Law, Politics & Social Change in 20th Century America  
Spring 2004

Film Reflection Papers

As part of your course grade you are expected to attend the screening (or view on your own) five of these films. There are three specific films you are required to see for this course: The Manchurian Candidate, Dirty Harry, and All the President’s Men. You can choose any two of the other films to watch. If the films are at an inconvenient time, you may find rental copies, library copies, or copies through interlibrary loan and watch them on your own. For Dirty Harry and All the President’s Men you must watch the films before class discussion on those films.

In addition to seeing the films, you must write a two-page reflection on each film (turned in within a week of the screening). These reflection papers are not intended to serve as a check that you actually attended the film. Thus, a synopsis of the film is unacceptable and will not receive credit. Instead you should choose one or two issues or topics that you notice in the film and reflect on those themes. Thus, for example, in The Manchurian Candidate paper, you might compare and contrast how McCarthyism is portrayed in the film versus how it played out in the readings we did on the subject. In short, you must connect the film to issues discussed in the course.

Remember that even in a paper as short an informal as this, you need a thesis. In other words, decide in advance of writing what your point is and what argument you will be making and supporting with examples from the film and from the class.

If you have further questions, do not hesitate to ask.