Since Thomas Edison patented America’s first motion picture camera in 1891, telling America’s history through film has become a large part of our culture. For many people watching a Hollywood film on America is their only way of getting to know her history (no matter how accurate the film). The films we will be watching for this class are Hollywood films rather than documentaries so they are reenactments of historical events not a documentary record of events. These Hollywood films may present content in four possible ways:

1. **As a Factual Record**: Film is used to dramatize events.

2. **To Convey Atmosphere**: The use of fiction to convey a sense of past – lifestyles, values, and beliefs.

3. **Analogy**: An historical events is used to point out or explain contemporary motives or actions, particularly when the event is controversial.

4. **A lesson in Historiography**: Because the dramatic form used in films requires consistent and relatively simple motivational interpretations, students can often learn how the time period in which the film was made interpreted historical personalities and events.
This class is not a eat popcorn and watch movie class. The goal of this class is learn American History through watching movies. Each film will consist of 6 to 8 days of class work. This class work will be divided into three different areas. The first area will be the introduction. At this point we will introduce the time period and what the film is about. The second area will be the actual watching of the movie with discussion. The third and final area will be the post work which may include discussion questions, work sheets, film reviews and/or essays. This class will be a writing and research intensive class. Being gone for the actual watching of the film will cause problems so it will have to be made up.

A true history of America contains stories of courage, leadership, innovation and triumph. These stories are marred with war, slavery, deceit and overall treachery. Thus when choosing from thousands of different films many good ones such as the Last of the Mohicans, The Patriot, Saving Private Ryan, The Right Stuff and Blackhawk Down had to be left out because of graphic violence, crude language and sexual innuendos which are deemed inappropriate for a public school setting. These 22 films were chosen because of their content as well as school friendliness. Unfortunately there may still be a few parts of the films with abusive language, unruly violence and innuendos. For that reason a permission slip must be signed before you can participate in class.

The following is a list of time periods and films we will watch this year. Time constraints may require one or two films to be dropped or a few more added.

Weeks 1 and 2 Students will learn how to do research and answer the following question: Can history be learned by watching

American Revolution
1776  Rated PG 166 minutes (1972)

Is a musical about the birth of America including the first congress and the Declaration of Independence

Expansion/Civil War/Westward Movement


Tale of 200 men and the fight for Texas independence

Lincoln  Rated PG-13 150 minutes (2013)

Story of President Lincoln during the Civil War

Gettysburg  Rated PG 271 minutes (1993)

Story of the 1863 Civil War Battle of Gettysburg

Dances with Wolves  Rated PG-13 185 minutes (1990)

Story of a white solider who posts in the 1870 Dakotas and becomes friends with the Lakota Sioux

Burying My Heart at Wounded Knee
No Rating 131 minutes

Little Big Horn

Story of the Sioux Nation from Little Big Horn to Wounded Knee

**Early 1900s through World War 1**

*Greatest Game Ever Played* Rated PG 120 minutes

(2005)

Francis Ouimet

Story of 1913 US Open –

*Sgt. York* No Rating 134 minutes

(1941)

from pacifist to WWI hero

**1920’s and Depression**

*Spirit of St. Louis* No Rating 135 minutes

(1957)

transatlantic flight

Story of Charles Lindbergh
World War II/Post War Time Period

**Tora! Tora! Tora!**
Rated G 144 minutes
(1970)
Movie based upon the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor

**A League of Their Own**
Rated PG 128 minutes
(1992)
Movie based on the All-American Girl Professional Baseball League created during World War 2

**Tuskegee Airman**
Rated PG-13 114 minutes (2001)
Story of black fliers who broke the color barrier in the U.S. Air Force during World War 2

**42**
Rated PG-13 128 minutes (2013)
The life story of Jackie Robinson and the color breaking within Major League Baseball and the United States

Communism and American Society

**October Sky**  
Rated PG 108 minutes (1999)  
Story of Homer H. Hickham Jr. and his quest at Rocketry

**Murder in the Heartland**  
NR 180 minutes (1993)  
Story of Charles Starkweather

Civil Rights/1960s

**Ghosts of Mississippi**  
Rated PG-13 131 minutes (2002)  
Story of the Murder of Medgar Evers and 30 years of failed justice

1960s/1970s
**Green Berets**  
Rated G 142 minutes (1968)  
Story of Vietnam heroes

**We Are Marshall**  
Rated PG 131 minutes (2006)  
Story of how the University of Marshall overcame a tragedy

**Apollo 13**  
Rated PG 140 minutes (1995)  
The story of tragedy to triumph of the Apollo 13 space craft

**Secretariat**  
Rated PG 123 minutes (2010)  
Story of Penny Chenery Tweedy and the Triple Crown

1970’s and 1980’s

**Miracle**  
Rated PG 136 minutes (2004)  
Movie based on the Miracle on Ice; the 1980 U.S. Hockey gold medal team

21st Century

**Flight 93**  
Rated PG-13 89 minutes (2006)  
Story of the forth plane hijacked on Sept 11, 2001