

Grade 12 Cinema as a Witness to Modern History

Course Code 1123

Course Credit 1.0

FRENCH IMMERSION Program

Discipline Overview

Social studies is the study of people and places, past and present, near and far, in relation to each other and to the natural world. In Manitoba, social studies focuses on the disciplines of history and geography, and embeds the interrelated concepts found within the humanities and social sciences.

Social studies has processes that allow learners to engage effectively with the curriculum and to continuously develop their global competencies and enduring understandings. Learners acquire interdependent knowledge and understanding, skills, and values to become active democratic and responsible citizens who adhere to the principles of Truth and Reconciliation, sustainable development, and human rights.

The enduring understandings of social studies focus on the following topics:

- Identity, Culture, and Community
- The Land: Places and People
- Historical Connections
- Global Interdependence
- Power and Authority
- Economics and Resources

Learning in social studies takes into account the role of the French Immersion Program, its vision, its foundations (language, culture, and identity), as well as the principles of learning and assessment. Learners in social studies are exposed to both models of this discipline, and cultural and language models.

Course Overview

This course will engage learners in an exploration of the connections among cinema as an art form, cinema as a product of history, and cinema as an interpreter of history. Learners will respond to and discuss the aesthetic and emotional elements of cinema and will apply historical thinking concepts to the analysis of historical themes as represented in various films and other sources. Throughout the course, learners will apply critical media literacy skills in order to understand that film does not simply reflect the past, but interprets and retells the past and, at times, reconstructs it.

Global Competencies in Social Studies



Critical Thinking

Critical thinking in social studies is essential to making ethical decisions and to being reflective and active global citizens. It involves the processes of inquiry and historical and geographical thinking, and the use of evidence, criteria, and reasoning that allows for informed decision-making and the creation of solutions necessary for a sustainable and ethical future.

- Learners will critically, strategically, efficiently, and effectively select and use sources in their research and inquiry, to ensure a depth and breadth of understanding, to draw conclusions, and to make informed decisions.
- Learners will make reasoned judgments about the world by evaluating sources for reliability and relevance, and by analyzing for bias, which could include prejudice, racism, and stereotyping.
- Learners will connect ideas, patterns, and relationships, using criteria and reasoning to understand historical thinking concepts.
- Learners will consider multiple perspectives and contexts to understand the diversity of the human experience.
- Learners will interpret information and ideas and recognize that interpretations may change with new information.
- Learners will evaluate personal assumptions and bias based on new information and ideas.
- Learners will ask relevant and clarifying questions to broaden and deepen knowledge and understanding.
- Learners will distinguish fact from opinion and interpretation to arrive at reasoned judgments.
- Learners will weigh criteria, based on observation, experience, and/or evidence, to make informed judgments and ethical decisions about the future of the world.



Creativity

Creativity in social studies enables learners to make observations and decisions, to solve problems, and to devise innovative strategies. This involves making connections among concepts and applying a variety of tools. Creative thinking emphasizes flexibility, divergent thinking, the generation of ideas, and the exploration of diverse choices to enhance understanding and consider sustainable and ethical solutions.

- Learners will demonstrate initiative and ingenuity, explore opportunities, be open to new ideas and possibilities, and take risks to consider different choices that could shape the future.
- Learners will demonstrate curiosity about choices made by people within a given context and explore new ideas/possibilities by asking relevant questions about those choices.
- Learners will use strategies and ways of thinking including historical/geographical thinking, perspective taking, and ethical decision-making to generate innovative ideas and concepts, solve problems, and/or make a difference to consider new opportunities for the future.
- Learners will build on the ideas and understandings of others.
- Learners will create plans and adjust them as they gain understanding of new information and/or changing contexts.
- Learners will test, refine, and adapt ideas in innovative and unique ways, and persevere through ambiguity and obstacles.
- Learners will reflect, seek, and use feedback from others to consider sustainable and ethical solutions and to enhance understanding.



Citizenship

Citizenship in social studies prepares learners to be informed and engaged global citizens. As they reflect upon diverse perspectives, narratives, and stories, they develop historical/geographical knowledge and conceptual understanding of the principles of Truth and Reconciliation, sustainability, and human rights, which provide a foundation for their role as engaged and responsible citizens—locally, nationally, and globally.

