 2014.

Refer to BBC, Afghanistan Profile at www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-12024253

- What are the natural resources of Afghanistan? How does the population make a living?

  Teaching note: In the past, the principal occupation was agriculture. In recent times, Afghanistan has become the world's largest producer of opium. Opium trade accounts for 35% of the country's economic production (GDP). Agriculture, textile, and rug production are also part of the economy. The country also possesses mineral and natural gas resources that are largely unexploited.

- What has been the impact of the Taliban regime on the condition of women in the country?

  Teaching note: Consider elements of continuity and change.

  - Refer to CBC News in-depth, Women in Afghanistan: www.cbc.ca/news/background/afghanistan/afghanwomen.html
  - Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan: www.cw4wafghan.ca/who-we-are

- Research the use of anti-personnel mines, their use, and their ongoing impact in the region.

Consider the ethical dimension and the ongoing issues related to land mines. Research the history of the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines (known as the Ottawa Convention) established on 3 December 1997.

Refer to International Committee of the Red Cross, Anti-personnel land mines: www.icrc.org/Eng/mines
International Campaign to Ban Landmines: www.icbl.org/

- Research Canadian humanitarian, development, and military involvement in Afghanistan. Take and defend a position on continued Canadian involvement.

  Teaching note: Canada has taken on an increasing military role in the country since 2001. Consider questions related to the ethical dimension of history, such as the role of citizens in supporting or opposing military action.

  - Refer to the following Canada in Afghanistan website: www.afghanistan.gc.ca/canada-afghanistan/index.aspx?lang=eng;
  - See also CBC report on Canada in Afghanistan: www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2009/02/10/f-afghanistan.html

During Viewing

Decide ahead on a possible dividing point in case the film needs to be viewed in two sittings.

Propose one or two elements for each student to observe during screening. For example:

- Record your impressions of the character of the American doctor
- Note the techniques used by the filmmaker to show the negative effects of the Taliban regime
- Observe the use of documentary-style filming in some scenes
- Take note of scenes that are particularly striking or beautiful
- Record your first impressions at the end of the film

After Viewing

Initial response

- How does this film make you feel? Do you believe that the story is mostly true or fictional? What are the first impressions that remain with you after viewing?
- In this film, are there "good" and "bad" characters? What distinguishes them?

Teaching note: One could think that the bad characters in the story are the Taliban, even though they never appear as characters in the film. On the other hand, what we do see is the impact of the regime on the population: a school where young boys learn the Koran while they learn how to use weapons; poverty; malnutrition; the oppression of women; a climate of violence; the permanent danger of land mines that threaten the limbs and lives of adults and children. The evil that is depicted here is the evil of a humanitarian catastrophe.

In her odyssey or quest, Nafas meets characters who are neither good nor evil, but who sometimes lean more toward one side than the other. Most of them are dominated by the single thought of survival. This motivation to survive pushes them to commit acts that are sometimes reprehensible. Even the American doctor, now helping to do good, once served as a fighter with the Mujahideen. All the characters in the story are depicted as people who could help—or hinder—Nafas in her quest.

- In this film, is there a central message? What is its message? Is the message clear or is it ambiguous?

  Teaching note: As mentioned above, the strongest message of the film is its condemnation of the effects of the Taliban regime on the Afghan people, and particularly on women. This message does not express a clear ideological position, but is rather a description of the devastating effects of the Taliban ideology on human beings.

Media literacy: response and reflection

- Analyze the visual details used by the filmmaker to represent life under the Taliban. Consider the lighting, cinematography, and composition techniques used by the filmmaker to enhance the effect of these images.

  Teaching note: This film is the story of a voyage in which documentary content is mixed with poetic imagery throughout. Certain strong poetic images emerge: women in burkas, one-legged men running to catch artificial legs delivered by parachute, children reciting the Koran in school, views of the desert, images of the face of Nafas, a child stealing a skeleton in the desert. But there are also scenes that show to a Western audience (Europeans and Americans in particular) the difficult realities of day-to-day Afghan life under the domination of the Taliban. The director often places a documentary-style scene just ahead of a scene of the arrival of Nafas (e.g., the Koranic school before the expulsion of the boy Khak, the scene with the American doctor, the Red Cross camp…).

  The style adopted by Mohsen Makhmalbaf is original, personal, and reflects an Iranian style of cinematography, as seen in the work of other Iranian filmmakers such as Abbas Kiarostami.

