

Pascack Valley Regional High School District

Pascack Hills High School, Montvale, New Jersey

Pascack Valley High School, Hillsdale, New Jersey

Course Name: Critical Analysis of History Through Film

Born on: August, 2020
Current Revision: July, 2026
Board Approval: 8/24/2026

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Critical Analysis of History Through Film

In addition to textbooks and other more traditional sources of information, people often learn about historical events and people from sources such as film and documentaries. The purpose of this course is for students to critically examine the historical accuracy of material presented in this form and how it enhances the themes previously developed in the United States History curriculum.

Each Unit will take about 1-2 weeks to complete for the semester course

Accommodations and Modifications: Each unit has examples of possible accommodations/modifications. Charts of accommodations/modifications are found at the end of the document.

Unit 1

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES & EXPERIENCES	EVALUATION	NJSLS	Time
Analyzing Films with Historical Themes: In this course students will learn to apply the process of critical analysis of film to determine the historical accuracy of the content by: - Examining primary and secondary documents of the events portrayed in the film - Comparing the film's representations to that of the primary and secondary sources to: - verify historical accuracy - identify discrepancies - determine bias - analyze screen writer's/director's interpretation - Comparing the historic context of the time to the time the film was produced - Evaluating the arguments and interpretations as portrayed in the film Film: Inherit the Wind - Students will review the concepts of conservatism and fundamentalism	- Have students brainstorm ways that people "learn" history in addition to those already discussed. List ideas on chart paper or on the board. If students do not offer films or movies, add this to the list and ask students to name films with historical themes that they have either seen or heard about. - Ask students to give their thoughts on the reliability of information presented in movies with historical themes. Questions to the class might include: Is it possible that some of these movies are very accurate? Is it possible that some of these movies are highly fictionalized? Is the perspective from which the film is told likely to influence the accuracy of information presented? How are historical movies or films with historical themes different from documentaries and news stories? - Explain to students that as a class you will view a film with an historical theme and then compare the account given in the film to other sources of information	Methods of Assessment <i>Student Assessment</i> Homework F Class discussion F Group projects and reports F Alternate assessments F Research papers S Tests and quizzes S Document-based essays and free-response essays S Class participation F Debates/Socratic Seminars F Project Based Assessments S	6.1.12.CivicsHR.8.a 6.1.12.HistoryUP.2.b 6.1.12.EconNE.4.a 6.1.12.HistoryUP.4.a 6.1.12.CivicsDP.5.a ELA RI.CR.11-12.1 RI.CI.11-12.2 RI.PP.11-12.5 RI.MF.11-12.6 RI.CT.11-12.8 RI.AA.11-12.7 W.AW.11-12.1 W.WR.11-12.5 W.SE.11-12.6 W.IW.11-12.2 Mathematics MP.2 MP.3 MP.6	1 week

2. Students will evaluate the ongoing debate regarding the teaching of creationism versus Darwin's theory of evolution	available on the topic. Instruct students to view the film critically, writing down any points that they want to verify through other sources. Differentiation for Diverse Learners/ Accommodations Special Ed/504: Provide copies of notes and presentation Provide excerpts of primary source documents instead of full documents. Provide students with essential vocabulary Re-teaching and review Graphic organizers Scaffolding of assignments Guided questions and note taking Provide an Outline for writing assessments Multilingual Learners: Use simplified text and summaries of content. Use art visuals for students to respond to instead of text. Provide copies of notes At Risk Students: Provide copies of presentations and notes Extended time on assignments Gifted and Talented:		Science HS-LS2-6 HS-LS2-7 HS-ESS3-1 Art 1.2.12acc.Re7a 1.2.12acc.Re8a 1.5.12prof.Re7a 1.5.12acc.Re7b 1.5.12acc.Re8a 1.5.12prof.Cn11a Technology and 21st Century Themes & Skills 9.4.12.IML.2 9.4.12.IML.8: Computer Science 8.1.12.DA.5	
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	Vary level of reading and primary source documents			
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Unit II