- Learners will understand and reflect on their own perspective in regard to complex issues in a rapidly changing world.
- Learners will recognize bias, including racism, prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination, and they will support the principles of Truth and Reconciliation, sustainability, and human rights.
- Learners will explore the interconnectedness of self, others, and the natural world.

- Learners will explore how the contributions of the past shape our present concepts of citizenship and democracy.
- Learners will use conceptual understanding and historical/geographical thinking to analyze information and to make informed decisions.
- Learners will explore diverse ideas, experiences, and world views to evaluate personal assumptions and bias and to make informed decisions that reflect the principles of Truth and Reconciliation, sustainability, and human rights.
- Learners will empathize with others and reflect on perspectives that do not fit their own to understand the diversity of the human experience.
- Learners will engage with others in responsible, respectful, and inclusive ways, in person and in digital contexts, to constructively shape dialogue and build relationships.
- Learners will evaluate factors and realize their own potential to propose solutions for the well-being of self, others, and the natural world.
- Learners will work with others to develop strategies to find equitable solutions that support equity, diversity, and inclusion, and that uphold human rights.
- Learners will make ethical choices to promote healthy and sustainable outcomes for the natural world.



Connection to Self

Connection to self in social studies is the learners' personal connection with historical and geographical thinking and knowing, and making connections with others and the natural world. Learners explore their dynamic relationships with people and the land, past and present, near and far, which develops knowledge and understanding of human interdependence and impact upon societies and natural environments, and of their role as responsible citizens for a sustainable and ethical future.

- Learners will recognize personal interests, strengths, challenges, and gifts to support their learning, their well-being, and their well-becoming.
- Learners will appreciate the factors that shape their identity, including the interrelationship of land and people within the cultural and historical context of their community, to gain an understanding of themselves.
- Learners will value and respect the interdependence of and personal connections to people and place, including the natural environment, to develop empathy and belonging.
- Learners will understand and use strategies to support self-regulation and well-being as citizens in a complex and ever-changing world.
- Learners will reflect on their biases, decisions, effort, and experiences, and on others' feedback.

- Learners will set goals to strengthen their learning and well-being as engaged citizens.
- Learners will have hope and demonstrate empathy as they plan for the future for themselves and as part of the natural world near and far.
- Learners will demonstrate an ability to persevere and adapt to new experiences and perspectives, environmental and global realities, and world events.
- Learners will recognize and embrace their role in lifelong learning, and take responsibility for personal growth, well-being, and well-becoming as global citizens.



Collaboration

Collaboration in social studies includes appreciating the diversity of perspectives, beliefs, and values, which is part of living in a democratic society and being part of the natural world. Collaboration includes learning with and from others and working together with a shared commitment to common purposes including Truth and Reconciliation. Collaboration builds relationships to enable learners to make informed decisions and accomplish common goals. Furthermore, productive discussion and debate concerning ethical questions serve to motivate learners, making learning more meaningful, and provide the opportunity for learners to contribute to their communities.

- Learners will seek to understand and clarify diverse perspectives, voices, and ideas.
- Learners will build on each other's ideas through productive, meaningful, and respectful interactions.
- Learners will value and put trust in others' contributions to deepen thinking about topics.
- Learners will practise active listening and ask ethical questions while considering diverse perspectives.
- Learners will work through differences and show a willingness to compromise or change perspective where appropriate to make informed and respectful decisions.
- Learners will co-construct with others by negotiating to build an ethical understanding and work together to solve problems for the well-being of people and as part of the natural world.
- Learners will use their gifts and commit to establishing and carrying out their responsibilities for a collective purpose and/or a common goal for the well-being of people and as part of the natural world.



Communication

Communication in social studies enables learners to interpret received information, and to share information and express ideas clearly and purposefully using a variety of media. This includes the development of oral, visual, print, and media literacy, and the use of information and communication technologies for the exchange of information and ideas. Learners constructively exchange information and ideas to build knowledge and to strengthen relationships for a sustainable and ethical future for themselves and the natural world.

