

WINTER BREAK ASSIGNMENT
MR. BRUNS
AP WORLD HISTORY
HISTORY V. HOLLYWOOD

Students are to view a historical film and then write an essay. After having done the research and viewed the film the students are to write a compare and contrast essay. Be sure to include a clear, comprehensive and analytical thesis. Also use significant evidence to support that thesis. The main research is to investigate the historical accuracies and inaccuracies of the film. Pick three points to discuss. Because you will be doing research, any information used in your essay must be cited and put into a separate bibliography.

Some of the films on this list have an “R” rating. Some content may be unsuitable for viewer because of violence, language, or other situations. You must create a waiver letter stating that your parent is allowing you to watch a film with an “R” rating. The letter must be the second page of your essay (Cover page, letter of permission, essay, and bibliography).

In order to provide an alternative, I have placed on the list PG and PG-13 films for viewing. You can also check the “foreign film” section of your video store. They sometimes have historical films, but in another language. This would give you an opportunity to view the film through the eyes of another culture, rather than “Hollywood’s” point of view.

Format: Typed, 12-font, Times New Roman, Double-Spaced, Cover-page, *permission form if necessary, essay, bibliography.

Source info for DVDs example:

The Last Samurai, Ken Watanabe, 2003

Please acknowledge that you have read the assignment. That you realize one of the options is has a "R" rating and requires your approval. Also by signing you realize there is an alternative assignment available.

Alternatives can be worked out. It is important that you improve your analytical skills and ability to determine bias whenever and wherever possible. The completed assignment will be turned in the day we come back Jan 2010. I am not trying to punish you, this is only an opportunity to be practicing your skills.

Thank you.
Mr. Bruns

[Elizabeth The Golden Age](#) (pg 13)

[Amazing Grace \(2007\)](#) *Amazing Grace* is based on the true story of William Wilberforce, a British statesman and reformer from the early part of the 19th century. This feature film chronicles his extraordinary contributions to the world, primarily his 20-year fight to abolish the British slave trade, which he won in 1807. Wilberforce was also instrumental in passing legislation to abolish slavery in the British colonies, a victory he won just three days before his death in 1833

[The Last King of Scotland \(2006\)](#) **(Warning Rated R)** **In an incredible twist of fate, a Scottish doctor (James McAvoy) on a Ugandan medical mission becomes irreversibly entangled with one of the world's most barbaric figures: Idi Amin (Forest Whitaker). Impressed by Dr. Garrigan's brazen attitude in a moment of crisis, the newly self-appointed Ugandan President Amin hand picks him as his personal physician and closest confidante. Though Garrigan is at first flattered and fascinated by his new position, he soon awakens to Amin's savagery - and his own complicity in it. Horror and betrayal ensue as Garrigan tries to right his wrongs and escape Uganda alive.**

[Apocalypto \(2006\)](#) **(Warning Rated R)**

As the Maya kingdom faces its decline, the rulers insist the key to prosperity is to build more temples and offer human sacrifices. Jaguar Paw (Rudy Youngblood), a young man chosen for sacrifice, flees the kingdom to avoid his fate.

[Marie Antoinette](#) **PG-13** "All eyes will be on you," says the Austrian duchess, Maria Theresa to her youngest daughter Marie Antoinette. The film, marketed for a teen audience, is an impressionistic retelling of Marie Antoinette's life as a young queen in the opulent and eccentric court at Versailles. The film focuses on Marie Antoinette, as she matures from a teenage bride to a young woman and eventual queen of France.

Ancient History

*[The Egyptian](#) (1954) **VHS**

Dir. Michael Curtiz. With Jean Simmons, Victor Mature, Peter Ustinov
Conflates the Egyptian story of Sinuhe with the events of Akhenaten's reign. It's ca costume drama, but an enjoyable one. Based on a novel by Mika Waltari.

[Land of the Pharaohs](#) (1955) **VHS**

Dir. Howard Hawks, With Jack Hawkins and Joan Collins.
This one has "proto-Hebrews" building pharonic tombs.

[Princess of the Nile](#) (1954) 71 mins.

