



Grow from the experience by **reflecting** on themes, **discussing** with others, **questioning** the filmmaker's perspective, and mentally putting yourself in someone else's shoes.

*Many of these contain strong language and strong content.*

**N** - available to stream on Netflix!

**12 Angry Men:** This movie depicts jury deliberations in a murder case, in which a young minority man is the defendant. The film is based on the play by Reginald Rose. [1997 Version TRAILER](#) and [1957 Version TRAILER](#) **N**

**A Day Without a Mexican** is another great independent film. Through satire, exploring what would happen to California if all the Mexicans were suddenly gone, the movie is a commentary on racism and social class. [TRAILER](#)

**A Passage to India:** The film is a story of several individuals, some British and one Indian, who try to become friends during the British colonial occupation of the subcontinent. The movie is closely based on the classic novel by E.M. Forster.

**American History X:** Derek Vinyard returns from prison to find his younger brother, Danny Vinyard, caught in the same web of racism and hatred that landed him in prison. After Derek's father is killed in the line of duty by a minority, Derek's view of mankind is altered, but while in prison, he discovers that there is good and bad in every race. The task before him now is to convince Danny of his newfound enlightenment.

**Amistad** Graphic, moving, and powerful, Steven Spielberg's Amistad depicts tragedies and honesty of the slave trade. Although not completely historically accurate (suggesting the court case was *the* catalyst for American viewpoints on domestic slavery to shift) it does accurately show horrors of our history, and uses this true event to explore true politics, concerns, people, motivations, struggles, and situations that occurred in our American history. [TRAILER](#) **N**

**Angels in America** an HBO miniseries, based on the Pulitzer Prize winning play, addressing homosexuality, social and political climates, and HIV. The series was important enough to draw many big name actors to the series, garnering it several Emmy's and Golden Globes.

**Antwone Fisher** is a very powerful movie, directed by Denzel Washington. Based on a true story, the movie shows great transformation and learning from a young man who suffered much abuse and abandonment. There are substantial therapy and healing applications, too. [TRAILER](#)

**Barbershop** is a comedy that does an admirable job dealing with diversity issues and other sociocultural issues. Don't let the genre fool you, comedy and circumstance can be a great medium to deliver and comment on more serious topics. [TRAILER](#) **N**

**Bend it Like Beckham** is an acclaimed British comedy and especially good for dealing with cultural issues with youth and challenging social paradigms. [TRAILER](#)

**Boys Don't Cry** is based on the true story of Brandon Teena, a trans man who is raped and murdered; It portrays his romantic tragedy and themes of empowerment and identity. Highly acclaimed and strongly recommended [TRAILER](#) **N**

**Boyz N the Hood** is a classic movie, highlighting social class, survival violence, and inner city brotherhood. It's easy not to recognize the importance today as there have been many movies which have addressed issues since. However, Boyz N the Hood led the way, and even a decade later was deemed culturally significant by the Library of Congress. [TRAILER](#) **N**

**Bulworth:** Senator Jay Bulworth has become completely disillusioned with all of the lying, cheating, and money-grubbing aspects of politics, so he hires a contract out on his own life. He decides that before he is killed, however, that he is going to ruin his reputation and alert people to the dirt of politics by delivering racist and hate-filled speeches to the public...that is, until he falls in love with a black woman. [TRAILER](#)

**The Color Purple** This Steven Spielberg movie has many layers of historical importance and is based on the Pulitzer Prize winning novel by Alice Walker, who is considered the founder of the womanist movement. It tells the story of a poor southern African-American woman at the turn of the century and the harshness she endures and overcomes. [TRAILER](#)

**Crash** is heavy in depicting cultural issues, barriers, and climates. It's a great movie for beginning discussions, especially discussions examining your own prejudices. Highly recommended. [TRAILER](#)

**Crazy/beautiful:** Nicole Oakley, the troubled daughter of a wealthy congressman, attends public school in the upscale community of Pacific Palisades. As an act of defiance, she makes a play for the attentions of Carlos Nunez, a determined, straight-A student who endures a two-hour bus ride each morning from East LA to attend the more prestigious school in Nicole's exclusive suburb.