- Learners will consider audience, purpose, context, modes, and forms to share ideas and present information thoughtfully and effectively.
- Learners will use clear and concise language to express ideas and voice perspectives that are inclusive and respectful of others, avoiding generalizations and pejoratives, while understanding how their words and actions impact others.
- Learners consider context cues (e.g., text features, non-verbal communication, tone of voice, appropriate digital images, icons) to enhance understanding when receiving messages.
- Learners will seek to understand others' perspectives to clarify and broaden thinking and negotiate constructively through active listening and questioning.
- Learners recognize how diverse contexts (linguistic, cultural, generational, experiential) can influence understanding.
- Learners will engage in productive, meaningful, and respectful discussions to build relationships and deepen understandings in a variety of ways including in digital contexts.
- Learners will relate events and stories in a way that makes sense to self and others.
- Learners will negotiate constructively with others to build consensus within a community of learners.

Enduring Understandings

Identity, Culture, and Community

Learners will explore the concepts of identity, culture, and community as they relate to individuals, societies, and nations. Many factors influence identity and life in communities, including geography and history, culture, language, economic factors, and shared beliefs and values, and these factors are subject to time and place. By studying various cultures, including one's own, learners develop a better understanding of diverse points of view and become sensitive to the fact that a community is strengthened by the interaction and interdependence among individuals through cultural diversity and pluralism.



The Land: Places and People

The exploration of people's dynamic interrelationships with places and environments creates an understanding of human dependence and impact upon the natural environment. Learners consider how connections to the land influence their identities and define their roles and responsibilities as civil stewards of the land—locally, nationally, and globally.

Historical Connections

Learners will explore how people, events, and ideas from the past shape the present and influence the future. In addition, stories and traditions allow learners to deepen their historical understanding of the influence of the past on the present. Through the exploration of one's own history, and history near and far, learners can draw on the past to understand the present and live with the future in mind, thereby providing a foundation for active democratic citizenship.

Global Interdependence

Learners will explore the interdependence of people, communities, societies, nations, and environments. This exploration will enhance the learners' global consciousness and help them develop empathy with respect to human rights and the human condition. Consideration of global connections enables them to expand their knowledge of the world in which they live and to engage in global citizenship.

Power and Authority

Learners will explore the diverse processes and structures of power and authority through time, and their impact on people, relationships, communities, and nations, along with issues of fairness and equity. Power and authority affect all human relations, in everyday life and in official situations. Rules and laws, both formal and traditional, exist to protect people and to meet their needs for living together in a just and peaceful manner. Through an exploration of power and authority and its influence on human relationships, learners develop a sense of personal empowerment as active democratic citizens.

Economics and Resources

Learners build an understanding of the impact, the sharing, and the interdependence of resources and wealth in relation to individuals, communities, and nations, both past and present. They examine economic factors that affect decision-making, the use and distribution of resources, and the development of technologies, and they consider social and environmental implications.



Learning Outcomes

Themes to Guide Outcomes for Cinema as a Witness to Modern History

Cinema as an interpretive witness of twentieth-century history


Cinema should be considered, among other sources, a credible interpreter of history. Film viewing may be organized around the key chronological historical developments that have unfolded in world history since the beginning of the twentieth century (e.g., from the Great War to the space race to the ecological impact of mass production). Film selection would involve selected documentary and dramatic films that portray and interpret historical content, and may involve learners in pre-research related to each historical event using primary and secondary sources. Learners would also be prompted to analyze historical errors and misinterpretations in cinema. This course design may include such elements as the role of the cinema in propaganda in times of war, the history of the National Film Board, and the emergence of documentary film in dealing with contemporary historical topics.

Cinema as social history (film as an artifact or product of history)

In this approach, the teacher focuses on film selection with an eye to the role of cinema in popular culture, concentrating on examples of how films reflect and influence the societal values of the time and place of their creation. In this course design, learners would be encouraged to consider each film as a historical artifact in itself, and would conduct research into the context of the film's production before or after viewing. This may include a study of interviews with filmmakers and of the film production circumstances. In this approach, films may be selected for viewing in a chronological order based on the time and place of their production. Film studies would also involve examining the critics' responses at the time of release and later on in the history of film.

