



# Park East High School

## *Around the World and Back: United States History and Beyond*

Teacher Name: Alexander Ott  
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Office Hours: Wed 8:00-8:45 Rm 404  
Classroom: Rm 206 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Period

*“When less than everything has been said about a subject, you can still think on further. The alternative is for the audience to be presented with a final deduction (...) no effort on their part. What can it mean to them when they have not shared with the author the misery and joy of bringing an image into being?”*

— Andrei Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*

### **Course Description:**

In this class, students will study modern American history and its origins through the medium of film. This will be done through viewing, writing, and discussing both historical and contemporary pieces on topics related to the political, social, economic, and racial history of the United States and the world. Grouped thematically, students will examine the historiography of slavery, the Victorian Age & Social Darwinism, voting rights, the Holocaust, the Second World War, the Cold War, the Civil Rights Movement, and Vietnam. Besides examining these historical events, students will examine the legacy of racism poverty, corruption, patriotism, civics, and ideology on contemporary American and World culture. In addition to each film’s historical and cultural importance, the course will also concentrate on film appreciation.

This elective course is a survey of films connected to United States History and Global History & Geography themes such as the causes and effects of world conflicts, and the expansion of human rights throughout the world, and social anxieties of events. These themes will be explored using various print, photographs, film, video, and on-line learning. Students are engaged to read and understand historical content and concepts as a historian and to develop critical historical thinking skills aligned with the common-core.

### **Academic Expectations (including learning habits and skills):**

- Provide students with the opportunity to study topics in depth (posthole) as an elective and far beyond a typical survey classes in either Global or American History.
- Provide students with an opportunity to use contemporary media and technology in their study of History.
- Provide students with the opportunity to raise and answer significant historical questions.
- Allow students to explore and use the Internet for historical research skills using peer reviewed journals.
- Use primary and secondary sources to provide data to help answer significant historical questions.
- Help students to communicate with other young historians about their studies.
- Help students to assemble and publish historical film reviews.
- Make history more meaningful by providing images, in addition to written words as messages of interpreting history.
- Help students to understand the role of film in influencing popular conceptions of historical figures and events.
- Make history more meaningful by providing images, in addition to written words as messages of interpreting history.
- Help students to understand the role of film in influencing popular conceptions of historical figures and events.
- Students will develop and apply critical thinking to historic events, people, and places.

### **Behavioral Expectations (including classroom norms and routines):**

- Students will come to class prepared with pen, notebook, homework, worksheets, and course materials daily.
- Students will be respectful to their classmates' point-of-view.
- Students will speak in-turn and create an atmosphere of calm debate.
- Students will have quiz to complete as soon as they enter the classroom.
- Students will respect all school and NYCDOE rules & regulations while in the classroom.
- Students will be placed in collaborative groups and have limited choices as to group members in the groups they are participating in.
- Students will be responsible for viewing films or film clips online for free and completing coursework discussion.

### **Course Materials/Required Texts:**

- Mr. Ott's Classroom Wiki ([www.mysocialstudiesteacher.com](http://www.mysocialstudiesteacher.com)), lessons, assignments, review
- Jupiter Grades (assignments, forum questions/discussions, grades)
- Various Primary & Secondary Documents pertaining to each topic.

### **Course Requirements/Grading Policy:**

- Classwork - 50%
- Projects - 15%
- Reviews/Exams/Essays - 20%
- Quizzes - 15%

### **Assignments:**


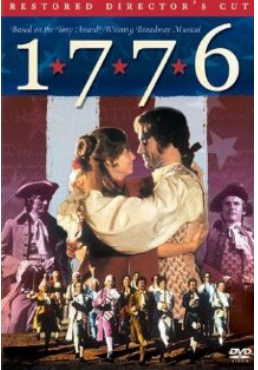

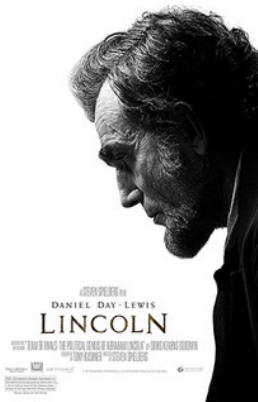
- Students will write a *reflection* for seven (7) films viewed based upon a historical overview and accuracy.
- Students will participate in a *discussion/debate* after each film in the classroom and/or online.
- Students will complete a *historical analysis* on selected essays based upon topics of the films.
- Students will complete a Google Questionnaire (worksheet) on each film.

