

Final Project for History through Film

Groups consisting of three students will create a twenty- two minute long video documentary, including credits, analyzing the historical accuracy of two or more films that either deal with the same historical topic --- e.g., *Tora Tora Tora* and *Pearl Harbor* --- or are related in some relevant and interesting way --- e.g., *The Magnificent Seven* and *Platoon*, two very different movies with a Vietnam War theme. In addition to analyzing the historical accuracy, there are other themes or avenues you may explore in your documentary. For instance, you might consider what the contemporary topic or issue was that a given film maker was trying to address when making a film with an historical theme. An example of this would be to analyze films about the Vietnam War that are not set in Vietnam, but rather are set during a different time period and/or place (*Burn*, an anti-imperialist film set on a fictitious nineteenth century Caribbean island ; *M*A*S*H**, a film about an army hospital in Korea during the Korean War. You might want to choose a director who has made several historical films and analyze his or her agenda or view of history, and the political and social events that were occurring during the making of the films --- e.g., Oliver Stone's Vietnam trilogy (*Platoon*, *Born on the Fourth of July*, *Heaven and Earth*), or other of his films, such as *Salvador*, *JFK*, and *Nixon* or John Ford and his western trilogy (*Fort Apache*, *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*, and *Rio Grande*).

There are numerous possibilities when it comes to choosing your topic and films. However, you must clear your topic with me first, to avoid going off on a topic that I feel can not be addressed properly within the framework of the assignment, or one that is inappropriate for the class, or one that is just a very bad idea. Each group must submit a written proposal stating the theme of the documentary and listing the films you will be using.

WHAT WILL THE VIDEO LOOK LIKE AND WHAT WILL IT INCLUDE?

It should look professional.

- It should include clips from the films you are analyzing.
- It should include commentary by the members of the group, between clips, using voice- overs, or both.
- It might include clips from documentaries.
- It might include interviews with or comments from experts.
- It must include credits at the end of the video. This is your on screen "bibliography".

WHAT ELSE DOES THE GROUP NEED TO TURN IN BESIDES THE VIDEO?

- A two page viewers' guide that should include a summary of the video, any themes or conclusions you have drawn from your analysis, and an annotated bibliography listing the sources you used and an explanation of how those sources were helpful.
- A one page teachers' guide explaining how your video could be useful in a classroom. The guide should also contain a table of contents, giving the minutes and seconds of the topics and clips in the video, a list of recommended films for further viewing, and a list of recommended books and articles for further reading.
- An explanation of how each member of the group contributed to the project.

WHERE AND WHEN ARE WE GOING TO CREATE THE VIDEO?

Before you start editing clips from videos you should do research on the period of history that the films address. You should also watch the videos together as a group at least once. This will take some time but you are most likely going to be watching videos that you are interested in.

- You should have a very good idea of which clips you want to include before you get to the editing equipment. Creating an outline or "storyboard" first would be a good idea.

- There are very few computers (Macs) at Horace Greeley that are suitable for this project. There are a few located in Gary Lanza's office and a few in the video lab run by Mr. Forlini. Our class will mostly be using the Macs in Gary Lanza's office. Mr. Lanza will help you; however, he is extremely busy and is often needed outside of his office. It is not his job to do your project for you. Mr. Lanza will provide a sign-up sheet to use the Macs; do not abuse this sheet or Mr. Lanza's generosity.
- You will be doing the research and editing on your own time. Very little class time, if any, will be set aside for this Final Project.

WHEN IS THIS PROJECT DUE?

Projects are due the Tuesday after MLK holiday (Jan 20). We will view the projects in class and offer critiques as a class.