Cinema as an instrument of mass media (the industry of film)

With this approach, the teacher may choose to study the emergence of film as a lucrative and influential commercial enterprise in the twentieth century and beyond. This would entail focusing attention on film production and distribution companies, film advertising and marketing, the role of cinema and celebrity in popular culture, film budgets and timelines, the dominance of Hollywood in the film industry, the business of film criticism and its impact on filmmaking, the development and use of special effects, rating systems, and awards, and the impact of new media on cinema. Teachers may choose to examine the emergence and history of mass media and media theory (e.g., the works of Chomsky or McLuhan) and may facilitate the comparative study of mainstream productions and auteur or independent productions.



Cinema as an evolving art form (history of film)

With this approach, the film selection and learning tasks are organized based on the study of cinema as an art form (as in France, where cinema is studied as *le septième art*, or “the seventh art”). The emphasis is placed on film language and film criticism, film technique, and the history of cinema. Learners learn to distinguish film genres and artistic conventions, to write formal critiques and analyses, and to compare different films dealing with the same theme. In this approach, course design may be organized around the selection of films or directors representative of significant turning points in the history of cinema.


Specific Learning Outcomes

Approach 1: Cinema as Interpretive Witness

- Research and discuss what cinema can contribute to historical interpretations of the twentieth century.
- Research and discuss whether cinema is a credible witness of twentieth- and twenty-first-century world history.
- Discuss whether cinema is a product of history or an interpretation of history.
- Discuss whether cinema should be used to interpret/represent/understand history.
- Explain how a chosen film interprets the historical subject it depicts.
 - ▶ Is it a convincing interpretation?
 - ▶ Is it a reliable interpretation?
 - ▶ How realistic is it?
 - ▶ What sort of an interpretation of the twentieth or twenty-first century does this film convey?
 - ▶ What events and values does this film seem to deem important?
 - ▶ What approach to history does this film implicitly or explicitly convey?

Approach 2: Cinema as Artifact

- Explain how a chosen film reflects the time and place in which it was created.
 - ▶ In what way does this film convey the values of its time and place?
 - ▶ In what sense is this film truly a historical film?
 - ▶ How effectively does this film use primary sources as part of its message?



Approach 3: Cinema as Art Form


- Explain how the language of cinema shapes a chosen film's portrayal of history and its choice of historical topics.
 - ▶ How does this film use the power of image and other techniques to convey its message?
 - ▶ In this film, which has the greater impact, the cinematic techniques or the historical content?
 - ▶ How does this film genre suit the historical topics or themes it deals with?

Approach 4: Cinema as Industry

- Explain how the film industry influences society.
 - ▶ What is the social/cultural/economic impact of the industry of film?
 - ▶ What are the elements that dominate the film industry?
 - ▶ What does the history of cinema tell us about the evolution of the film industry?
 - ▶ How and why did Hollywood blockbuster cinema come to dominate the film industry?
 - ▶ How does Hollywood blockbuster cinema influence our tastes in cinema?
 - ▶ What are the advantages or disadvantages of viewing film from other countries or in other languages?

Critical Media Literacy

- Identify the skills needed to become critically literate film viewers.
- Describe the social or historical context in which a chosen film was created, and explain how this film reflects this context.
- Identify who is behind the camera lens, and explain what one should know about the cinematographer and director.
- Describe the main message of a chosen film, and explain what values underlie this film.
- Explain how a chosen film is historical.
- Deconstruct a historical film.
- Explain how a chosen film influences our understanding of 20th-century world history.
- Discuss whether one can really understand history through film.
- Describe the difference between dramatic and documentary film.
- Discuss whether documentary film is more reliable as a source of historical information than fiction is.
- Describe the techniques the filmmaker uses to convey their message, and explain whether or not these techniques are successful and why.
- Compare a chosen film to another film that deals with the same subject.



Historical Thinking

- Explain how a chosen film portrays the historical theme that it deals with.
- Explain how one can tell what is fiction and what is non-fiction in cinema, and describe any untold story.
- Explain how cinema can be a primary source of historical information (documentary evidence of the past).
- Explain how cinema can be a secondary source of historical information (interpretation of a past event).
- Discuss whether cinema can be considered to be a credible witness of history like conventional historical documents (primary and secondary sources).
- Explain how cinema can help deepen our historical thinking.
- Explain how cinema can interfere with our historical thinking.

