



## EXTRA CREDIT FILM ANALYSIS

Following is a list of films that can be viewed for extra credit. You may pick any film on the list, write a 2-3 page, **SINGLE-SPACED** essay (approximately 1,000-1,500 words), and earn up to 20 points extra credit.

Your essay should provide analysis, communicate insights, and make connections between the past and the present. It should not include a synopsis of the film. Simply recounting the events in the film will earn little or no points. Instead, your essay should discuss:

- The film's historical accuracy
- The insights you gained from watching the film
- How the film relates to the present

**NOTE:** Only films on the approved list may be used for this paper. There will be no exceptions.

In your essay, be sure to include:

- An introductory paragraph with a thesis statement and supporting arguments
- Three to five paragraphs discussing the film's historical accuracy, your insights, and the connections you made between past and present
- A concluding paragraph discussing the value of the film
- A Works Cited section in which you list the title and URL for online resources and use the MLA method of citations for the film itself and any printed sources you may have used. (See <http://easybib.com> for a free online citation maker.)

You may submit only **ONE** essay for a maximum of 20 points, so be sure to do a good job.

I think you will find these films interesting and worthwhile. They provide visual images of events we rarely have an opportunity to view in books. Because some of these films have been re-made over the years, I have picked specific versions for you to watch. Please be sure to rent the right version. I have included dates to help distinguish one version from another. Many familiar actors and actresses do excellent jobs portraying various historical characters and I hope this adds to your enjoyment.

Items on the list preceded by two asterisks (\*\*) are available at NWACC's Pauline Whitaker Library. Those preceded by two pluses (++) are available at Blockbuster Online and may also be available at your local Blockbuster Video store. Those preceded by two carets (^ ^) are in my personal library.

When you have completed your essay according to specifications, **COPY AND PASTE** it into a journal entry in the Student Lounge under the category "Extra Credit." **DO NOT** send it as an attachment. **THE DEADLINE IS 11:59 PM, FRIDAY, MAY 7, 2010.** Essays submitted after that time will not be accepted.

## DOCUMENTARIES

### \*\* ++ **People's Century: Killing Fields - Death on an Industrial Scale (1998)**

The terrible statistics of World War I are discussed in People's Century: Killing Fields -- Death on an Industrial Scale, as the civilian body count is added to that of the soldiers'. At war's end, the final count was nine million, and the fields and trenches overflowed with the dead. The Battles of Verdun and Somme were two of the bloodiest encounters. The People's Century series emphasizes the role of the common citizen on events that impacted the entire world. After all the aerial bombings, the mustard gas, and the fighting, the ordinary citizens made up a large part of the casualties. ~ Alice Day, All Movie Guide

### \*\* ++ **People's Century: Total War - WWII and the Home Front (1997)**

Part of the People's Century series, Total War -- WWII and the Home Front documents how the war brought new blood into the workplace, but made those new workers targets for attack from the enemies. Utilizing archival footage and new materials, the film illuminates such events as the creation of Rosie the Riveter, Pearl Harbor, and the Siege of Leningrad. This is a fine, informative film for those with an interest in the subject matter, as well as for teachers who may find it useful in a classroom setting. ~ Perry Seibert, All Movie Guide

### ++ ^^ **Iraq for Sale: The War Profiteers (2006)**

Join documentary filmmaker Robert Greenwald (Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price, Outfoxed) in assessing the damage done to average Americans when corporations decide to wage war. For critics of the current administration, the connection between the war in Iraq and the private corporations who profit from the fighting is plain to see. For those who may not be so easily convinced, however, Greenwald and company not only explore the questionable motivations of the corporate decision-makers whose wartime profiteering has affected the lives of countless soldiers and their families, but also the increasingly negative international reputation of the United States as a result.

### \*\* ++ ^^ **No End in Sight (2007)**

On March 19, 2003, forces from the United States and a handful of allied nations invaded Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein from power. American military leaders expected the conflict to last no more than a few months, and President George W. Bush declared that major military operations were over less than two months later. However, Iraq soon became a dangerous quagmire for American forces, and near the end of 2006, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, one of the key architects of America's strategy in Iraq, resigned from office due to public outcry and Bush declared he was "rethinking" his plan of attack in Iraq as the nation sank into civil war, with U.S. troops the frequent targets of attacks on both sides. How and why did America's leaders decide to invade Iraq? How did they formulate a strategy that went so far wrong? And can anything be done to salvage the situation? Filmmaker Charles Ferguson, a former advisor with the Brookings Institution, examines these questions in No End in Sight, a documentary on the War in Iraq which includes interviews with a number of figures involved in the conflict's decision-making process, some speaking on-camera about the war for the first time. No End in Sight was screened in competition at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival. ~ Mark Deming, All Movie Guide