### **Academic Integrity Statement**

All students are expected to act with civility, personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property; and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their own efforts. An environment of academic integrity is requisite to respect for self and others and a civil community.

Academic integrity includes a commitment to not engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty include cheating or copying, plagiarizing, submitting another persons' work as one's own, using Internet sources without citation, taking or having another student take your exam, tampering with the work of another student, facilitating other students' acts of academic dishonesty, etc.

***Movies May be Substituted or Not Run in their Entirety Due to Time Constraints.***


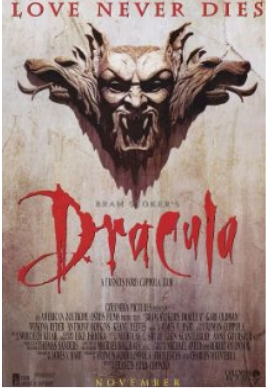
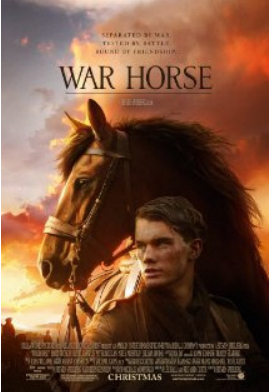
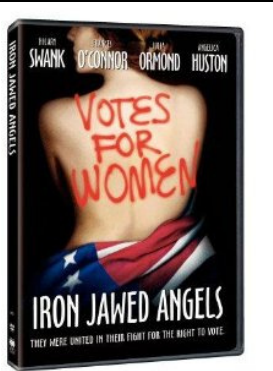
Film	Rating / Run Time # Class Periods / Main Focus	Synopsis / Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2000</li> <li>• Rated "R"</li> <li>• 155 Minutes</li> <li>• 4 Class Periods</li> <li>• Roman Empire vs. Republic, Slavery</li> </ul>	<p><b>GLADIATOR</b></p> <p>A dying Marcus Aurelius plans to name his loyal and brave General Maximus as his successor in order to restore the power of the Roman Senate. However, his power-hungry, jealous son Commodus learns of the plan, murders Marcus Aurelius, and plans to execute Maximus in order to secure his claim to the throne. Maximus escapes execution, but is sold into slavery and is forced to become a gladiator. Eventually, Maximus and his fellow gladiators are sent to Rome to perform for Commodus. Through his bravery he wins over the masses and reveals his true identity, much to the chagrin of Commodus. Can Maximus use his newfound popularity to avenge Marcus Aurelius' death, or will Commodus be able to keep the throne?</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1972</li> <li>• Rated "PG"</li> <li>• 141 Minutes</li> <li>• 4 Class Periods</li> <li>• Founding of America, Slavery Issue</li> </ul>	<p><b>1776</b></p> <p>The film version of the Broadway musical comedy of the same name. In the days leading up to July 4, 1776, Continental Congressmen John Adams and Benjamin Franklin coerce Thomas Jefferson into writing the Declaration of Independence as a delaying tactic as they try to persuade the American colonies to support a resolution on independence. As George Washington sends depressing messages describing one military disaster after another, the businessmen, landowners and slave holders in Congress all stand in the way of the Declaration, and a single "nay" vote will forever end the question of independence. Large portions of spoken and sung dialog are taken directly from the letters and memoirs of the actual participants.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1939</li> <li>• Rated "G"</li> <li>• 221 Minutes</li> <li>• 6 Class Periods</li> <li>• Antebellum South, Slavery, Reconstruction</li> </ul>	<p><b>GONE WITH THE WIND</b></p> <p>This epic drama traces the life of the fictional Scarlett O'Hara, the daughter of a wealthy plantation owner, from before the Civil War to Reconstruction and makes clear the conflicts, values, corruption and character types that dominated the Southern states in their struggle to free themselves from the Union and to maintain slavery, a system essential to the wealth of the Southern aristocracy. It is adapted from the book by Margaret Mitchell.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2012</li> <li>• Rated "PG-13"</li> <li>• 150 Minutes</li> <li>• 4 Class Periods</li> <li>• Civil War, Slavery, Civil Rights, US Constitution</li> </ul>	<p><b>LINCOLN</b></p> <p>It's January, 1865, and US President <a href="#">Abraham Lincoln</a> has just started his second term in office as an immensely popular leader, especially among his supporters, because of his down home attitude. However, the country is in turmoil with the Civil War entering its fourth year and having taken the lives of many a soldier on both sides. Lincoln believes that passage of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution - which would abolish slavery - would most importantly achieve something in which he believes to his core, but also end the war as slavery is a large part of the reason for it. The Amendment has already passed in the Senate, and is scheduled for vote in the House of Representatives at the end of the month. While he is assured of yes votes from his fellow Republicans, he and his team have to work hard behind the scenes to assure enough yes votes from Democrats, which may require some compromise in other areas. But other factors may also come into play on the vote, such as the Confederate forces in the war issuing their own compromise to end the war but keep slavery. Meanwhile, Lincoln also deals with his oft supportive but oft tumultuous relationship with wife Mary Todd Lincoln, and their latest possible rift in oldest son, Robert Todd Lincoln's want to leave law school to enlist.</p>

