Course Description: This course provides a survey of selected civilizations in world history from 3,000 BC to 1300 AD. It focuses on de-constructing mythologies, false perceptions and popular misconceptions about those civilizations by examining popular Hollywood films and foreign cinematic spectacles. Students will study and discuss specific historical issues as they are properly understood from original primary sources, view the films and analyze discrepancies between fact and fiction by asking pertinent historical questions and applying proper historical methodology. At the same time, students will consider the efficacy and value of historiophoty or filmic history, which is an emerging field of professional historiography that advocates fictionalized historical films to recreate and understand historical processes. The course will study the strengths and limitations of film entertainment as a medium of historical expression. There is also the issue to consider the extent to which screenwriting--and its strict requisites--are compatible with the stringent requirements of historical writing and research. Hence, students will consider to what extent historical films might or might not portray an accurate view of the past, as well as how history itself--in film and elsewhere--is often distorted for a variety of reasons, including: dramatic license for entertainment purposes, to propagandize particular interpretations, to advocate change, as well as to accommodate a society's needs to sanitize and/or mythologize its (or another's) past, or else to indict or criminalize it.

Course Requirements

Report Essays: Students will submit regular reports (min. 3 pages EACH, double spaced), on the historicity of the historical films shown in class and on the primary sources related to the films' contents. The specific format and details are noted below, “Project Paper Requirements.”
Completion of all the essays is a necessary requirement for passing the course.

Course Discussions: Discussions of history and the films and class participation are a significant part of the course grade. As part of his lectures, the professor employs the question-and-answer method. Therefore, students are expected to keep up with the readings in order to answer questions correctly and contribute to discussions. They are encouraged to take notes on their own when reading the primary text assignments. The professor may call upon specific students to lead the discussion of the films.

Examinations and Quizzes: This course includes a cumulative final take-home examination on the historicity of the historical films. Quizzes will be scheduled when the instructor determines they are required in order to boost achievement and activities. Unannounced pop quizzes on the readings are real possibilities.

Student Learning Outcomes: General Education Student Learning Outcomes are assessed by means of the final report essay (20% of the course grade), and they include:

1. Students demonstrate knowledge of history and awareness of the historical experience.
2. Students situate primary historical records in their context and use sources to construct historical arguments.
**Accommodations for Absences Related to COVID-19:** According to the revised College policy on attendance, "Because class attendance is crucial for any course, students are expected to attend all classes and laboratory meetings of each course in which they enroll." Instructors have the responsibility to address absences. Students should talk to the instructor about occasional and recurring absences. Students who test positive for COVID-19 or have been exposed should stay home and quarantine for the appropriate 5-day period. After that, they must wear a mask at all times for another 5-day period.

Any students absent specifically due to COVID-related issues, i.e., they have tested positive for COVID-19, or they have been exposed, they express symptoms, and/or they are in quarantine, they must inform the College. The instructor will try to make reasonable accommodations for students absent for COVID issues or issues related to major life disruptions. According to the College:

A reasonable accommodation provides a student with the opportunity to continue making progress in the course but does not compromise the course’s goals and learning objectives. Students may directly notify instructors (or the Dean of Students’ Office) of these disruptions. If a particular situation cannot be accommodated during the course of the semester, students can withdraw from the class, request an incomplete (if the instructor agrees), or petition for a late withdrawal.

**NOTE:** The College does not require a documented excuse for an absence. However, the professor will excuse a medical or serious personal absence more readily if the student provides documentation of their own volition. COVID-19 cases require no documentation, as long as the students report and certify their condition to the College.

If any students are suspected of being dishonest about an illness or a COVID-associated absence, according to the policy, they may be reported to the Dean of Students for investigation of a suspected Honor Code violation.

**There is no Zoom component currently for this course. Absent students should not request classes to be Zoomed to them personally or recorded for them.**

In general, absent students should recover missing course notes the old fashioned way. They get them from other students in the class.

**Attendance and Participation:** Discussion figures prominently in the class-program, and class attendance, participation and effort form a percentage of the course grade. Attendance and participation constitute 20% of the course grade. Success here improves the functioning of the class as well as students’ grades. Students are otherwise expected to attend all lectures and to engage in discussion, unless they have valid documented excuse. Regardless, students are responsible for all the material in the readings, videos, lectures, etc., whether they are present or not in class.

Any person missing class for a valid college function should present documentation to the instructor at least one week in advance.

**Students should NEVER(!) email or telephone the instructor on the same day to say they will be absent.**

If the instructor does not call the daily roll, an attendance sign-in sheet may be circulated. Students are also marked as absent for the following reasons: they do not sign the attendance sheet; they sign the sheet then leave class; they leave class for an *inordinate* period of time without valid excuse.