Dir. Harmon Jones, With Debra Paget and Jeffrey Hunter

[Sudan](#) (1945) 76 mins.

Dir. John Rawlins, With Maria Montez

*[The Ten Commandments](#) (1956) 220 mins. **VHS**

Dir. Cecil B. DeMille, With Charlton Heston, Yul Brynner, and Anne Baxter.
De Mille's last movie, and curiously old fashioned. Best scenes are the Parting of the Red Sea, the engraving of the Ten Commandments, and the orgy around the Golden Calf.

[Gladiator](#) (2000) **Rated R for intense, graphic combat**

[Ben-Hur](#) (1959)

Judah Ben-Hur lives as a rich Jewish prince and merchant in Jerusalem at the beginning of the 1st century.

Together with the new governor his old friend Messala arrives as commanding officer of the Roman legions. At first they are happy to meet after a long time but their different political views separate them. During the welcome parade a brick falls down from Judah's house and barely misses the governor. Although Messala knows that they are not guilty he sends Judah to the galleys and throws his mother and sister into prison. But Judah swears to come back and take revenge.

[The Passion of the Christ](#) (2004) **Rated R for sequences of graphic violence**

Middle Ages

[Braveheart](#) (1995) **Rated R for brutal medieval warfare**

[Lion in Winter](#) (1968)

Christmas 1183--an aging and conniving King Henry II plans a reunion where he hopes to name his successor. He summons the following people for the holiday: his scheming but imprisoned wife, Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine; his mistress, Princess Alais, whom he wishes to marry; his three sons (Richard, Geoffrey, and John), all of whom desire the throne; and the young but crafty King Philip of France (who is also Alais' brother). With the fate of Henry's empire at stake, everybody engages in their own brand of deception and treachery to stake their claim.

[Anne of the Thousand Days](#) (1969)

Henry VIII's obsession with siring a male heir endangers all around him: his courtiers, his government servants, and, especially, young Anne Boleyn. What ensues is both more, and less, than a love story; it changes England forever.

*[A Knight's Tale](#) (2001)

US, Action, 132, PG 13, Color

Director: Brian Koppelman; Star: Heath Ledger

-Set in the world of tournaments, this is not a "historical film" in any conventional sense.

*[Monty Python and the Holy Grail](#) (1975)

UK, Historical/Comedy, 90, Rated PG, Color

Director: Terry Gilliam, Terry Jones; Star: Graham Chapman

-Meant to be humorous. It is, in parts.

*[The Seventh Seal](#) (1957)

Sweden, Drama, 96, No rating B&W

Director: Ingmar Bergman; Cast includes: Max Von Sydow

-Set in 14th-century Sweden, about a knight returning from a crusade playing a chess game with death. The film made Bergman famous. It is less about the crusade era, however, than Swedish existentialism in the 1950s.

Renaissance/Reformation

[Elizabeth](#) (1998) **Rated R for violence and sexuality**

[Luther](#) PG-13 (2003)

[The Last Valley](#) (1971)

People in a small German village in the last valley to remain untouched by the devastating Thirty Years' War try to exist in peace with a group of soldiers occupying the valley.

[Retour de Martin Guerre, Le \(1982\)](#)

During the medieval times, Martin Guerre returns to his hometown in the middle of France, after being away in the war since he was a child. Nobody recognise him, and the people who knew him suspect he is not Martin, but he knows all about his family and friends, even the most unusual things. Is this man really Martin Guerre?

[The Agony and the Ecstasy \(1965\)](#)

Pope Julius is eager to leave behind works by which he will be remembered. To this end he cajoles Michelangelo into painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. When not on the battlefield uniting Italy, the Pope nags Michelangelo to speed up his painful work on the frescoes.

[A Man for All Seasons \(1965\)](#)

Henry VIII wants to divorce his wife, and seeks the approval of the aristocracy. Sir Thomas More is a man of principle and reason, and is thus placed in a difficult position: should he stand up for his principles, risking the wrath of a corrupt King fond of executing people for treason? Or should he bow to the seemingly unstoppable corruption of Henry VIII, who has no qualms about bending the law to suit his own needs?

