

Stockbridge High School
Summer Assignment 2013
Advanced Placement United States History (11th grade)
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Welcome to AP US History! Students are expected to go beyond the normal textbook reading assignments and learn to explore primary source documents, novels, short stories, poetry and film as sources of information about the history of our country. Your summer assignment will involve viewing movies that depict various time periods in American history. As you watch these films, understand that the primary reason Hollywood makes movies is to entertain and to make money. Therefore Hollywood producers often take liberties and stretch the historical facts to make their movies sell. Part of your job as you watch these movies will involve outside investigation to determine how much of the movie is factual and how much is fiction. Should you have any trouble finding these, please feel free to email me. You must watch 5 of the below films during the summer and complete the video analysis worksheet for each film. To give yourself a variety of exposure, choose films from as many categories as possible (i.e. don't just watch all the WWII movies).

Along with your film analysis you will read the historical fiction novel *A Long Way From Home* by Connie Briscoe. The novel vividly recreates Southern life and the shifting relationships on both sides of the color divide, from the cruelty and insidious benevolence of President James Madison's family to the deep yearnings and conflicted emotions of their slaves. The book can be purchased used at amazon.com from .01- \$3.99. Follow the link for more information: <http://www.amazon.com/A-Long-Way-From-Home/dp/0060172789>. Along with the novel you are to complete the corresponding discussion questions.

Choose 5 movies from five categories on the following list:

Colonial History and American Revolution: The New World, The Crossing, The Patriot
Antebellum Period: Alamo, Amistad, The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman, Alex Haley's Queen or Roots
Civil War and Reconstruction: Gone with the Wind, Glory, Red Badge of Courage, Gettysburg,
US's Relationship with Native Americans: Dances with Wolves, Last of the Mohicans, Little Big Man
Imperialism and WWI: Rough Riders, All Quiet on the Western Front
1920s and the Great Depression: Grapes of Wrath*, Cinderella Man*, O Brother Where Art Thou?,
Inherit the Wind, The Great Gatsby, The Great Debaters
WWII: Saving Private Ryan*, Band of Brothers (1 episode), Pearl Harbor, Patton,
Gentlemen's Agreement* (Anti-Semitism in the US), The Great Escape, Tora Tora Tora!, Midway,
The Longest Day, Tuskegee Airmen*, Flags of Our Fathers, Letters from Iwo Jima*
The Cold War: Thirteen Days, Good Night and Good Luck
1960s and 1970s: All the President's Men* (Watergate), Forrest Gump, Apollo 13, The Right Stuff
Civil Rights and Racism in the United States: To Kill a Mockingbird, Freedom Rides (in theaters!),
Ghosts of the Mississippi, A Raisin in the Sun, Selma Lord Selma, Spike Lee's 4 Little Girls, Ruby
Bridges, Eyes on the Prize
Vietnam War: Platoon, Apocalypse Now, Full Metal Jacket
Women's Rights: Iron Jawed Angels*, A League of Their Own, Erin Brockovich, Secret Life of the Bees

Due Dates

Monday August 5th - All 5 Movie Analyses are due. You will be expected to write a Free Response Essay on the second day of class using two of the five movie analysis you completed over the summer. These video analysis sheets will count as much as a major essay/test. You will be expected to be able to use the knowledge gained from these videos throughout the semester.

Friday August 8th- *A Long Way From Home* novel should be completely read and discussion questions are due. Novel and discussion questions will be revisited when discussing the topic of plantation economies and slave societies.

****Please Note****

If you come to school the first week without your summer assignments you will begin the year off failing the course seeing that these are your first grades to be entered in the grade book.

Film Analysis Questions (complete for each film viewed)

1. What is the title of the film you picked?
2. Why did you pick this film to watch?
3. What is/are the central message(s) of this documentary/ film? Be specific. Use examples from the film to support your choice.
4. Consider the effectiveness of the film for this history class. What are its strengths and weaknesses of this film in documenting history?
5. How do you think the filmmakers want the audience to respond? Is there a social justice message? If so, what is it?
6. Did the documentary/film leave you with any unanswered questions? If so, what were they?
7. How did this film change any misconceptions or stereotypes you had about the subject matter? If so, what were they?
8. What is the most important thing you learned from watching the film?
9. Why is this film important to understanding contemporary American History?
10. In your opinion, how accurate is this film in showing or explaining an historical event, figure, or time period? Explain at least two specific parts of the film that support your opinion.

A Long Way From Home Discussion Questions

1. The author sets her fictional characters among historical figures and events. How does this technique affect your reaction to the story?
2. As a girl, Clara is critical of her mama's placid behavior, of her seeming acceptance of their life in slavery. Yet years later, when Clara is head of the house slaves in the Montgomery household, Clara's daughter Susan has the same criticism of Clara. What makes Clara, once so rebellious, reach a similar state of acceptance as her mama?
3. Parts I and II are told by two different narrators, Clara and her daughter Susan. Though they are a generation apart, their lives have many parallels. Both worked in the households of wealthy white families and enjoyed certain privileges. And both rejected a possible turning point in their lives: Clara declines her father's offer to "run" with him, and Susan, sitting in the Richmond train station with money stolen from Miss Lizbeth, changes her mind and returns to the Montgomery house. What kept them from running? What might their futures have held if they had carried out their plans for escape?
4. The author writes of an "invisible mask" that slaves pull over their faces when speaking and acting before white people. What kind of behavior is the mask hiding? What is it projecting?
5. As Susan is chained to a wagon and wrenched from her family, her mother valiantly tries to give her a string of blue beads that belonged to Grandmother Squire. What does the shattering of the beads signify? What objects in our own lives convey a sense of family unity?
6. When Susan's name is changed to Suzanne for her owners' convenience, she feels this insult above all else. What significances is attached to a name? Does her acceptance of this new name reflect a defeated spirit? How would we react if our employers requested us to change our names?
7. Susanne witnesses Oliver's forcible removal from a public park for lack of the "proper papers" and sees his humiliation. She reflects that Oliver, a free man, is not so different from her --he is merely a "slave without a master." How does society limit a person's freedoms even when the law has freed them? Does today's society continue to restrict its black citizens?
8. Many of the slaves are conflicted about pursuing their freedom. What are some of the things they feared would be lost with the gain of freedom? Was it more difficult for a slave like Susan, living amidst wealth and privilege, to see the gains of freedom? What convinces her that a free life is the life she must live?

9. The slaves were forbidden to learn to read. Why did slave-owners fear the literacy of their slaves? How would communication among the slaves challenge the power of the slaveholders? What other ways were the slaves kept dependent?

10. The pre-Civil War South housed an obvious division between whites and blacks. More subtle divisions existed between house slaves and field slaves, between country slaves and city slaves, between American-born blacks and African-born blacks. Besides color, what are some of the prejudices that divide people in our society today?