### ^^ **House of Cards (2008)**

The Definitive Look At The Origins Of Today's Global Economic Crisis. See how the American dream became a nightmare. Americans are facing the most crushing economic crisis since the Great Depression. Emmy, Dupont, and Peabody Award-winning correspondent David Faber investigates the defining story of our time with inside accounts from key players, tracing the origins of the calamity from Main Street to Wall Street to Washington. Just a short time ago it would have been inconceivable: the economy, here in the U.S. and around the world, stopped in its tracks. Today, it is a grim reality, with bailouts, bankruptcies, and massive layoffs all stemming from a complex problem with a simple name: the credit crisis. "House of Cards" is a fascinating two-hour documentary, told through riveting first-person accounts from Wall Street insiders, aggressive lenders, desperate homeowners, and former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan. The result is the gripping chronology of the buildup and ultimate collapse of the U.S. housing market, which triggered a worldwide economic meltdown. Over 30 Minutes of Bonus Material Including: Greenspan on Wall Street's Failings, Mortgage Lender on the Perfect Storm, How a Hedge Fund Profited While Others Lost, FDIC Chairman on Risky Assets & Practices.

### ++ **Capitalism: A Love Story (2009)**

Twenty years after his influential debut, *Roger & Me*, Michael Moore returns to his roots by pulling back the curtain on capitalism to reveal the insidious role it has played in the destruction of the American dream for many people. Back in 1989, auto workers in Flint, MI, were lamenting layoffs and wondering how they would support their families without jobs to pay the bills, or benefits to ensure their health. Flash forward two decades, when cities all across the country are feeling the same pressures that Flint residents were back when GM left them high and dry. With an average of 14,000 U.S. jobs lost every day and taxpayer money constantly being pumped into failing financial institutions, the question must be asked: how long can this go on before the entire system collapses? Is there really any hope for Americans who are losing their homes to foreclosure and seeing their savings get wiped out at an unprecedented rate? In order to seek out an answer to this question and many more, Moore takes a trip to our nation's capitol, engaging average Americans in conversations about the prospect of repairing America's failing, debt-ridden economy along the way.

## HISTORICAL FICTION

### \*\* ++ **Inherit the Wind (1960)**

The Evolution vs. Creationism argument is at the center of the Jerome Lawrence-Robert E. Lee Broadway play *Inherit the Wind*. Lawrence and Lee's inspiration was the 1925 "Monkey Trial," in which Tennessee schoolteacher John Scopes was arrested for teaching Darwin's theory of evolution in violation of state law. Scopes deliberately courted arrest to challenge what he and his supporters saw as an unjust law, and the trial became a national cause when The Baltimore Sun, represented by the famed (and atheistic) journalist H. L. Mencken, hired attorney Clarence Darrow to defend Scopes. The prosecuting attorney was crusading politician William Jennings Bryan, once a serious contender for the Presidency, now a relic of a past era. While Bryan won the case as expected, he and his fundamentalist backers were held up to public ridicule by the cagey Darrow

### \*\* ++ **The Grapes of Wrath (1940)**

The adaptation of Nobel Prize-winner John Steinbeck's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel of dirt-poor Dust Bowl migrants by 4-time Oscar-winning director John Ford starred Henry Fonda as Tom Joad, who opens the movie returning to his Oklahoma home after serving jail time for manslaughter. En route, Tom meets family friend Casey (John Carradine), a former preacher who warns Tom that dust storms, crop failures, and new agricultural methods have financially decimated the once prosperous Oklahoma farmland. Upon returning to his family farm, Tom is greeted by his mother (Oscar-winner Jane Darwell), who tells him that the family is packing up for the "promised land" of California. Warned that they shouldn't expect a warm welcome in California--they've already seen the caravan of dispirited farmers, heading back home after striking out at finding work--the Joads push on all the same. Their first stop is a wretched migrant camp, full of starving children and surrounded by armed guards. Further down the road, the Joads drive into an idyllic government camp, with clean lodging, indoor plumbing, and a self-governing clientele. When Tom ultimately bids goodbye to his mother, who asks him where he'll go, he delivers the film's most famous speech: "I'll be all around...Wherever there's a fight so hungry people can eat...Whenever there's a cop beating a guy, I'll be there...And when the people are eatin' the stuff they raise and livin' in the houses they build. I'll be there too.

