

HIST475-001 (3 crs.)  
History, Myth & Film  
6-9 p.m. Mondays (Fall 2015)

Instructor: Dr. Brian E. Strayer

Office: Buller Hall 127

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Hours: 9:30-10:20 a.m.; 11:30 a.m.-12:20 p.m. MWF

Textbook: William V. Constanzo, *Great Films and How to Teach Them* (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 2004. ISBN: 0814139094); also 1 DVD film per student.

Schedule of Assignments:

- August 24—Introduction, Syllabus, Assign Films, Handouts for “Birth of a Nation”  
Meet at tables in History & Political Science Department, Buller 135  
31—“Birth of a Nation” (1915)  
Read Constanzo, ix-xxi, 3-15; watch & discuss “Birth of a Nation”
- September 14—“All Quiet on the Western Front” (1930)  
Read Constanzo, 16-24; watch & discuss “All Quiet on the Western Front”  
21—“Stagecoach” (1939)  
Read Constanzo, 25-42; watch & discuss “Stagecoach”  
28—“Casablanca” (1942)  
Read Constanzo, 43-55, 133-40; watch and discuss “Casablanca”; 5-page  
book review due at class time
- October 5—“To Kill a Mockingbird” (1962)  
Read Constanzo, 56-64, 155-64; watch & discuss “To Kill a Mockingbird”;  
distribute midterm exam questions due in two weeks.  
\*19—Midterm Exams due by 6 p.m. (-10% per hour if late!)  
26—“Cry Freedom” (1987)  
Read Constanzo, 65-76; watch & discuss “Cry Freedom”
- November 2—“Glory” (1989)  
Read Constanzo, 77-94, 205-15; watch & discuss “Glory”  
9—“Forrest Gump” (1994)  
Read Constanzo, 95-115; watch & discuss “Forrest Gump”  
16—“Bend It Like Beckham” (2003)  
Read Constanzo, 116-29, 273-81; watch & discuss “Bend It Like Beckham”  
23—“Australia” (2008)  
Read Constanzo, 291-302; watch & discuss “Australia”; distribute final exam  
questions due in two weeks.  
30—“Unbroken” (2015)  
Read Constanzo, 303-20; watch & discuss “Unbroken”
- December \*7—Final Exams due by 6 p.m. (-10% per hour if late!)

Aim of the Course: “The greatest work of the teacher is to lead those under his charge to be intellectual Christians.”—Ellen G. White, ms. release no. 76, p. 3

In relating to the film media, an intellectual Christian should be both historically critical and analytical in evaluating films (How close to truth is it? How does it portray reality?) and morally discriminating (What impact does it have on my character and the mindset of those who watch it?). While our major focus in this course will be on the former, subjective comments will always be welcome as we seek to assess the impact that a film had on its original audience and on us today.

Outcome Objectives Upon successful completion of this course, students will understand

1. the art of historical fiction in films.
2. the languages (discourse) of films.
3. the technology by which films are created and shown.
4. a brief history of film from the 1890s to the present.
5. the business aspect of producing and marketing films.
6. the theoretical frameworks (or paradigms) of films.
7. various film genres.
8. representation in films.
9. how to accurately view and critique historically based films from different eras.
10. the evolution in the treatment of war, women, and race in feature films from 1915 to 2015.

### Course Requirements

It is expected that each student will study the weekly reading assignments from *Great Films*, view each film on Monday night, read several reviews available on-line, prepare one five-page single-spaced film critique on one film, lead out in discussing one film, write one analytical book review from the book list provided, and actively participate in weekly discussions following each film. Furthermore, two take-home essay exams of 100 points each will be given over the eleven films, film reviews, textbook reading, and class discussions.

### Class Participation

This is not a lecture course, so your participation is very important to your grade and to your enjoyment of the class. A maximum of 60 points will be awarded for regular discussion credit (30 points at midterm; 30 points at the final exam). This will be noted on your exam. Do come to class prepared to share your ideas and questions! In addition, each student will be expected to take notes while watching films as s/he would do in a lecture class.

### Class Attendance

Because we meet only once a week, missing one three-hour class is equivalent to missing three regular MWF class sessions. Therefore, missing two Monday classes will lower one's overall grade by one letter; missing three Monday classes will be grounds for an F grade. A maximum of 40 points will be awarded for regular attendance (20 points at midterm; 20 points at the final exam). This will be noted on your exam. Excused absences must be documented in writing by a doctor, dentist, nurse, professor, etc. before any makeup work is permitted.

### Oral Presentations

Clarity, persuasiveness, depth and breadth of analysis, accuracy of one's handouts, and the skill of conducting discussions on one's chosen film will be taken into consideration during oral presentations. One's handouts (which should include discussion questions) should reflect the research one has done in books, magazines, journals, newspapers, and on-line, examining such topics as sources used for the film; myths perpetuated by it; racial, religious, social, cultural biases of the producer, director, writers, etc.; audience reactions to it; actors' backgrounds; reviews of the film; favorable and unfavorable essays about it; its settings, music, costumes, etc.; interesting film techniques, etc. Handouts are due in my office (Buller 127) by noon one week prior to the date for viewing a film so that I can distribute them to students at my home a week ahead.

### Academic Dishonest Policy

Honesty in all academic matters is a vital component of personal integrity. Breaches in academic integrity principles are taken seriously. Acts of academic dishonest as described in the University *Bulletin* are subject to incremental disciplinary penalties with redemptive intent. Such acts are tracked in the office of the Vice President for Academic Administration. Serious offenses will be referred to the Committee on Academic Integrity for further recommendations on penalties. To avoid involvement in academic dishonesty, in this course my policy will be to give no credit to any written work that demonstrates any degree of plagiarism, which is stealing and passing off words or ideas of another as one's own without giving credit (as with quotation marks or footnotes) to the original source or copying information from another student's exam.

### Disability Accommodations

If you qualify for accommodation under the American Disabilities Act, please contact Student Success in NH100 ([disabilities@andrews.edu](mailto:disabilities@andrews.edu) or 471-6096) as soon as possible so that accommodations can be arranged.

### Emergency Protocol

Andrews University takes the safety of its students seriously. Signs identifying emergency protocols are posted throughout buildings. Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting that specific location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during any evacuation or sheltering emergency.

### Federal Credit Definition

A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than (1) one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one

semester hour of credit; or (2) at least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other activities as established by an institution, including laboratory work, internship, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading toward the award of credit hours.

Grading: Your letter grade is based on the composite of all the points earned:

1 five-page single-spaced film critique	100 points
1 five-page double-spaced book review	50 points
2 take-home essay exams (100 points each)	200 points
1 film discussion leader w/handouts	50 points
Discussion credit	60 points
<u>Attendance credit</u>	<u>40 points</u>
TOTAL	500 points

Grading Scale\*

A = 93-100%  
A- = 90-92%  
B+ = 87-89%  
B = 83-86%  
B- = 80-82%  
C+ = 77-79%  
C = 73-76%  
C- = 70-72%  
D = 60-69%  
F = 0-59%

\*In this course the grades of AU (Audit), I (Incomplete), and DG (Deferred Grade) *will not be given to any student for any reason.* Only grades of A, B, C, D, F, and W will be given.

Communication

Email is the official form of communication at Andrews University. Students are responsible for checking the Andrews University email and I-VUE alerts regularly for messages from the professor and cumulative grade updates every three weeks.

I trust that this semester's study will be not only a richly rewarding experience for you, but also a pleasurable journey into the world where film, myth, and history intersect. May God richly bless your study efforts!

Dr. Brian E. Strayer  
Professor of History