[The Black Robe \(1991\)](#) The film is set in the 17th century and tells the story of a Jesuit priest and his young companion who are escorted in late fall by Algonquin Indians across what is now called Quebec, to find a distant mission in a Huron village. Most of their Algonquin escorts desert them, under the impression that he is a demon, and the rest of his party are captured by a party of Iroquois. They escape, and the priest eventually finds the Jesuit mission on his own

Puritan Revolution

[Cromwell \(1970\)](#)

Disgusted with the religious policies of King Charles I, Oliver Cromwell plans to take his family to the New World. But on the eve of their departure, Cromwell is drawn into the tangled web of religion and politics that will result in the British Civil War.

French Revolution

[Danton-\(1983\)](#)

Action opens in November of 1793, with Danton returning to Paris from his country retreat upon learning that the Committee for Public Safety, under Robespierre's incitement, has begun a series of massive executions, The Terror. Confident in the peoples' support, Danton clashes with his former ally, but calculating Robespierre soon rounds up Danton and his followers, tries them before a revolutionary tribunal and dipatches them to the guillotine.

[Misérables, Les \(1998\)](#)

Jean Valjean, a Frenchman imprisoned for stealing bread, must flee a police officer named Javert. The pursuit consumes both men's lives, and soon Valjean finds himself in the midst of the student revolutions in France.

[Waterloo \(1970\)](#)

After defeating France and imprisoning Napoleon on Elba, ending two decades of war, Europe is shocked...

18th Century

[The Mission-](#) (1986) Jeremy Irons plays a Spanish Jesuit who goes into the South American wilderness to build a mission in the hope of converting the Indians of the region. Robert DeNiro plays a slave hunter who

is converted and joins Irons in his mission. When Spain sells the colony to Portugal, they are forced to defend all they have built against the Portuguese aggressors.

Russian and Chinese Revolutions

[Nicholas and Alexandra \(1971\)](#)

The tragic story of Nicholas II, the last Czar of Russia, set against the backdrop of the Russian Revolution. It is an inside look into the private lives of Nicholas and his wife Alexandra, their daughters, and the painful secret which bound the Imperial Couple to the mystical Rasputin, and the eventual execution of the entire family.

[The Last Emperor \(1987\)](#)

A dramatic history of Pu Yi, the last of the Emperors of China, from his lofty birth and brief reign in the Forbidden City, the object of worship by half a billion people; through his abdication, his decline and dissolute lifestyle; his exploitation by the invading Japanese, and finally to his obscure existence as just another peasant worker in the People's Republic

World War I

[Gallipoli \(1981\)](#) **PG-13 Sexuality, violence** The story of a group of young Australian men who leave their various backgrounds behind and sign up to join the ANZACs in World War I. They are sent to Gallipoli, where they encounter the might of the Turkish army. Stars Mel Gibson

[All Quiet on the Western Front \(1979\)](#) (TV)

Paul Baumer is a young German who, along with his graduating high school classmates, enlist in the German Imperial Army during the First World War. Originally thinking war would be a great adventure, Paul and his friends discover exactly the opposite as the war drags on and one by one the members of the class are killed in action until only Paul remains.

[Lawrence of Arabia \(1962\)](#)

A biography of T.E. Lawrence. The young lieutenant Lawrence manages to get a job as an observer with Prince Feisal, the leader of an Arab tribal army. Lawrence decides to stay and help Feisal. His adventures are detailed by Jackson Bentley, a journalist.

World War II

[Enemy at the Gates \(2001\)](#) **Starring Joseph Fiennes, Jude Law and Ed Harris** **Rated R for strong graphic war violence and some sexuality**

In World War II, the fall of Stalingrad will mean the collapse of the whole country. The Germans and Russians are fighting over every block, leaving only ruins behind. The Russian sniper Vassili Zaitsev stalks the Germans, taking them out one by one, thus hurting the morale of the German troops. The political officer Danilov leads him on, publishing his efforts to give his countrymen some hope. But Vassili eventually start to feel that he can not live up to the expectations on him. He and Danilov fall in love with the same girl, Tanya, a female soldier. From Germany comes the master sniper König to put an end to the extraordinary skilled Russian sniper.

