**“History through Film” Analysis Essay**

Historical films attempt to present content in four ways:

1. **As a factual record**.

2. **To convey atmosphere**: the use of fiction to convey a sense of past – lifestyles, values, and beliefs.

3. **Through analogy**: an historical event is used to point out or explain contemporary beliefs or actions (particularly when the event is controversial).

4. **A lesson to aid in historiography**: the writing of history, especially the writing of history based on the critical examination of sources, the selection of particular details from the authentic materials in those sources, and the synthesis of those details into a narrative that stands the test of critical examination.

Part I:

Historical film writer/director/producer Edward Zwick said **“There is no reason why challenging themes and engaging stories have to be mutually exclusive – in fact, each can fuel the other. As a filmmaker, I want to entertain people first and foremost. If out of that comes a greater awareness and understanding of a time or a circumstance, then the hope is that change can happen.”** Support or refute the validity of this statement based on evidence from the films we have viewed during this assignment. Address the following within your essay:

1. Reflecting upon the films watched in class, is film a legitimate historical source?

2. In what ways has film been used in American History to appropriately analyze time periods, events, significant individuals, etc.? Explain using specific factual evidence (SFI) from our film selection, as well as historical films you may have watched outside of this class.

3. What advantages does film provide in learning the content from an American History course?

4. What potential disadvantages can come from using film in an American History course? How can these “pitfalls” be avoided or actually used to benefit classroom discussion?

5. Using the four methods for presenting a historical film (above), discuss how each film watched in class used one or more methods.

Part II: rank the films we watched in order, 1st being your favorite all the way to last. Write a brief explanation as to why you chose your favorite. (This should be part of your conclusion)

**Paper should be typed and will be due the day of the final exam.**