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES & EXPERIENCES	EVALUATION	NJSLS	Time
TransMississippi West and the impact that it had on Native Americans: Film: Fort Apache (clips from Little Big Man) - Students will evaluate the film's portrayal of Native Americans versus John Ford's in Fort Apache. - Students will develop an opinion concerning the role that the American soldier had in taming the American West.	- Have students brainstorm ways that people "learn" history in addition to those already discussed. List ideas on chart paper or on the board. If students do not offer films or movies, add this to the list and ask students to name films with historical themes that they have either seen or heard about. - Ask students to give their thoughts on the reliability of information presented in movies with historical themes. Questions to the class might include: Is it possible that some of these movies are very accurate? Is it possible that some of these movies are highly fictionalized? Is the perspective from which the film is told likely to influence the accuracy of information presented? How are historical movies or films with historical themes different from documentaries and news stories? - Explain to students that as a class you will view a film with an historical theme and then compare the account given in the film to other sources of information	Methods of Assessment <i>Student Assessment</i> Homework F Class discussion F Group projects and reports F Alternate assessments F Research papers S Tests and quizzes S Document-based essays and free-response essays S Class participation F Debates/Socratic Seminars F Project Based Assessments S	6.1.12.HistoryUP.2.a 6.1.12.CivicsDP.5.a 6.1.12.HistoryCC.11.c 6.1.12.GeoSV.3.a ELA RI.CR.11-12.1 RI.CI.11-12.2 RI.PP.11-12.5 RI.MF.11-12.6 RI.CT.11-12.8 RI.AA.11-12.7 W.AW.11-12.1 W.WR.11-12.5 W.SE.11-12.6 W.IW.11-12.2 Mathematics MP.2 MP.3 MP.6	2 weeks

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	Gifted and Talented: Vary level of reading and primary source documents			
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Unit III

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES & EXPERIENCES	EVALUATION	NJSLS	Time
World War II: Film: The Longest Day vs. Saving Private Ryan - Students will identify the theme of the film, The Longest Day, as a patriotic one, the triumph of democracy over dictatorship. - Students will identify the themes in Saving Private Ryan. - Students will compare the themes in both. - Students will examine the central character roles as designed by the purpose of the films. - Students will identify and describe the reaction the films had on that generation.	- Have students brainstorm ways that people “learn” history in addition to those already discussed. List ideas on chart paper or on the board. If students do not offer films or movies, add this to the list and ask students to name films with historical themes that they have either seen or heard about. - Ask students to give their thoughts on the reliability of information presented in movies with historical themes. Questions to the class might include: Is it possible that some of these movies are very accurate? Is it possible that some of these movies are highly fictionalized? Is the perspective from which the film is told likely to influence the accuracy of information presented? How are historical movies or films with historical themes different from documentaries and news stories? - Explain to students that as a class you will view a film with an historical theme and then compare the account given in the film to other sources of information	Methods of Assessment <i>Student Assessment</i> Homework F Class discussion F Group projects and reports F Alternate assessments F Research papers S Tests and quizzes S Document-based essays and free-response essays S Class participation F Debates/Socratic Seminars F Project Based Assessments S	6.1.12.EconET.11.a 6.1.12.HistoryCC.11.b ELA RI.CR.11-12.1 RI.CI.11-12.2 RI.PP.11-12.5 RI.MF.11-12.6 RI.CT.11-12.8 RI.AA.11-12.7 W.AW.11-12.1 W.WR.11-12.5 W.SE.11-12.6 W.IW.11-12.2 Mathematics MP.2 MP.3 MP.6 Science HS-LS2-6 HS-LS2-7	2 weeks

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	Vary level of reading and primary source documents			
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Unit IV