[Swing Kids \(1993\)](#) **Starring Christian Bale and Robert Sean Leonard**

The story of a close-knit group of young kids in Nazi Germany who listen to banned swing music from the US. Soon dancing and fun leads to more difficult choices as the Nazi's begin tightening the grip on Germany. Each member of the group is forced to face some tough choices about right, wrong, and survival.

[Schindler's List \(1993\)](#) **Rated R for language, some sexuality and actuality violence**

Oskar Schindler is a vain, glorious and greedy German businessman who becomes unlikely humanitarian

amid the barbaric Nazi reign when he feels compelled to turn his factory into a refuge for Jews. Based on the true story of Oskar Schindler who managed to save about 1100 Jews from being gassed at the Auschwitz concentration camp.

[The Pianist \(2002\)](#) **Rated R for violence and brief strong language**

A brilliant pianist, a Polish Jew, witnesses the restrictions Nazis place on Jews in the Polish capital, from restricted access to the building of the Warsaw ghetto. As his family is rounded up to be shipped off to the Nazi labor camps, he escapes deportation and eludes capture by living in the ruins of Warsaw.

[Au revoir, les enfants \(1987\)](#)

During WWII, in a Catholic boarding school in the French countryside, two boys become friends. One is a French boy, Julien Quintin, and the other is a Jewish boy, Jean Bonnet, who is being hidden from the Nazis by the friars who run the school. Louis Malle directed this film based on what actually happened when he was at a boarding school himself during the war.

[Memoirs of a Geisha \(2005\)](#) **PG-13 Sexual situations**

In 1929 an impoverished nine-year-old named Chiyo from a fishing village is sold to a geisha house in Kyoto's Gion district and subjected to cruel treatment from the owners and the head geisha Hatsumomo. Her stunning beauty attracts the vindictive jealousy of Hatsumomo, until she is rescued by and taken under the wing of Hatsumomo's bitter rival, Mameha. Under Mameha's mentorship, Chiyo becomes the geisha named Sayuri, trained in all the artistic and social skills a geisha must master in order to survive in her society. As a renowned geisha she enters a society of wealth, privilege, and political intrigue. As World War II looms Japan and the geisha's world are forever changed by the onslaught of history.

Cold War

[Gandhi \(1982\)](#)

The biography of Mahatma Gandhi, who rose from a small-time lawyer to India's spiritual leader through his philosophy of non-violent but direct-action protest.

[October Sky \(1999\)](#)

In 1950's mining town called Coalwood, Homer Hickam is a kid with only one future in sight, to work in the local coalmine like his father. However in October 1957, everything changes when the first artificial satellite, Sputnik goes into orbit. With that event, Homer becomes inspired to learn how to build rockets. With his friends and the local nerd, Homer sets to do just that by trial and a lot of error. Unfortunately, most of the town and especially Homer's father thinks that they are wasting their time. Only one teacher in the high school understands their efforts and lets them know that they could become contenders in the national science fair with college scholarships being the prize. Now the gang must learn to perfect their craft and overcome the many problems facing them as they shoot for the stars.

[Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb \(1964\)](#)

An insane general starts a process to nuclear holocaust that a war room of politicians and generals frantically try to stop

Post Cold War/Post Colonialism

[Battaglia di Algeri, La \(1966\)](#)

A film commissioned by the Algerian government that shows the Algerian revolution from both sides. The French foreign legion has left Vietnam in defeat and has something to prove. The Algerians are seeking independence. The two clash. The torture used by the French is contrasted with the Algerian's use of bombs in soda shops. A look at war as a nasty thing that harms and sullies everyone who participates in it.

[Hotel Rwanda \(2004\)](#) **PG-13 language, violence**

Ten years ago some of the worst atrocities in the history of mankind took place in the country of Rwanda--

and in an era of high-speed communication and round the clock news, the events went almost unnoticed by the rest of the world. In only three months, one million people were brutally murdered. In the face of these unspeakable actions, inspired by his love for his family, an ordinary man summons extraordinary courage to save the lives of over a thousand helpless refugees, by granting them shelter in the hotel he manages.