



**Hull High School**  
**180 Main St. Hull, MA 02045**  
**(P) 781-925-3000**  
**Principal: Ms. Nosek**

**Course: American History Through Film Teacher: Mr. Mullin**

Dear Parents and Students,

I would like to introduce myself, my name is Mr. Mullin and for the 2018/2019 school year, I will be your American History Through Film teacher. This year will be my seventh year teaching at Hull High School, but not my seventh year teaching. For the previous four years, I had been teaching High School in New York City where I earned my Masters Degree in Social Studies Education. You will soon find that I am passionate about; politics, history, film, teaching and that I expect the best effort from all students that I have the pleasure of teaching. Although, I have recently lived in New York City my original home is Massachusetts and I am proud to call the South Shore home.

This class will begin with the study of the basic understanding of Film studies and then work it's way into analyzing exceptional films. As your teacher, I hope to actively engage you in the study and enjoyment of film and all that it has to teach us. This means that the course will not just be watching films, but students will actively be engaged in the concepts, themes and debates that encompass world and film history. This approach will cover many avenues of academic engagement such as; debates, research, projects, essay writing and will end with a film of your own.

My goal is to build a partnership with families and community members. Together we can create a learning environment that can help you succeed in this competitive world. Attached you will find course requirements and classroom expectations that are essential for a successful year at Hull High School. Your first homework assignment is to have you read and sign this letter and return it to class. This way you know what is to be expected to have a successful year in American History through Film class.

I am very excited about this year and what it has to offer! We are a team and our goal is to have you receive the best education possible. I want to stress, the most important factor to a strong foundation in education is your (the student's) involvement. With our teamwork you will get the best opportunities this world has to offer. I want to thank you in advance for your cooperation and support here at Hull High School. If you have any concerns or questions feel free to email me at [bmullin@town.hull.ma.us](mailto:bmullin@town.hull.ma.us).

It's going to be an amazingly fun and challenging year. I look forward to working with you and having a successful school year!

Sincerely, Mr. Mullin

**Course Breakdown**

The course will be taught through the lens of perspectives. All history has altering views of what/who was right and wrong. In this class we will look at differing views of; historical events, individuals, the idea of the hero, race in America, collective movements/beliefs, mythology, business rights v. workers rights, immigration, ideals and beliefs.

A quote from the New York Times article titled, *The Surprising Truth About How Humans Determine Right and Wrong* explains my approach to teaching, “There are few things we enjoy more than complicating — or upending — the most common, fundamental assumptions about how the world works. It’s not that we want to upset you. Rather, those assumptions, though reasonable on their face, are often misleading, out of date, simplistic or just wrong. And, usually, we find that once you see how things really work, lots of seemingly intractable problems or unsolvable mysteries about the world become easier to figure out.”

## **Course Content:**

### **1. Introduction to Film:**

- a. Why do we watch film?
- b. How can we become engaged, analytical observers of cinema?
- c. What can we learn about a time period and culture from watching film?
- d. The origins of Film

### **We will be watching some of these films (Subject to change)**

1. Saving Private Ryan
2. God Grew Tired of Us
3. Gone with the Wind
4. Malcolm X
5. Mr. Smith Goes to Washington
6. On the Waterfront
7. 12 angry Men
8. The Oxbow Incident
9. Sugar
10. Everything is Illuminated
11. Dances with Wolves
12. True Grit
13. Last of the Mohicans
14. Matewan
15. The Grapes of Wrath
16. Blade Runner
17. The Manchurian candidate
18. Good night and good luck
19. Zero dark thirty
20. Network
21. Sunset Boulevard
22. Jesus Camp
23. Jonestown: The life and death of peoples temple

## **2. General Structure of class:**

- a. Learn general background of country/time period/topic
- b. Historical/Sociological/Philosophical perspective accompanied to historical topic
- c. Watch analyze film
- d. Discussion of film/debate
- e. Assessment piece

## **Skills utilized:**

### **Thinking/Perspective Skills**

1. To challenge ideas by analyzing facts (objective v. subjective analysis). Being able to think critically while observing films.
2. To observe and analyze themes in American history through the medium of film.
3. The student's place as Americans in a globalized world. How they view the world and how the world views them.
4. How powerful American events can be understood and debated through the medium of cinema.
5. How power, technology and geography affect all of our lives, beliefs and cultural systems. How all these themes are interconnected and presented in films.

### **Career/College Skills:**

1. Film literacy
2. Film history
3. Film as an art form.
4. Formal Writing.
5. Public speaking skills and group dynamic speaking skills.
6. Understanding and being able to see through bias.
7. Reading and Analysis of various forms of information.
8. Forming logical educated opinions.
9. Synthesize different accounts and form a solid summary and opinion.

## **Assessments:**

### **1. Project Assessments**

History Through Film will have various forms of assessments. Each Film viewed in class will have a project that correlates to the film. The student's grade will largely reflect their performance on these projects.

## **Student and Community Expectations**

- ❖ Respect! Always respect each other, respect yourself, respect the teacher and I promise to respect you in return.
- ❖ Come to class on time and prepared. **Lateness will not be tolerated and lead to detention.**
- ❖ Raise your hand if you would like to ask or make a comment in class. Do not be afraid to ask, ask, and ASK questions!
- ❖ Plagiarism equals a zero and a referral to the office.
- ❖ Respect Mr. Mullin's right to teach and your fellow student's right to learn.
- ❖ Always stay in your assigned seat.
- ❖ **Food is not allowed in the classroom.**
- ❖ Beverages **are** allowed in the classroom.
- ❖ Never complain if you are not willing to be apart of the solution.
- ❖ Follow rules and regulations of the school. **No Cell phones, unless otherwise specified.**

### **Permission Slip**

This course is the study of film and history. Many of the most important events in history are during wars, dictatorships and genocides. Some of the films we will watch will have violence within them. By signing this permission slip you give your son/daughter permission to watch films that may contain violence and an R rating. If you do not want your child watching certain films an alternative film will be available for them.

**WE KNOW WHAT TO DO!**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Student) and \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent) are aware of, understand, that if I (my son or daughter) do not do the work mentioned above I will not pass American History through Film. I also understand that I have given my son/daughter permission to watch films that may or may not contain violence. You are responsible for your grade in American History through Film. Take this contract and this year seriously, and I promise it will be an excellent year.

Student's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please feel free to contact me at [bmullin@town.hull.ma.us](mailto:bmullin@town.hull.ma.us). Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Mr. Mullin