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Film	Rating / Run Time # Class Periods / Main Focus	Synopsis / Description
 <p>22</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1980</li> <li>• Rated "PG"</li> <li>• 124 Minutes</li> <li>• 4 Class Periods</li> <li>• Victorian England, Human Rights, Social Darwinism</li> </ul>	<p><b>THE ELEPHANT MAN</b></p> <p>In Victorian London, Dr. Frederick Treves with the London Hospital comes across a circus sideshow attraction run by a man named Bytes called "The Elephant Man". In actuality, the creature on display is indeed a man, twenty-one year old John Merrick who has several physical deformities, including an oversized and disfigured skull, and oversized and disfigured right shoulder. Brutish Bytes, his "owner", only wants whatever he can get economically by presenting Merrick as a freak. Treves manages to bring Merrick under his care at the hospital - not without several of its own obstacles, including being questioned by those in authority since Merrick cannot be cured. Treves initially believes Bytes' assertion that mute Merrick is an imbecile, but ultimately learns that Merrick can speak and is a well-read and articulate man. As news of Merrick hits the London newspapers, he becomes a celebrated curiosity amongst London's upper class, including with Mrs. Kendal, a famed actress. Despite treated much more humanely, the question becomes whether Treves' actions are a further exploitation of Merrick. And as Merrick becomes more famous, others try to get their two-cents worth from who still remains a curiosity and a freak to most, including to Bytes, who has since lost his meal ticket.</p>
 <p>26</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1992</li> <li>• Rated "R"</li> <li>• 128 Minutes</li> <li>• 4 Class Periods</li> <li>• Victorian England, Human Rights, Masculinity vs. Femininity, Gender Roles, Modernity, Social Darwinism</li> </ul>	<p><b>DRACULA</b></p> <p>This version of Dracula is closely based on Bram Stoker's classic novel of the same name. A young lawyer (Jonathan Harker) is assigned to a gloomy village in the mists of eastern Europe. He is captured and imprisoned by the undead vampire Dracula, who travels to London, inspired by a photograph of Harker's betrothed, Mina Murray. In Britain, Dracula begins a reign of seduction and terror, draining the life from Mina's closest friend, Lucy Westenra. Lucy's friends gather together to try to drive Dracula away.</p>
 <p>31</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2011</li> <li>• Rated "PG-13"</li> <li>• 146 Minutes</li> <li>• 5 Class Periods</li> <li>• World War I, Modernity, Technology</li> </ul>	<p><b>WAR HORSE</b></p> <p>Albert (Jeremy Irvine) and his beloved horse, Joey, live on a farm in the British countryside. At the outbreak of World War I, Albert and Joey are forcibly parted when Albert's father sells the horse to the British cavalry. Against the backdrop of the Great War, Joey begins an odyssey full of danger, joy and sorrow, and he transforms everyone he meets along the way. Meanwhile Albert, unable to forget his equine friend, searches the battlefields of France to find Joey and bring him home.</p>
 <p>33</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2004</li> <li>• For TV Not Rated</li> <li>• 123 Minute</li> <li>• 3 Class Periods</li> <li>• United States Suffrage Movement, Women's Rights</li> </ul>	<p><b>IRON JAWED ANGELS</b></p> <p>Alice Paul and the women of the 1917 Women's Suffrage movement fight for future generations right to vote and run for office. Sacrificing their health, marriages and the limited amount of freedom they had, women were imprisoned and force fed after picketing and hunger-striking against war-time president, Woodrow Wilson; but survived to see the results of their efforts.</p>

