

HISTORY IN FILM – SYLLABUS - Rowlett High School, 2014-2015

Teacher: Mrs. Tracey Osborn

Room: 2164

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Welcome to Mrs. Osborn's History in Film class. This course examines 20th/21st century American history, culture and society through film. The primary text for this course will be American films (in whole or part) such as *City Lights*, *I was a Fugitive from a Chain Gang*, *It Happened One Night*, *Modern Times*, *Journey for Margaret*, *The Mortal Storm*, *Mrs. Miniver*, *Casablanca*, *The Best Years of Our Lives*, *Citizen Kane*, *High Noon*, *The Searchers*, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, *War of the Worlds* (excerpts from 3 versions), *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, *Dr. Strangelove*, *American Graffiti*, *Little Big Man*, *The Sting*, *Rocky*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Norma Rae*, *Tootsie*, *Live from Baghdad*, *Charlie Wilson's War*, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, and *Argo*. We will critically analyze how American cultural and social conflicts are portrayed and worked out in popular film. By watching, discussing, and writing about these films, we will examine how motion pictures create a window into modern American society.

COURSE OBJECTIVE:

The larger goal of this course is to learn how to critically analyze and evaluate films as cultural texts. The primary form of cultural and historical analysis done in this class will involve writing critical film reviews. A good film review examines both how a film works and how and why it affects the viewer the way it does. We will learn how to use popular American films to understand competing perspectives on 20th/21st century American history, culture, and society. If you disagree with an argument or perspective, or find it biased or limited, then say so. If you find the reading difficult, confusing, or pointless, then say so. But, in each case, you must be prepared to support your argument and larger conclusions.

CLASS FORMAT/SCREENINGS:

A major portion of this class involves watching and critically analyzing films. **All in-class films are rated G, PG, or PG-13, EXCEPT the HBO TV film, *Live from Baghdad*, which is rated TV-MA (for language).** Signing the syllabus is considered as permission for your student to screen these films in class. Separate permission slips will be issued for the last films screened in class, *Charlie Wilson's War* & *Argo*, which are rated R.

FILM REVIEWS:

Students are required to write 2 major film reviews each grading period (total of 6 reviews) (1 ½ - 2 pages each) throughout the semester based on films viewed **OUTSIDE OF CLASS**. The films are selected from the Library of Congress's *American Film Institute's* list of Top 100 American Films. These reviews count as test grades. At the beginning of each grading period, students receive a list of films from which to choose. All the films for outside-class viewing during the first grading period are rated G (films released prior to 1960). The second grading period list (films released from 1960-2007) includes some "R" rated titles. If a student chooses an R-rated film, he/she **MUST TURN IN A VIEWING PERMISSION SLIP** signed by a parent/guardian (It does not matter if you are 18 years old). The 3rd grading period will involve writing reviews on films released since June 2013. In order to provide a model for writing these film reviews, portions of *Critical Approaches to Writing about Film* by John Moscovitz will be assigned. Film reviews will be graded on how well you critically analyze how a movie works and how it examines larger cultural and social issues in American history and society. **ALL REVIEWS WILL BE SUBMITTED VIA www.turnitin.com.**

ABOUT THE TEACHER:

I received my Bachelor of Science degree (Cum Laude) in History from Texas A&M University-Commerce. My certifications include: Secondary History (grades 6-12), Secondary Composite Social Studies (grades 8-12), & Talented/Gifted. My husband & I have a daughter who works as an engineer for Verizon Wireless and our son is a sociologist with Round Point Mortgage. I am also a violinist with the Mesquite Symphony Orchestra.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Students and parents are encouraged to contact me with any questions or concerns.

RHS phone number: 972-463-1712, ext. 81147

Email: trosborn@garlandisd.net

RHS website: <http://www.garlandisdschools.net/rhs> (with link to GISD Online Grade Book)

*** Class website: <http://www.teacheroz.com> (more info below) ***

*** Class Google Drive (all lecture notes & handouts for view/download): LINK ON CLASS WEBSITE, teacheroz.com.

CONFERENCE PERIOD: 9:08-9:45AM (3RD PERIOD)

GRADING PROCEDURES:

Classwork – 50% Homework – 10% Quizzes/Tests/Major Film Reviews – 40%

EACH six weeks grade counts as 2/7 of trimester grade. Final Exam: 1/7 of trimester grade

ABSENCES/MAKE-UP WORK/LATE WORK: Late work is penalized a maximum of 30 points. **NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THREE (3) DAYS. Major Film Reviews will not be accepted late.** Students with **excused** absences have one extra day for each day absent to make up work. **If absent (illness, reassignment, or suspension), it is the STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY to inquire about make-up work and check the class calendar posted in the room. STUDENTS WHO ARE ASSIGNED TO RAC MUST PICK UP WORK BEFORE GOING TO RAC ROOM AND ARRANGE TO VIEW MISSED FILMS DURING TUTORIALS.**

TUTORIALS: **Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday mornings 6:40-7:10**

Students must have a pass (or signed note from parent/guardian) to enter the building.

*** **I DO NOT NORMALLY ASSIGN MANDATORY TUTORIALS FOR MISSING WORK. IT IS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO ATTEND TUTORIALS.** ***

REQUIRED SUPPLIES:

- notebook paper - pens (blue/black ink) & pencils - Section of Binder dedicated to Film Class.

*** **ONLINE GRADEBOOK** ***: ***NEW THIS YEAR!*** Parents and students can check progress, grades, & attendance in class 24 hours a day/7 days a week with Family/Student Access to **SKYWARD** software program.

REGISTRATION IS OPEN ON SEPTEMBER, 5TH. You can access the link to Skyward from the Film class, RHS, or GISD websites. Please be aware that I do use some special grade codes. A grade of "1" in the GISD Online Grade Book means the time allotted to turn in an assignment has passed. A "2" means a student has plagiarized a source or copied/allowed someone else to copy his/her work. A "3" means the assignment was more than 50% incomplete.

BYOD (Bring Your Own Device): Mrs. Osborn allows students to use electronic devices for classroom activities **ONLY**. Otherwise, the use of these devices in Mrs. Osborn's classroom is **expressly forbidden**. On first observed use, a warning will be issued. At Mrs. Osborn's discretion, subsequent use may result in an office referral AND/OR the loss of any earned final exam exemption. Signs with this policy are displayed in class.

CLASS WEBSITE (www.teacheroz.com): An Internet website listing important announcements, each week's schedule/assignments, and links to websites for research and information on Film History. *** **NOTE:** All assignments, information, and notes/outlines listed on the online website are also displayed in the classroom or given to the students. Students who do not have regular access to the Internet can access the sites in the Library before school, after school, and during their lunch period.

*** **Students** are required to keep this syllabus in the "Notes/Assignments" section of their binder for future reference. A copy of this syllabus (for home reference) is available for download on the class website at

<http://www.teacheroz.com> ***