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES & EXPERIENCES	EVALUATION	NJSLS	Time
Civil Rights Movement: Film: Simple Justice vs. Mississippi Burning - Students will review the Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas decision concerning the issue of “separate but equal.” - Students will apply the civil rights amendments (13, 14, and 15) and the various legal decisions and procedures leading up to the Brown v. Board of Education decision. - Students will review the actions and events of Freedom Summer of 1963. - Students will compare the approach in Simple Justice to the civil disobedient actions taken by SCLC, SNCC and the Freedom Riders.	- Have students brainstorm ways that people “learn” history in addition to those already discussed. List ideas on chart paper or on the board. If students do not offer films or movies, add this to the list and ask students to name films with historical themes that they have either seen or heard about. - Ask students to give their thoughts on the reliability of information presented in movies with historical themes. Questions to the class might include: Is it possible that some of these movies are very accurate? Is it possible that some of these movies are highly fictionalized? Is the perspective from which the film is told likely to influence the accuracy of information presented? How are historical movies or films with historical themes different from documentaries and news stories? - Explain to students that as a class you will view a film with an historical theme and then compare the account given in the film to	Methods of Assessment <i>Student Assessment</i> Homework F Class discussion F Group projects and reports F Alternate assessments F Research papers S Tests and quizzes S Document-based essays and free-response essays S Class participation F Debates/Socratic Seminars F Project Based Assessments S	6.1.12.CivicsDP.13.a 6.1.12.HistoryCC.13.a 6.1.12.HistoryCC.13.c 6.1.12.HistoryUP.4.a ELA RI.CR.11-12.1 RI.CI.11-12.2 RI.PP.11-12.5 RI.MF.11-12.6 RI.CT.11-12.8 RI.AA.11-12.7 W.AW.11-12.1 W.WR.11-12.5 W.SE.11-12.6 W.IW.11-12.2 Mathematics MP.2 MP.3 MP.6	2 weeks

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	Extended time on assignments Gifted and Talented: Vary level of reading and primary source documents			
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Unit V

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES & EXPERIENCES	EVALUATION	NJSLS	Time
The Cold War: Nuclear Development Film: Dr. Strangelove vs. Fail Safe 1. Students will review concepts of the Cold War themes that include: brinkmanship, MAD (Mutual Assured Destruction), thermonuclear warfare. 2. Students will describe the era's strategic thinking and cultural climate in the 1960s. 3. Students will compare the intensity of the threat of nuclear war from the 1960s to 1980s (Dr. Strangelove vs. Fail Safe). 4. Students will compare the personal reactions from those generations to their own.	- Have students brainstorm ways that people “learn” history in addition to those already discussed. List ideas on chart paper or on the board. If students do not offer films or movies, add this to the list and ask students to name films with historical themes that they have either seen or heard about. - Ask students to give their thoughts on the reliability of information presented in movies with historical themes. Questions to the class might include: Is it possible that some of these movies are very accurate? Is it possible that some of these movies are highly fictionalized? Is the perspective from which the film is told likely to influence the accuracy of information presented? How are historical movies or films with historical themes different	Methods of Assessment <i>Student Assessment</i> Homework F Class discussion F Group projects and reports F Alternate assessments F Research papers S Tests and quizzes S Document-based essays and free-response essays S Class participation F Debates/Socratic Seminars F Project Based Assessments S	6.1.12.EconNE.12.a 6.1.12.HistoryCC.12.d 6.2.12.HistoryCC.5.a 6.2.12.HistoryCC.5.e ELA RI.CR.11-12.1 RI.CI.11-12.2 RI.PP.11-12.5 RI.MF.11-12.6 RI.CT.11-12.8 RI.AA.11-12.7 W.AW.11-12.1 W.WR.11-12.5 W.SE.11-12.6 W.IW.11-12.2 Mathematics	1 week