**Film Attendance:** Students should not expect to stream films at home. These films are a communal experience. Their lessons are transmitted to a group, i.e., the audience, for reflection. It is necessary
that the class experience the films *together and simultaneously*, to share the experience equally and provide a common basis of discussion. **Students absent on any film days without valid and acceptable documented excuse will receive twice (i.e. 2 times) the deduction in the class Attendance-grade** than for an absence on a lecture-discussion day. The absence also impacts the Participation grade. Students missing films will be especially questioned in discussions about the film's contents. **Students who miss more than three (3) classes with or without excuse become subject to a summary grade of F due to excessive absences (regardless of current grade). Only certified COVID-related absences are exempt.**

**However, any student with a perfect attendance record (i.e., attending every class without physical absence) will receive 3 points extra credit in the total attendance grade !**

**Film Schedule:** Eight (8) films and film-days are established for this course, in which students will watch a film, followed by a discussion of history and its historicity. Five days are set aside solely for lecture and discussion. A single 2:45 hour (165 minutes) Express class equals one entire week’s work in a regular 14-week term. That means missing one express class equals 2 standard classes or an entire standard week.

If it is because of a valid medical reason that any student has missed the maximum number of classes, he/she should discuss the matter with the professor and, if appropriate, seek a Late Withdrawal based on medical grounds in the Registrar's Office. Students must apply for a medical withdrawal for all courses simultaneously (not just for a single course), and they must do so before the last day of classes.

If the instructor does not call the daily roll, a sign-in sheet will be circulated (especially on film days). Students are also marked as absent for the following reasons: they do not sign the attendance sheet; they sign the sheet then leave class early without authorization; they leave class for an inordinate period of time without valid reason, and if they arrive substantially late after the doors are closed. Any student who leaves class without authorization and does not return *after taking a quiz or exam* will be recounted as absent, and the quiz/exam will receive an automatic failing grade (0 = F).

**Late for Class:** **Students are expected to arrive to class on time and be ready to start at 5:30 p.m.** Students consistently arriving late for class will receive a deduction in the class participation grade. Those arriving late on a film day will receive twice the deduction as a non-film day. However, in any case, students should not use tardiness as an excuse to cut class, since the result of unexcused absences can result in even more severe grade sanctions.

**Special Needs:** The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should apply for services at the Center for Disability Services/SNAP located on the first floor of the Lightsey Center, Suite 104. Students approved for accommodations are responsible for notifying me as soon as possible and for contacting me one week before accommodation is needed.

**Statement of Inclusion:** The History Department's learning community is a safe and inclusive space for students of all religions, genders, races, ethnicities, nationalities, and sexualities. Sexist, racist, xenophobic, and homophobic language is unacceptable. Also, insults, intimidation, threats, harassment, and bullying of any kind will be met with severe sanctioning. In regard to names and gender pronouns, this course will honor students' request to address them by the name and gender pronouns of choice that are within the bounds of courteous English normative use ("meathead" is out of the question). Many students are given names that are gender neutral (e.g., Jordan, Skylar, Michael, Sydney, Kennedy, Logan, Taylor, etc.). Are they male or female? In these cases, please let the instructor know which gender pronoun applies to you, and do this early in the semester via email or during virtual office hours. The College of Charleston offers many resources to address gender, racial, and religious diversity. Below is a link for diversity resources on campus. 

[http://diversity.cofc.edu/diversity-resources/index.php](http://diversity.cofc.edu/diversity-resources/index.php)
Standard Vernacular English (SVE) is the language of instruction in this class and is required in all discussions and writing assignments. SVE is the language of social empowerment and efficient communication in education, the professions, business, and media in this nation and the larger English-speaking world. This course and the College would be remiss and negligent if they did not enjoin the teaching and proper use of this common vernacular.

Email Contact Policies: The professor will generally contact students outside of class through OAKS and by direct email, using their college Gmail address. If students regularly use addresses other than that, they should check their college email on a regular basis to insure they are receiving all mailings. The professor can be reached by email with the following limitations. He cannot guarantee to reply to every email within 24 hours, but he will try. Since, he does not regularly check email on weekends and holidays, students should not expect replies on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays.

Course Textbooks

Internet Medieval Sourcebook: The Crusades (http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook1k.html).
Accessible directly on the World Wide Web or through "Reading Assignments"-page on class Web pages.


Other required readings are found among these course Web pages. Students will find links to these readings on the "Reading Assignments"-page. To access these texts, find the assigned reading on the schedule under the specific date on which it is due. Click on the name of the text; open it, download and print out.

Grading Policy

Final course-grades will be constituted according to the following formula: Report Essays (4) 80%, attendance and class participation 20%. For the purposes of calculating the attendance grade, film-days have twice the value as lecture-discussion days. That means any unexcused absences on film-days carry 2 times the deduction as other days. DON’T MISS THE FILMS!