- Find examples of the use or symbols or metaphors in the film. Reflect on how this film's style differs from the style of mainstream Hollywood productions.

  Teaching note: Students may wish to refer to the film review and summary by Roger Ebert at <www.rogerebert.com/reviews/Kandahar-2002>.

  The final impression of the film is abrupt and shocking, completely opposite to the typical Hollywood ending. Nafas, who wants to rejoin her sister before the eclipse, finds herself blocked at the gates of the city, unable to proceed any further. She experiences herself the "prison" that each woman must live in under the Taliban, the prison of the burka, its lace serving to limit the vision of the women who must wear it day after day, hour after hour. It is the eclipse that obscures all vision and kills all hope.

Historical thinking: response and reflection

- To what extent can we consider this film to be a secondary source of historical information? What does the selection and presentation of historical information tell us about the point of view of the filmmaker regarding these events?
- The actress who plays Nafas is an Afghan refugee in Canada, Nelofer Pazira. This story is inspired in part by her experience and her attempts to retrace a childhood friend in Kabul. Unfortunately Nelofer Pazira had to turn back in Afghanistan before arriving in Kabul, because of the danger. Does this information change how you see the film? How? Does this background add to or diminish the impact of the film as a source of historical information?
- The situation of the Afghan people in the years preceding the attack of 11 September 2001 is mostly unknown. This film, produced in 2001 before the New York attack, contributed to the world's awareness of the situation under Taliban rule. Create an inventory or descriptive list of the characteristics of Afghan society under the Taliban as revealed in the film. Conduct research to find statistics and further data to compare with what is revealed in the film about social and economic conditions.

  Teaching note: The film, with its gallery of portraits (e.g., the boy named Khak, the American doctor, the man with the amputated hand, etc.), conveys a great deal of information as it tells the story:

  - the indoctrination of young men into Taliban ideology at the Koranic school
  - the almost total absence of rights for women (education, dress, requirements of marriage, etc.)
  - the absence of children's rights
  - frequent civilian victims of antipersonnel mines and bombs, including some concealed in children's toys

- daily violence and crime (theft, rape, military and religious terrorism, etc.)

- Many Western people have difficulty in relating to the ethnic and ideological conflicts of this region, because of strong underlying cultural differences. Students may conduct an inquiry into the complex religious foundations of the question in order to clarify their understanding.

  Teaching note: Religious conflict between Sunni and Shiite Muslims is a long-standing issue of the Middle East and is further complicated by the displacement of people, political issues, and ethnic and regional differences. The conflict between Pashtoun and Tadjik (referred to by the false American doctor in the film) is another example of the religious and ethnic conflicts of this region.

  - Refer to the CBC News in depth, *Sectarian tensions: Shia vs. Sunni across the Middle East:*
    www.cbc.ca/news/background/islam/sectarian-tensions.html

Note that Sunni Muslims constitute the majority of Muslims worldwide, with Shiite Muslims being predominant in Iraq and Iran and certain regions of other countries. Iranians (including the filmmaker in this case) are mostly Shiite Muslims, as is most of the Afghan population near the Iranian border. The Taliban are predominantly made up of young boys from the Pashtun ethnic group who left Afghanistan during the period of Soviet rule and travelled as refugees to Pakistan, where they were trained by extremist groups of Sunni Muslims. Note that the civil war in Iraq is also based largely on tensions between Shiite and Sunni Muslims.

Beyond the Film

- To find out more about the actress and activist who inspired this film, students may view the W5 documentary produced by CTV called *Lifting the Veil*, which is included with the film on the DVD. Students can gather observations about how the documentary style differs from the style of the film.

  Students may also view Nelofar Pazira's dramatic film *Act of Dishonour:*
  www.imdb.com/title/tt1670620/?ref_=nm_ov_bio_lk1

- Students may read about humanitarian efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan, as described in the memoir *Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin (2006).

  - Students may view a documentary about Canada's military involvement in Afghanistan.
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMyiTRMDp_c
  - The NFB film *Portraits of Soldiers in Afghanistan*
    https://www.nfb.ca/playlist/22nd-regiment/

- The CBC news special *Remembering Afghanistan*
  www.cbc.ca/thenational/indepthanalysis/rememberingafghanistan/#tpSwf

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