	from documentaries and news stories? ● Explain to students that as a class you will view a film with an historical theme and then compare the account given in the film to other sources of information available on the topic. Instruct students to view the film critically, writing down any points that they want to verify through other sources. Differentiation for Diverse Learners/ Accommodations Special Ed/504: Provide copies of notes and presentation Provide excerpts of primary source documents instead of full documents. Provide students with essential vocabulary Re-teaching and review Graphic organizers Scaffolding of assignments Guided questions and note taking Provide an Outline for writing assessments Multilingual Learners: Use simplified text and summaries of content.		MP.2 MP.3 MP.6 Science HS-LS2-6 HS-LS2-7 HS-ESS3-1 Art 1.2.12acc.Re7a 1.2.12acc.Re8a 1.5.12prof.Re7a 1.5.12acc.Re7b 1.5.12acc.Re8a 1.5.12prof.Cn11a Technology and 21st Century Themes & Skills 9.4.12.IML.2 9.4.12.IML.8: Computer Science 8.1.12.DA.5	
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	Use art visuals for students to respond to instead of text. Provide copies of notes At Risk Students: Provide copies of presentations and notes Extended time on assignments Gifted and Talented: Vary level of reading and primary source documents			
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Unit VI

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES & EXPERIENCES	EVALUATION	NJSLS	Time
Film: Schindler's List vs. Escape from Sobibor - Students will review events of the holocaust and the concept of genocide. - Students will describe the human effects of persecution and triumph of the human spirit. - Students will describe the response of the world community to genocide in the contemporary world.	- Have students brainstorm ways that people "learn" history in addition to those already discussed. List ideas on chart paper or on the board. If students do not offer films or movies, add this to the list and ask students to name films with historical themes that they have either seen or heard about. - Ask students to give their thoughts on the reliability of information presented in movies with historical themes. Questions to the class might include: Is it possible that some of these movies are very accurate? Is it possible that some of these movies are highly fictionalized? Is the perspective from which the film is told likely to influence the accuracy of information presented? How are historical movies or films with historical themes different from documentaries and news stories? - Explain to students that as a class you will view a film with an historical theme and then compare the account given in the film to other sources of information	Methods of Assessment <i>Student Assessment</i> Homework F Class discussion F Group projects and reports F Alternate assessments F Research papers S Tests and quizzes S Document-based essays and free-response essays S Class participation F Debates/Socratic Seminars F Project Based Assessments S	6.1.12.CivicsHR.11.a 6.1.12.HistoryCC.11.d 6.2.12.CivicsHR.4.a: 6.2.12.HistoryUP.4.b 6.2.12.HistoryUP.4.c ELA RI.CR.11-12.1 RI.CI.11-12.2 RI.PP.11-12.5 RI.MF.11-12.6 RI.CT.11-12.8 RI.AA.11-12.7 W.AW.11-12.1 W.WR.11-12.5 W.SE.11-12.6 W.IW.11-12.2 Mathematics MP.2 MP.3 MP.6	2 weeks

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Interdisciplinary Connections	<u>Connections to NJSLS – English Language Arts:</u> W.IW.11-12.2: Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes) to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. W.SE.11-12.6: Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation (MLA or APA Style Manuals). RI.CR.11-12.1: Accurately cite a range of thorough textual evidence and make relevant connections to strongly support a comprehensive analysis of multiple aspects of what an informational text says explicitly and inferentially, as well as interpretations of the text. <u>Connections to NJSLS – Mathematics</u> MP.4: Model with mathematics. SL.PE.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with peers on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. SL.II.11-12.2 Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.
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Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills	● 9.1.12.CFR.1: Compare and contrast the role of philanthropy, volunteer service, and charities in community development and quality of life in a variety of cultures. ● 9.1.12.CFR.2: Summarize causes important to you and compare organizations you seek to support to other organizations with similar missions. ● 9.1.12.CFR.3: Research companies with corporate governance policies supporting the common good and human rights. ● 9.4.12.IML.3: Analyze data using tools and models to make valid and reliable claims, or to determine optimal design solutions (e.g., S-ID.B.6a., 8.1.12.DA.5, 7.1.IH.IPRET.8) ● 9.4.12.IML.4: Assess and critique the appropriateness and impact of existing data visualizations for an intended audience (e.g., S-ID.B.6b, HS-LS2-4). ● 9.4.12.TL.3: Analyze the effectiveness of the process and quality of collaborative environments. ● 9.4.12.TL.4: Collaborate in online learning communities or social networks or virtual worlds to analyze and propose a resolution to a real-world problem (e.g., 7.1.AL.IPERS.6). ● 9.4.12.IML.8: Evaluate media sources for point of view, bias, and motivations (e.g., RI.PP.11-12.5, 7.1.AL.IPRET.6). ● 9.4.12.IML.9: Analyze the decisions creators make to reveal explicit and implicit messages within information and media (e.g., 1.5.12acc.C2a, 7.1.IL.IPRET.4).
Computer Science and Design Thinking	● 8.2.12.ETW.2: Synthesize and analyze data collected to monitor the effects of a technological product or system on the environment. ● 8.2.12.ETW.3: Identify a complex, global environmental or climate change issue, develop a systemic plan of investigation, and propose an innovative sustainable solution. ● 8.2.12.EC.1: Analyze controversial technological issues and determine the degree to which individuals, businesses, and governments have an ethical role in decisions that are made. ● 8.2.12.EC.2: Assess the positive and negative impacts of emerging technologies on developing countries and evaluate how individuals, non-profit organizations, and governments have responded.

