



MIDLAND PARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Midland Park, New Jersey  
CURRICULUM

# Film & Literature

Prepared by:  
Jack Ferriday

*Superintendent of Schools:*

Marie C. Cirasella, Ed.D.

*Director of Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment:*

Melissa Quackenbush

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CCCS born on 9/2012

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NJSLS born on 8/2017

## Film and Literature

### Semester Course

Film and Literature is a half year course for students in grades 10 - 12. Students will study a variety of films from each decade of the 20th and 21st Centuries. Starting with Chaplin's silent films and moving into the development of sound films, students will study how the films were made, the current events that influenced their development, their impact on the culture both then and now, and how each film influenced the "next" film which came along. Students will discuss their thoughts, likes, and feelings about the films studied in class discussions as well as in a written journal - which will be kept by them. Students will also have the opportunity to present a film of their choice for discussion with the class.

#### Suggested Course Sequence\*:

- Lesson 1: Modern Times: 4 days
- Lesson 2: The Great Dictator: 4 days
- Lesson 3: Chaplin: 4 days
- Lesson 4: Frankenstein: 4 days
- Lesson 5: The Bride of Frankenstein: 4 days
- Lesson 6: Last of the Mohicans: 4 days
- Lesson 7: Casablanca: 4 days
- Lesson 8: Rebel Without a Cause: 4 days
- Lesson 9: Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid: 4 days
- Lesson 10: Annie Hall: 4 days
- Lesson 11: The Godfather: 4 days
- Lesson 12: One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest: 4 days
- Lesson 13: Midnight in Paris: 4 days

Pre-Requisite: none

*\*The number of instructional days is an estimate based on the information available at this time. 1 day equals approximately 42 minutes of seat time. Teachers are strongly encouraged to review the entire unit of study carefully and collaboratively to determine whether adjustments to this estimate need to be made.*

**Content Area:** Film & Literature

**Unit Title:** Analyzing Film

**Grade Level:** 10 - 12

**Unit Summary:** The course is broken down into chronological order starting with older films and moving through the decades towards the most contemporary films available. Silent films can be shown first. Then early sound films and then important films of each decade. Emphasis is made upon showing how each decade's films portray the time period in which the film was made. (For example in Charlie Chaplin's silent film *Modern Times* we see Chaplin pick up a flag that's fallen off the back of a lumber truck. Charlie waves the flag at the disappearing truck in an attempt to catch the driver's eye and return the flag. As Charlie is doing this a group of union protesters marches into view and immediately starts following Charlie waving the flag. He is oblivious to this. Police come to break up the union protest and seize Charlie because he looks like the leader with the "red" communist flag. The film was made in 1936 - at the height of The Great Depression. Even though the film is in black and white, we know the flag is red because we've all seen a red flag on the back of delivery trucks that carry long loads. Chaplin is using the events of the times - the bread lines and union protests and rising enthusiasm for the Communist ideals of the Great Depression versus crumbling capitalism. It's important to point out these kinds of things in films. Each decade's best films portray the times in which they were made.) Within each "unit" - each decade's important film - emphasis will be made on discussing the techniques that directors use. Lighting, camera angles, composition, film speed, clothing, sets, cuts, sound, music, and any other techniques that are used in the individual films will be noted and discussed.

**Interdisciplinary Connections:** To help high school students develop a more critical, discerning eye when watching films. To relate how literature influences films and how it differs from film. To see how the era in which a film was made affects its content. To see how a director develops a scene to convey a specific message. To see how films develop and influence each other over the decades. To see how our collective, societal values are conveyed and reinforced through films. To see how films influence the development of present and future films.

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Themes and Skills:**

- CRP1. Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee.
- CRP2. Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.
- CRP4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
- CRP5. Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
- CRP6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
- CRP7. Employ valid and reliable research strategies.
- CRP8. Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
- CRP9. Model integrity, ethical leadership and effective management.
- CRP10. Plan education and career paths aligned to personal goals.
- CRP11. Use technology to enhance productivity.
- CRP12. Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence.

**Standards (Content and Technology):**

<b>CPI#:</b>	<b>Statement:</b>
NJSLSA.W1.	Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
NJSLSA.W3.	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.