Grades in this course are issued according to the following numerical scale: A = 92-100 [superior]; A- = 90-91; B+ = 87-89 [very good]; B = 82-86 [good]; B- = 80-81; C+ = 77-79 [above average]; C = 72-76 [average]; C- = 70-71; D+ = 67-69 [unsatisfactory]; D = 61-66 [poor, passing]; D- = 60 [barely passing]; F = 0-59 [failure]; WA = administrative withdrawal for excessive absences (= F); XF = failure due to academic dishonesty.

Report Essays Requirements
(see Web-page, "Essay Requirements")

Due dates: Four (4) essays, each due regularly. Papers should be submitted online only through the OAKS Dropbox. See "Reading Assignments" or Film Schedule for due dates. Papers arriving after 11:59 pm on due days will be counted as late.

Length: Minimum three (3) pages per film, double spaced (not including bibliography). Failure to provide the minimum number of pages of text will result in a grade reduction.
Specific Essay Assignments: Each essay is a comparative study of two films analyzing the historicity of the film and the extent to which they portray an accurate view of the past. **focusing on the appropriate primary sources.** The topics can include any issues of historicity that the student chooses, including the modern context in which a film is made. The essays will include any outside history readings the student must do (secondary and primary sources), including the readings assigned for each specific film in the "Reading Assignments". Failure to meet these necessary reference minimums will result in deductions in the paper grades. Repeating the professor's lecture content as as major points in the reports will result in grade reductions.

Primary Sources. The essays must focus on primary sources in their argumentation. Historical interpretation is founded first on an analysis of written primary sources (i.e., original ancient documents from the past) combined with modern secondary sources (which provide context or theoretical bases). History is not done by merely by recompiling what other people have already said in their modern secondary studies. Any papers that do not include references and analyses of primary-text documents will receive substantial reductions. **If the professor assigned three (3) documents to read for a film, then students are expected to analyze at least those three (3) documents in their papers in relation to the film’s content. Additional documents means additional points!**

Late Policy, Submissions, etc. Late papers will be penalized 5 points for each day late after 11:59 pm on the due date (including weekends), up to three days, after which they will be graded not higher than 59% (F).

Form and Format. See course Web page, “Project Paper”-link, for detailed information, requirements and advice on form, format, writing strategies and grading criteria for the project papers. In general, the essay and paper should contain 1-inch margins all around. They should be formatted double space in a 12-point type. They should include any proper footnote citations plus a separate “Bibliography” at the end of the paper. Students may not use "parenthetical references" and "reference lists" for any paper or essay in this course, neither may they use the MLA style of notes and references.

Required Style Guide. In the preparation and execution of all papers for the class, students are required to follow the format presented by Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), especially in regard to the style of block quotations, footnotes, and bibliographies. Look over Chapters 8-11 on how to cite references. Use footnotes +"Bibliography". Read Chapter 11 (pp. 185-213) to compare their forms and styles. Use footnotes only; do not use parenthetical references.

Execution. As a rule of thumb, **never quote from general encyclopedias, dictionaries, or class lecture notes (e.g., Wikipedia, Encyclopedia Britannica, etc.).** However, you may use specialized encyclopedias (e.g., encyclopedias of film, history, etc.). You may **not** cite references from the course textbook (Spodek, *The World's History*), although the primary-text reader is allowed (Riley et al, *The Global Experience*). **Never cite course lecture notes or professor's essays.** Treat lecture contents as common knowledge, and use them only as the building blocks of new interpretations, and not as an end to themselves. If you want to use lecture material mentioned in class as an end, you must find it independently in published sources among the course readings and in other print publications. **For information on film history or film production only, you may use the Internet and pages on the World Wide Web.** Feel free to consult the instructor at any time for advice on preparing the papers or about writing strategies. Alternatively, students may consult the writing counselors in the Writing Lab of the Center for Student Learning, Addlestone Library, 1st Floor (http://www.cofc.edu/~csl/writing/writing_lab.html).

Improper form and misspellings will reduce the grade of the term paper. To be certain of your spelling, use a dictionary. Use a spell-check program **only after** you have already manually checked your spelling. **You must proofread your paper before submitting it, and make any final corrections cleanly in ink, if necessary. Why the emphasis on form?** A research paper is a means of
communication. The purpose of any paper is to convey an argument as logically as possible according to standards of form that facilitate its communicative function. Form is not merely format and correct spelling; it also includes the logical arrangement of an argument and the rational ordering of historical and textual data to support a particular historical interpretation. Poor form can impede the communication of a valid point of view. When a paper cannot communicate due to a lapse of form, it has failed in its purpose.