	● 8.2.12.EC.3: Synthesize data, analyze trends, and draw conclusions regarding the effect of a technology on the individual, culture, society, and environment and share this information with the appropriate audience. ● 8.2.12.ETW.4: Research historical tensions between environmental and economic considerations as driven by human needs and wants in the development of a technological product and present the competing viewpoints.
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Career Options for Jobs that Involve Social Studies

Social studies focus on society, and social studies professionals may concentrate on understanding how people are shaped and influenced by peer groups, their culture, or other societal factors. While some social studies professionals primarily conduct research to determine how people are affected by social variables, others may focus on how these social variables can be used to predict people's behavior. A handful of these social studies career options are profiled below:

Career Information for Jobs that Involve Social Studies**Sociologists**

Sociologists are professionals with a master's or doctoral degree in their field. They focus on understanding social groupings and behavior, and may be involved in research or make recommendations about how to address specific issues in society. Since their work focuses on understanding how society can influence behavior, they work within the field of social studies.

Historians

Historians research the past and educate people about historic events, artifacts or developments. Their work focuses on civilizations and incidents involving people in the past, which is why it falls within the social studies field. They might use the data from their research to form conclusions

about why a society relocated or how cultural beliefs in a particular group evolved. They may need a doctoral degree, although it is possible to enter this field with a master's degree in history.

Postsecondary Teachers

Postsecondary teachers instruct college and university students in a specific subject they've specialized in. They typically need a doctoral degree, although entry-level positions may be obtained with a master's degree in some cases. Postsecondary teachers who instruct students in subjects such as criminology or history spend their career focused on social studies. As part of their work, postsecondary teachers usually also participate in research related to their specialty.

Anthropologists and Archeologists

Anthropologists and archeologists must have a master's or doctoral degree to work in their field. While archeologists may be involved in recovering historic artifacts from dig sites around the world, anthropologists focus on how humans have developed over time. Archeologists and anthropologists help discover evidence that relates to how cultures have evolved, how significant events have impacted people's behavior, and how social constructs, such as politics, have developed. Since they focus on issues related to society and behavior, they work within the field of social studies.

Political Scientists

Political scientists focus on the history and development of political systems. They may research political ideologies or study how political trends have evolved over time. They are social science professionals because understanding how politics shape society and impact individual and group behavior is part of what political scientists focus on. They are professionals with master's or doctoral degrees who perform research, analyze the information gained from their research, and use that data to develop predictions about the effects of political policies or structures.

Market Research Analysts

With a bachelor's degree, it's possible to become a market research analyst. Market research analysts examine consumer demographics, along with data collected from opinion polls and surveys, and then use what they learn to make recommendations about actions companies should or should not take. For example, they may recommend that a new product be developed and provide pertinent information about the customers they expect would

be interested in that product. Market research analysts are professionals who focus on understanding what influences the purchasing decisions people make and the economic variables that should be considered when making business decisions. Since they focus on determining financial and societal factors that can affect consumer choices, their work involves the use of social studies.