Historical Themes

- Explain whether or not a chosen film deals with a defining theme of twentieth-century world history.
- Identify the defining theme of twentieth-century world history that a chosen film deals with.
- Explain whether a chosen film is a convincing and/or credible witness of a significant event or theme of the twentieth century.
- Explain how a chosen film deals with private history (e.g., biographies or small, personal dramas) as compared to the larger narrative of history (e.g., the collective or macro-story).

War and Peace

- Discuss whether or not there is ever a just war, if there has there been a just war in the twentieth or twenty-first century, and whether the chosen film conveys a particular message about the moral value of violent conflict.
- Describe how conflict between groups is treated in a chosen film, noting how the opposing groups are portrayed, and whether the film implicitly or explicitly vilifies a particular group as the enemy or glorifies a particular group as the hero.
- Discuss whether a chosen film treats violent conflict as entertainment, using portrayals of gratuitous, extreme, or explicit violence, and/or downplaying or glossing over violence by portraying it as a part of an adventure, a thrill, or a game, and explain why the filmmaker might choose to do this.
- Describe how this film portrays the possible sources of conflict.
- Discuss whether or not you believe the following statement to be true: All war films are in reality anti-war films.



Ideology and Revolution

- Discuss what brings about a revolution, whether revolution is preferable to slow, gradual change, and whether a revolution can be started by a single person.
- Discuss whether revolution is generally a consequence of ideology, propaganda, or the gap between rich and poor, the powerful and the powerless.
- Express an opinion about whether the impact of the communications revolution in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has meant progress or decline in quality of life.
- Explain whether or not most films express an ideology or a belief system that is a product of the time and place in which they were created.

Cinema and Propaganda

- Explain how cinema can function as propaganda.
- Explain how and why states or political groups have, in times of war, used the power of cinema to pass a message on to the people.
- Explain how each of video, speech, written word, music, and photography conveys a message for a specific purpose, and say which medium is more effective as an ideological tool.
- Express an opinion on whether filmmakers have a social responsibility, and whether cinema should be subject to censorship.
- Discuss whether or not all of cinema is merely the creation of an imaginary world for entertainment purposes.
- Express an opinion on whether every film has—or should have—a moral message or lesson.

Oppression and Resistance

- Discuss whether or not there is a time and a place for authoritarian rule, or a time and a place for violent revolution.
- Discuss what the dividing line between the legitimate exercise of power and the abuse of power is, and explain how a chosen film portrays the power and authority of the state.
 - ▶ How does this film deal with questions of state authority and sovereignty and the rights of individuals or groups to oppose this authority?
 - ▶ How does this film deal with the rights of citizens to oppose a legitimate state power?
 - ▶ How does this film deal with the question of international intervention in matters of state jurisdiction?
- Explain how a chosen film portrays examples of human resistance to oppression and how the film depicts groups or individuals who act against the authority of a state.



Public History and Personal Experience

- Explain the role that biography or personal memory can play in helping us to understand history.
- Describe how the historical context influences individual lives.
- Discuss whether or not history is simply the sum total of all individual stories.
- Discuss whether the private lives of individuals or the big story of history is more significant in a chosen film, and whether private lives and relationships are a significant force in history.

Social Transformation and Existential Questions

- Describe how cinema can influence our image of groups or individuals, and how cinema has been used historically to convey particular images or stereotypes of cultural groups, and discuss how this should be controlled and who should make these decisions.
- Explain whether or not a chosen film conveys stereotypes of ethnic, cultural, or national groups or gender identities, and describe how these identities are portrayed in the film.
- Identify the big questions about human life and the human condition that are dealt with in a chosen film.
- Describe the types of moral decisions that the characters in a chosen film are faced with and how they respond.
- Explain how a chosen film portrays human suffering, and discuss how cinema can help deal with human suffering.

Curriculum Implementation Resources

Curriculum implementation resources are frequently added. Please refer to https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/framework/immersion/socstud/resources/grade_12.html.