NJSLSA.W4.	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
NJSLSA.W5.	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
NJSLSA.W6.	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.
NJSLSA.W9.	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
NJSLSA.W10.	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
8.1.12.E.1	Produce a position statement about a real world problem by developing a systematic plan of investigation with peers and experts synthesizing information from multiple sources.
8.1.12.E.2	Research and evaluate the impact on society of the unethical use of digital tools and present your research to peers.
8.1.12.F.1	Evaluate the strengths and limitations of emerging technologies and their impact on educational, career, personal and or social needs.
8.2.12.B.1	Research and analyze the impact of the design constraints (specifications and limits) for a product or technology driven by a cultural, social, economic or political need and publish for review.
8.2.12.B.2	Evaluate ethical considerations regarding the sustainability of environmental resources that are used for the design, creation and maintenance of a chosen product.
8.2.12.B.3	Analyze ethical and unethical practices around intellectual property rights as influenced by human wants and/or needs.
8.2.12.B.4	Investigate a technology used in a given period of history, e.g., stone age, industrial revolution or information age, and identify their impact and how they may have changed to meet human needs and wants.
<div> <div> <b>Unit Essential Question(s):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why are films important to study?</li> <li>What do films say about us as a people and society?</li> <li>How does an individual film reveal its "time," - the time period in which it was made?</li> <li>How do films influence each other?</li> <li>Why does the individual film "look" the way it does?</li> <li>Why does each scene "look" the way it does?</li> </ul> </div> <div> <b>Unit Enduring Understandings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What archetypes are portrayed in the film?</li> <li>Why do some films "stand the test of time" while others seem to fade into oblivion?</li> <li>What does the director do to keep a sense of focus on a film?</li> <li>What is the film saying about us?</li> <li>What do the costumes say about each character and scene?</li> </ul> </div> </div>	
<b>Unit Learning Targets/Objectives:</b> <i>Students will...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss in class the ideas presented in the film. Discussion will also involve how the director presented his/her ideas about the theme of the film.</li> <li>Write three pages in a journal will be collected every week from the students. In those three pages the student will present what he/she thinks about the film and about what was discussed in class.</li> </ul>	

**Formative Assessments:**

Weekly writings will be collected and assessed. The writings will deal with what the students saw, learned in class, and thought about the film. All the writings will be written in a hard bound notebook that the student will eventually retain when the class has concluded. This notebook will act a record of the student's thoughts about the films, about life as it's related to the films and about the student's growth during the semester. In a way, it's a gift to the student. He or she will have a written account of his or her life during the semester. If the student has taken Creative Writing, the same note book will be used and it'll serve as a record of the student's entire school year. (I tell the students that I wish I had my grandmother's journal of the Great Depression or of the WWII years that she lived in. Unfortunately my grandmother did not keep a journal - but that's part of the reason I have the students keep this one - so they'll have a record for their kids and grandkids. The students will have a written record of their lives.) Grading will be conducted on the basis of effort. A set number of pages each week will receive an A. Lateness will make down the grade. Some emphasis will be given to "correct" punctuation and structure, but most of the emphasis will be put on an honest exploration of what the film has invoked in the student's mind. It is believed that film viewing will be a life-long endeavor for each student. It's important for each of us to decide what is important, motivating and stimulating for each of us individually. We can read what the critics say, but (I believe)) it's more important to foster a critical discerning eye in each student.

During the second half of the course the students will break into small groups, of two or three students each, and present a film of their choice to the class. They are expected to "pick it apart" the film as the teacher has done during the previous ten weeks of the course. The students will be expected to discuss the time period in which the film was made, and how that time period has influenced the film's content. They will be expected to discuss what the director has done to emphasis a scene (camera angle, lighting, choice of movement by the characters, etc.) A grade will be given for the participation of each of the presenting group members.

**Summative/Benchmark Assessment(s):**

A final grade will consist of the weekly formative assessments as well as the class presentation of the group's film. (No final exam is given for one semester courses.)

**Resources/Materials** (copy hyperlinks for digital resources):

Films can be obtained from the local library in town. Several can also be obtained on-line for free. Written criticisms can be obtained from Roger Ebert's *The Great Movies* - a three volume set of books.