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 <p>36</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2008</li> <li>• Rated “PG-13”</li> <li>• 121 Minutes</li> <li>• 3 Class Periods</li> <li>• Fascism, Nazism, World War II, Resistance Movements</li> </ul>	<p><b>VALKYRIE</b> In Nazi Germany during World War II, as the tide turned in favor of The Allies, a cadre of senior German officers and politicians desperately plot to topple the Nazi regime before the nation is crushed in a near-inevitable defeat. To this end, Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg, an Army officer convinced he must save Germany from Hitler, is recruited to mastermind a real plan. To do so, he arranges for the internal emergency measure, Operation: Valkyrie, to be changed to enable his fellows to seize control of Berlin after the assassination of the Fuhrer. However, even as the plan is put into action, a combination of bad luck and human failings conspire on their own to create a tragedy that would prolong the greater one gripping Europe.</p>
 <p>41</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2001</li> <li>• Rated “PG-13”</li> <li>• 183 Minutes</li> <li>• 5 Class Periods</li> <li>• World War II, Japan, FDR</li> </ul>	<p><b>PEARL HARBOR</b> Rafe and Danny are best friends who are also pilots. When World War II breaks out in Europe, America chooses not to join but they train nonetheless, so Rafe and Danny join the Army Air Corps. Rafe meets a nurse named Evelyn and falls for her. But when he gets an opportunity to go join the British Air Corps, he jumps at it. Shortly after he leaves, he gets shot down and is reported killed. Danny and Evelyn who are stationed in Pearl Harbor, lean on each other after learning of what happened to Rafe. It isn't long that they're together. But suddenly Rafe returns. And when he learns about them, he freaks out and he goes after Danny. But suddenly Pearl Harbor is attacked, and they shoot down some of the planes attacking them. Later, Roosevelt decides to retaliate against Japan and Colonel Doolittle is placed in charge and asks Rafe and Danny to join him and they accept knowing that the chances of them coming back is slim. But things between them are still tense.</p>
 <p>44</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1997</li> <li>• Rated “PG-13”</li> <li>• 116 Minutes</li> <li>• 3 Class Periods</li> <li>• Human Rights, Holocaust, Social Darwinism, World War II.</li> </ul>	<p><b>LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL</b> In 1930s Italy, a carefree Jewish book keeper named Guido starts a fairy tale life by courting and marrying a lovely woman from a nearby city. Guido and his wife have a son and live happily together until the occupation of Italy by German forces. In an attempt to hold his family together and help his son survive the horrors of a Jewish Concentration Camp, Guido imagines that the Holocaust is a game and that the grand prize for winning is a tank.</p>
 <p>47</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1989</li> <li>• Rated “PG-13”</li> <li>• 127 Minutes</li> <li>• 3 Class Periods</li> <li>• Atomic Age, Nuclear Weapons, WWII</li> </ul>	<p><b>FAT MAN &amp; LITTLE BOY</b> In real life, Robert Oppenheimer was the scientific head of the Manhattan Project, the secret wartime project in New Mexico where the first atomic bombs were designed and built. General Leslie Groves was in overall command of it. This film reenacts the project with an emphasis on their relationship.</p>