### ++ **All the King's Men (2006)**

The legacy of a populist Southern politician whose lofty ambitions for the future leave him open to corruption and scandal is detailed as author Robert Penn Warren's thinly veiled portrait of Depression-era Louisiana governor Huey Long comes to the screen -- again -- this time courtesy of director and screenwriter Steven Zaillian. Willie Stark (Sean Penn) is a man of the people, and for the people; at least that's what he tells the people. Propelled into a race for governor by opposing forces looking to split the "hick vote," Stark is convinced by a handler -- as well as by young journalist Jack Burden (Jude Law) -- to not kowtow to the powers that be. His rhetoric grows fiery, and he makes his way into office on a not-so-solid foundation of social-service promises. When idealism gives way to the harsh realities of the time, however, the fast-talking politico is quick to discover just how far one can fall when ambition and power lead to a betrayal of one's original motivations. Kate Winslet, Patricia Clarkson, James

Gandolfini, Mark Ruffalo, and Anthony Hopkins round out an all-star cast in this second version of Warren's Pulitzer Prize-winning 1947 novel; the first won a parade of Oscars after its release in 1949.

### **\*\* ++ Miss Evers' Boys (1997)**

Produced for the HBO cable network, this docudrama explores the social and ethical issues at the heart of the infamous Tuskegee Study of Untreated Blacks With Syphilis. From 1932 through 1972, the U.S. Public Health Service studied 600 poor African-American sharecroppers in Macon County, AL -- 399 chronic syphilitics and a 201-man healthy control group. Doctors treated the men with placebos, hid the true nature of their research, and withheld penicillin even after it became the standard and highly effective treatment for the disease in the mid-'40s. Although the experiment was hardly a secret, it was not until the early '70s that a public outcry developed; by then, all but 127 of the original study group had died. A class-action lawsuit obtained modest financial reparations for the participants and their descendants, but it was not until 1997 that President Bill Clinton offered an official government apology for the study. Framed as a series of flashbacks during the 1971 congressional hearings about the experiment, the film employs the viewpoint of Eunice Evers (Alfre Woodard), a local nurse who knew of the study's true nature, but devoted her life to caring for the men as they suffered horrifying physical and mental debilities and eventually died. The film charts her warm personal relationships with many of the participants -- the title refers to a singing and dancing troupe named in her honor -- and her failed romance with Caleb Humphries (Laurence Fishburne), an experimental subject who obtained penicillin from a military doctor and left the study to fight in World War II. *Miss Evers' Boys* was adapted from the play by David Feldshuh, which was itself based on the book *Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment* by James H. Jones. Although fictionalized, the title character is based on the real-life Eunice Rivers. The film won three Emmy Awards, including top acting honors for Woodard. ~ Brian J. Dillard, All Movie Guide

### **\*\* ++ Thirteen Days (2000)**

Director Roger Donaldson teams up with star Kevin Costner for another political thriller (after their 1987 pairing, *No Way Out*), only this time with a film based on the actual events surrounding the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, taking place during the titular thirteen days wherein the U.S. and the Soviet Union nearly engaged in full-scale nuclear war. After President John F. Kennedy (Bruce Greenwood) is shown photographs from a spy plane detailing the presence of missiles in Cuba capable of obliterating massive areas of the U.S., he must immediately decide the most effective course of action for the country. With the aid of best friend and special assistant Kenny O'Donnell (Kevin Costner) and brother Robert (Steven Culp), the President must avoid a dire chain of events that could be dictated by General Curtis LeMay (Kevin Conway), who would rather take immediate action and invade Cuba. After initial reticence about leaking the information to the nation, President Kennedy eventually tells of the conflict, leading to widespread panic and a blockade of Cuba. With the aid of Robert McNamara (Dylan Baker) and Adlai Stevenson (Michael Fairman), the leaders must find a way to alleviate the tension of the situation.

