

HISTORICAL FILMS

Fall 2016



Historical film dramas deal with real events and people. They can be “based on” or “inspired by” (there’s a real distinction) true stories. Some attempt accurate portrayals of historical fact, others are highly fictionalized and may change much of the historical record. Not all remain true to the actual history of the event or the individuals portrayed. Proponents praise them for reawaking interest in aspects of the past that were not previously well represented or understood. Detractors point out that that it is from these sometimes very inaccurate films that many viewers learn history. As always, truth lies somewhere between these poles. We will try to determine just where that point is.

Choosing 20 films “based on history” was no mean feat. I started with a list of over 400 films (see [“List of films based on actual facts”](#) in Wikipedia.) The films we will be discussing are listed below. (I will go through my *highly subjective* criteria when we meet on 9/14.) Almost all are available for streaming on **Amazon.com**. The two that are not, can be streamed on **iTunes**. I have provided links to the pages for streaming. Just click on **Amz** or **iTunes** in the **Streaming** column and you’ll be taken to the right page. These films might also be available on other streaming services (Netflix, Vudu, Hulu, Flixster, YouTube, etc.), but I did not check. DVD copies may also be available to borrow at your local library.

Each week, I will ask that two of you prepare a short presentation on one of the films. (I have tentatively assigned a film to each member of the class. If you will not be attending on the week assigned to you, I’ll make sure there’s time to trade/swap at class on Wednesday, September 14.) Please do a bit of research ([Wikipedia](#) is always a good place to start) on the veracity (or the lack thereof) of events as portrayed in the film assigned to you. You can also talk about any other aspect of the film that interests you (for instance, its critical/popular reception, its genre, the director, stars, etc.)

I also reviewed a number of books on the topic. I think one of the best is **Reel History** by Robert Brent Toplin. I would ask that you purchase a copy so that we can discuss it in conjunction with the films we will be viewing. It can be purchased new (\$18.95) or used (\$6.50) on **Amazon** (click [HERE](#) to be taken to the page). Of course. It too can probably be borrowed at your local library. I have assigned pages in the paperback edition to be read for each class.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Director</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Stream</u>	<u>Assigned</u>	<u>Pages</u>
9/14	Battleship Potemkin	Sergi Eisenstein	1925	Amz.	S. Zrike	1-19
	They Died with Their Boots On	Raoul Walsh	1941	Amz.	S. Zrike	
9/21	Young Mister Lincoln	John Ford	1939	Amz.	A. Cohen	19-41
	Lincoln	Steven Spielberg	2012	Amz.	M. Cohen	
9/28	Rope	Alfred Hitchcock	1948	Amz.	B. Anderson	41-62
	Bridge On the River Kwai	David Lean	1957	Amz.	S. Blicher	
10/5	Man for All Seasons	Fred Zinnemann	1966	Amz.	P. Deflator	62-89
	Inherit The Wind	Stanley Kramer	1960	Amz.	L. DePalma	
10/19	Mongol	Sergei Budrov	2008	iTunes	D. Flavin	90-113
	The Baader Meinhof Complex	Uli Edel	2008	Amz.	B. Goldstein	
10/26	In Cold Blood	Richard Brooks	1967	Amz.	A. Margiotta	114-138
	Capote	Bennett Miller	2005	Amz.	T. Margiotta	
11/2	Salvador	Oliver Stone	1986	Amz.	S. Grossman	139-159
	Vincent & Theo	Robert Altman	1990	Amz.	H. Hawkins	
11/9	Eight Men Out	John Sayles	1988	iTunes	N. Miles	160-177
	The New World	Terrence Malick	2005	Amz.	L. Moss	
11/16	The Diving Bell and the Butterfly	Jiulian Schnabel	2007	Amz.	S. Murphy	178-196
	Margin Call	J.C. Chandor	2011	Amz.	T. Salabert	
11/30	In the Name of the Father	Jim Sheridan	1993	Amz.	M. Schaberg	197-206
	The Pianist	Roman Polanski	2002	Amz.	C. Young	