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 <p>51</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2000</li> <li>• Rated "PG-13"</li> <li>• 145 Minutes</li> <li>• 4 Class Periods</li> <li>• Cold War, JFK Presidency, Cuban Missile Crisis</li> </ul>	<p><b>THIRTEEN DAYS</b></p> <p>In October, 1962, U-2 surveillance photos reveal that the Soviet Union is in the process of placing nuclear weapons in Cuba. These weapons have the capability of wiping out most of the Eastern and Southern United States in minutes if they become operational. President John F. Kennedy and his advisors must come up with a plan of action against the Soviets. Kennedy is determined to show that he is strong enough to stand up to the threat, and the Pentagon advises U.S. military strikes against Cuba--which could lead the way to another U.S. invasion of the island. However, Kennedy is reluctant to follow through, because a U.S. invasion could cause the Soviets to retaliate in Europe. A nuclear showdown appears to be almost inevitable. Can it be prevented?</p>
 <p>54</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2014</li> <li>• Rated "PG-13"</li> <li>• 128 Minutes</li> <li>• 3 Class Periods</li> <li>• US Civil Rights Movement, Human Rights</li> </ul>	<p><b>SELMA</b></p> <p>The unforgettable true story chronicles the tumultuous three-month period in 1965, when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. led a dangerous campaign to secure equal voting rights in the face of violent opposition. The epic march from Selma to Montgomery culminated in President Johnson signing the Voting Rights Act of 1965, one of the most significant victories for the civil rights movement. Director Ava DuVernay's "Selma" tells the story of how the revered leader and visionary Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr and his brothers and sisters in the movement prompted change that forever altered history.</p>
 <p>58</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1994</li> <li>• Rated "PG-13"</li> <li>• 142 Minutes</li> <li>• 4 Class Periods</li> <li>• US History from 1950s to 1980s</li> </ul>	<p><b>FORREST GUMP</b></p> <p>Forrest Gump follows the life events of a man who shares the name as the title of the film. Gump faces many tribulations throughout his life, but he never lets any of them interfere with his happiness. From wearing braces on his legs, to having a below average IQ and even being shot, Gump continues to believe that good things will happen and goes after his dreams. While several less than ideal things occur during Gump's life, he manages to turn each setback into something good for him, such as when he finally gets his braces off he discovers that he is capable of running faster than most other people. This skill allows Gump to not only escape his bullies while he is a child in Greenbow, but also to gain a football scholarship, save many soldiers' lives and become famous for his ability. While Gump eventually achieves the majority of the things he hoped to throughout the movie, it proved a much more difficult task to win the heart of his life-long friend Jenny Curran. The movie is centered on Forrest Gump and the incidences that occur during his life, but during each period in his lifetime he thinks back of Jenny and how important she is to him. Although the two characters grew up together and shared a very close friendship, as the movie progresses they grow apart. This upsets Gump who cares immensely for the girl who had a rough start in life, and it seems the two always end up back in each other's lives, often in extraordinary ways like meeting in the Reflection Pond in D.C. Even though Gump is the main character of the film, it similarly tells the story of Curran and the hardships she faces.</p>

*Additional Film/Documentaries added as Necessary or Substituted*