## **BIOGRAPHIES**

### **\*\* ++ The Indomitable Teddy Roosevelt (1983)**

In an era when opinion polls seem to determine the opinions of politicians, it is good to be reminded that President Teddy Roosevelt actually led the country on several major issues (right or wrong), without waiting for feedback from the polls to see if he should change his actions. Using historical footage, old newsreels that were just coming out at this time, re-enactments (with Bob Boyd as Roosevelt), and an excellent narration written by Theodore Strauss, director Harrison Engle has put together a rousing biography of the 26th president. Little-known tragedies in Roosevelt's life (his wife died in childbirth on the same day his mother died) are recalled alongside well-known tragedies (as vice-president, he took over the presidency when William McKinley was assassinated in 1901). Photos and narration paint a picture of a childhood that was fraught with illness, but the young Roosevelt was still raised in the lap of luxury. His education extended to a period at Harvard, and his frail childhood is long gone by the time he energetically stumps the campaign trail and then fights for the legislation he wants approved in Congress. He established national parks and wildlife preserves, inaugurated the Panama Canal, and once out of office (he lost in a second attempt at the presidency), he went on personal expeditions to Africa and up the Amazon in South America. This is altogether an interesting documentary, especially for history buffs. ~ Eleanor Mannikka, All Movie Guide

### ++ **Landslide: A Portrait of President Herbert Hoover (2009)**

This documentary profiles the 31st president (1874-1964), an Iowa native who had the misfortune to be in White House when the stock market crashed in 1929, and presided over the Great Depression's early years before losing his reelection bid to FDR in 1932. An engineer by profession, Hoover directed WWI-era humanitarian aid to Europe, and served as Secretary of Commerce under Harding and Coolidge. Interviewees include historian David Kennedy (Freedom From Fear: The American People in Depression and War).

### ++ **Eleanor and Franklin: The Early Years (1976)**

The winner of 11 Emmy awards, the made-for-TV Eleanor and Franklin stars Edward Herrmann as Franklin D. Roosevelt and Jane Alexander as Eleanor Roosevelt. The film traces the first four decades of the lives of cousins Franklin and Eleanor, beginning with their marriage in 1905. Conflicts loom in the form of FDR's domineering mother (Rosemary Murphy) and Eleanor's discovery of an affair between her husband and artist Lucy Mercer (Linda Kelsey). After Franklin is stricken by polio in 1921, Eleanor emerges as a formidable and influential public figure. James Costigan wrote the teleplay for Eleanor and Franklin, which first aired as a two-parter on January 11 and 12, 1976. The film was followed several months later by a multipart sequel, Eleanor and Franklin: The White House Years. ~ Hal Erickson, All Movie Guide

### ++ **Eleanor and Franklin: The White House Years (1977)**

First aired March 13, 1977, Eleanor and Franklin: The White House Years was the brilliant follow-up to the equally praiseworthy 1976 TV movie Eleanor and Franklin: The Early Years. The film is framed in a flashback experienced by first lady Eleanor Roosevelt (Jane Alexander) while accompanying the casket carrying the body of her husband Franklin Delano Roosevelt (Edward Herrmann) to its final resting place in Hyde Park. Elected in 1933, FDR endeavors to pull the country out of the Depression with the New Deal during his first term, while Eleanor emerges as a formidable public figure in her own right during the second term, tirelessly working on behalf of social change and reforms. Ever under the baleful eye of his mother Sara (Rosemary Murphy), Roosevelt tries to maintain family equilibrium in the White House as he seeks an unprecedented third term. Sara dies in December of 1941, two days before Roosevelt, in his "Day of Infamy" speech, declares war on Japan. Despite health problems, FDR successfully pursues a fourth term in 1944; he dies in office in April of 1945, a scant few months before the end of World War II. Despite her long-standing displeasure over her husband's long-ago affair with artist Lucy Mercer (Linda Kelsey), a stiff-lipped Eleanor puts on a brave front when Roosevelt dies in the company of Deakins at a health spa in Georgia. Based on Joseph P. Lash's Pulitzer prize-winning biography, Eleanor and Franklin: The White House Years earned Emmies for "Outstanding Special" and for director Daniel Petrie. ~ Hal Erickson, All Movie Guide

### ++ ^^ **The Fog of War (2003)**

Former Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara is the sole focus of documentarian Errol Morris's *The Fog of War*, a film that not only analyzes McNamara's controversial decisions during the first half of the Vietnam War, but also his childhood upbringing, his education at Berkley and Harvard, his involvement in World War II, and his later years as president of the World Bank. Culling footage from almost 20 hours of interviews with the Secretary, Morris details key moments from McNamara's career, including the 1945 bombing of Tokyo, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and President Kennedy's suggestions to the Secretary that the U.S. remove itself from Vietnam.