**Modifications:**

- **Special Education Students:**

Allow errors  
 Rephrase questions, directions, and explanations  
 Allow extended time to answer questions, and permit drawing, as an explanation  
 Accept participation at any level, even one word  
 Consult with Case Managers and follow IEP accommodations/modifications

- **At-Risk Students:**

Provide extended time to complete tasks  
 Consult with Guidance Counselors and follow I&RS procedures/action plans  
 Consult with classroom teacher(s) for specific behavior interventions  
 Provide rewards as necessary

- **Gifted and Talented Students:**

Provide extension activities  
 Build on students' intrinsic motivations



• **English Language Learners:**

Assign a buddy, same language or English speaking

Allow errors in speaking

Rephrase questions, directions, and explanations

Allow extended time to answer questions

Accept participation at any level, even one word

Consult with parents to accommodate students' interests in completing tasks at their level of engagement

Lesson Name/Topic	Lesson Objective(s)	Time frame (day(s) to complete)
Lesson #1	<b>Modern Times</b> Discuss the film's significance - the fact that it's Chaplin's last silent film but uses some sound. Discuss how Chaplin made his films - by using sequences of physical gags and tying them together with a story line. Discuss how the film portrays the 1930s.	4 days
Lesson #2	<b>The Great Dictator</b> - Show the film. Point out how Chaplin uses his "tramp" character and how he uses his traditional sight gags. Discuss the times and how they're portrayed in the film.	4 days
Lesson #3	<b>Chaplin</b> - show Robert Downey Jr.'s portrayal of Charlie Chaplin. Discuss how Chaplin's biography is interpreted in the film. Discuss how Chaplin made his movies as seen in Chaplin.	4 days
Lesson #4	<b>Frankenstein</b> - read some sections of Mary Shelly's Frankenstein. Discuss why we still see the monster's image 200 years after the publishing of the book. Discuss our relationship with science and religion and how it's portrayed in the film. Discuss the	4 days

	impact of the 1933 movie on today's "scary" movies. Discuss the camera angles and the use of lighting to create the scary mood.	
Lesson #5	<b><i>The Bride of Frankenstein</i></b> - show the movie - discuss how the producers changed the imagery and the characters from the 1933 film. Discuss how Boris Karloff developed the character of the monster.	4 days
Lesson #6	<b><i>Last of the Mohicans</i></b> - discuss how in James Fenimore Cooper's novel the characteristics of Nathaniel are still honored in American society today - the fact that Nathaniel is a "straight shooter" and he speaks the truth. He's self-reliant, he treats all men, and women with equal respect, etc. Characteristics we want in our president and heroes.	4 days
Lesson #7	<b><i>Casablanca</i></b> - discuss how this movie is considered by most of the critics as the number one or two best movie ever made. Discuss the "tightness" of the film. Discuss the times in which it was made and how "everybody goes to Rick's: American Café because everyone from Europe was going to America to get away from Hitler	4 days
Lesson #8	<b><i>Rebel Without a Cause</i></b> - discuss how this movie ushered in the "teen" movies that we all see today. Discuss the times in which it was made. Discuss the fact we still see images of James Dean and the	4 days

	<p>movie title in new movies. Discuss the film's influence on our popular culture today. Discuss the theme and the storyline.</p>	
Lesson #9	<p><b><i>Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid</i></b> - discuss the times in which the film was made. Discuss the turbulent 1960s and Vietnam War and how it influenced the film. Discuss why we are so interested in two bandits and why in 1969 they would be seen to us as heroes. Discuss the real lives of Butch and Sundance. Discuss the ending and why we see the final image as a still photo and not a moving image.</p>	4 days
Lesson #10	<p><b><i>Annie Hall</i></b> - discuss Woody Allen and the fact he makes a film every year. Discuss his influences and how he constructs the film using imaginary sequences and "real" sequences.</p>	4 days
Lesson #11	<p><b><i>The Godfather</i></b> - discuss the times in which the film was made. Discuss the impact of the film on our culture. Discuss how Francis Ford Coppola "does it" - how he's able to make such a great movie. Discuss how Coppola holds our interest by showing one image on the screen and having us keep in mind another image and aspect of the film at the same time.</p>	4 days
Lesson #12	<p><b><i>One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest</i></b> - discuss the</p>	4 days



	times in which it was made. Discuss how the film portrays its times. Discuss the life of the director and how it influenced his directing. Discuss the author and how the book is different.	
Lesson #13	<b><i>Midnight in Paris</i></b> - discuss how this film is similar and different then Woody Allen's previous Academy Award film <b><i>Annie Hall</i></b> . Discuss how it portrays our time.	4 days
<p><b>Teacher Notes:</b></p> <p><b>Additional Curriculum Resources:</b>  <b><i>The Hollywood Style</i></b> - video  <b><i>Frankenstein</i></b> by Mary Shelley  <b><i>Chaplin</i></b> - his autobiography  <b><i>Butch and Sundance, an historical account</i></b> - video  <b><i>The Godfather</i></b> by Mario Puzzo  <b><i>The Last of the Mohicans</i></b> by James Fenimore Cooper          And any other videos or printed material that relates to the films</p>		