**The Crying Game** is classified as a physiological thriller and explores themes of race, gender, nationality, and sexuality against the backdrop of the Irish Troubles. [TRAILER](#) **N**

**Grand Canyon** is a dated coming-to-age film with a stellar cast. It is both feel-good and dramatic. Grand Canyon is noted as “*The Big Chill*” of the 1990’s. [Haven’t see *The Big Chill*? Also, a must see film] [TRAILER](#) **N**

**Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner:** Set in the 1960s, this movie tells of a dinner party given by a bride’s parents to meet her fiancé and his parents. The comfortable middle class existence of the bride’s white parents is disrupted when they find out that the groom is black. Nor are the groom’s parents, also invited to dinner, happy to find that their son is going to marry a white girl. **N**

**Higher Learning:** The story of college students of different races, as they confront issues of racial identity and cross-cultural friendship. [TRAILER](#)

**Hotel Rwanda** is a historical drama starring Don Cheadle about the genocide which occurred in Rwanda and the world's reaction. **N**

**The Human Stain** – College Professor is forced to resign after a comment in class is perceived as racist. Events following, including his wife’s sudden death, pursuit to overcome the scandal, and romantic involvement, paint a picture of his complex identity and life because of it. [TRAILER](#) **N**

**In Time** – Modern blockbuster in the fantasy/action genre that shows a dramatically emphasized division of social class that is not hard to relate to. [TRAILER](#)

**Jesus Camp:** Oscar-nominated documentary looking at a children’s summer camp and their evangelical Christian community. [TRAILER](#) **N**

**John Q** heart-wrenching look at racial and socioeconomic barriers. This film is blockbuster, action, emotional, dramatic, and tender. [TRAILER](#)

**Joy Luck Club:** This movie is based on the bestseller written by Amy Tan describing the experiences of four women who emigrated from China to the United States. Each woman’s story contains horrendous experiences in China and shows how those experiences affected their relationships with their American-born daughters. [TRAILER](#)

**The Laramie Project** The film (based on the play) tells the true story of Matthew Shepard's murder. The brutal hate crime on Matthew was not only powerful then, but also now as an important reminder of humanity, violence, fear, and discrimination. [TRAILER](#)

**Monster's Ball** follows a poor Southern woman, spotlighting the racism and interracial relationships. Very critically acclaimed. [TRAILER](#)

**North Country** is based on the true story of Lois Jenson, a single-mother iron mine worker in Minnesota. It’s a story of the pioneer first class action sexual harassment law suit in the US. It does an excellent job of creating a visceral feel for the experience of the women. [TRAILER](#)

**Once Upon a Time When We Were Colored** A classic, this movie is impactful and historic, directly looking at racism in America. [TRAILER](#)

**Priest** is a British film about a Roman Catholic priest. The story evolves from the issues that arise and grow, causing his crisis of faith **N**

**Roots** ground-breaking and hugely impacting mini-series from 1977 that features the lives of 4 generations of family from capture in Africa, slavery in America, and “freedom” in the South.

**Schindler’s List:** This film depicts the heroic actions of Oskar Schindler, a German war profiteer who, because of his fundamental humanity and great courage, saved more than 1,100 Jews from death in the Holocaust.

**School Ties** is a 1992 drama starring Brendan Fraser, Matt Damon, Ben Affleck, Chris O'Donnell, Cole Hauser, Randall Batinkoff, Andrew Lowery and Anthony Rapp. It’s the story of a 1950’s prep school highlighting Anti-Semitic bullying and prejudice. [TRAILER](#) **N**

**Smoke Signals:** 10 years after his alcoholic and abusive father left home, Victor Joseph journeys to Phoenix to retrieve his ashes and his truck. On the trip he learns about his father and comes to terms with his own identity. Based on the book Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven by Sherman Alexie. [TRAILER](#) **N**

**To Kill a Mockingbird:** Atticus Finch is a lawyer and single parent in a small southern town during the Great Depression. When Finch is appointed by the local judge to defend a black man accused of raping a white woman, most people in the town expect only a token defense. The film is based on the Pulitzer Prize winning novel by Harper Lee.

Honorable mentions: White Man’s Burden, House of Sand and Frog, In the Flies of Butterflies, If These Walls Could Speak 2, Passage to India, Kissing Jessica Stein, Million Dollar Baby, Coach Carter , Sometimes in April, Remember the Titans, Charlotte Sometimes, Rain Man, Sophie’s Choice, Billy Elliot, My Left Foot



Would you like to share your review?

Have a film recommendation?

Email Emma at [emma.mentley@clarke.edu](mailto:emma.mentley@clarke.edu)