**Using the World Wide Web for Research and as a Source of Quotations**

One does not do research merely by sitting at a computer and browsing the Web (not yet anyway). One does research by paging through books and journal articles and by following sources backward from one footnote to another. Students should confine the bulk of their research to printed publications. However, they may also use the World Wide Web selectively to help research the paper topic. Beware! A great deal of pseudo-historical trash exists on the Web that does not conform to modern academic standards. The World Wide Web contains three types of historical materials:

1. **primary sources**, i.e., collections of original historical documents and inscriptions;

2. **synthetical reports and essays** prepared by professional historians and which are published in professional Web-based electronic journals, or they were published originally in paper then scanned on to the Web;

3. **idiocyncratic essays, polemical tracts, and document collections** of uneven and inconsistent quality, prepared by non-professionals, dilettantes, and hobbyists which are often biased in their presentations, inaccurate and/or misleading in content.

Sadly, this cyber-trash [no. 3] permeates much of the historical matter on the Web, and students must learn to recognize and avoid it. Many of the primary sources on the Web [no. 1] include translations of foreign language documents into English. However, these translations are usually obsolete, incomplete, or idiocyncratic (which is why they are freely available on the Web). More modern and accurate translations are published in print (books and journals), and they supercede the less correct obsolete translations on the Web.

**Library Electronic Databases.** On the other hand, many legitimate and professional peer-reviewed historical academic journals are also scanned and published on restricted portions of the Web (requiring password access). They are collected together into electronic databases or digital archives for easy searching. The Addlestone Library of the college subscribes to these electronic databases, and they are available through the Library catalogue under the heading, "Databases" (soon to be available through the library catalog). Students should use these databases and sources to find articles for writing their papers, and they do not need the instructor's permission to use them, e.g.: *Academic Search Premier; Jstor; Lexis-Nexis, and Infotrac.*

Students should never quote from any dictionaries and encyclopedias, such as *Wikipedia, Encyclopedia Britannica,* etc. *With the exception of film-history and film-production information,* students should not quote from any *public or open* Web pages, including translations, reports, and essays *without prior approval of the instructor* (i.e., nos. [1], [2], [3] above). Of course, students may always quote from any on-line sources found through the Addlestone Library Catalog of electronic databases and e-journals (see above). The professor reserves the right to fail any paper outright that egregiously violates the prohibition against employing unauthorized Web sources for historical information, whether footnoted or not.

While students may not *quote* from any Web source, they can still *consult* reliable Web pages (i.e., those that are authored by professional scholars) in order to identify issues, printed books, and other *paper-form* sources of information, which they may then quote in their papers. Use these Web pages
to lead you to printed books. *Wikipedia* is not consistently reliable because most of its articles are written by biased amateurs and ill-informed non-specialists. However, articles in *Wikipedia* might contain bibliographies of some usefulness. Potentially reliable pages on the World Wide Web are usually identifiable by the domain-markers “.edu” or “.ac.uk” or “.org” in their addresses, while much less trustworthy pages are often identifiable by the domain-markers “.com” “.net” or in their Web addresses. If in doubt about the appropriateness of any research source—either on the Web or in print—consult the instructor, and run these pages by him.

**Policy on Plagiarism, Cheating, and Disruptive Behavior**

**Academic Honor Code.** As you prepare your papers for this course, do not plagiarize any of your sources. Plagiarism is copying or paraphrasing the words and ideas of others and passing them off as your own or misleading the reader into thinking that the words and ideas of other writers are your own. Any plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, whether blatant or merely inappropriate paraphrasing, cannot be tolerated.

If you have any questions as you prepare your assignments, please ask the advice of the instructor. If in doubt about anything, quote it—even indirect quotations! The *Honor Code of the College of Charleston* strictly prohibits plagiarism, cheating, and attempted cheating. Students found by the instructor to commit these offenses will automatically fail the course with an "F", or else they will be reported to the College Honor Board and receive an "XF"-grade ("Failure due to Dishonesty"), which will appear as such on the college transcript. Additional penalties can include suspension or expulsion, depending on the severity of the plagiarism, as determined by the instructor, the Dean and/or the Honor Board. For definitions of these offenses and explanations of sanctions, see: "The Honor Code," in *College of Charleston Student Handbook*, §9.6-7, pp. 11-12

You are responsible for informing yourself of all definitions and regulations on this subject. Ignorance is not an acceptable excuse before the College Honor Board. Protect yourself; when in doubt, footnote it!

**Classroom Behavior.** Eating, drinking, and smoking are prohibited in the classrooms of the College of Charleston. **DO NOT BRING FOOD INTO CLASS!** The classroom is an inappropriate venue for eating meals, reading newspapers, personal grooming (such as combing hair, applying makeup, etc.), or even sleeping. The instructor reserves the right to expel any student from the classroom for unruly or disruptive behavior, and to contact Campus Police when necessary.

**No Electronic Devices in Class.** Students may not operate ANY type of personal electronic device in class, especially: iPods, Blackberrys, Android and Android-like devices of any kind, etc., MP3 players, iPhones, cell phones, smart telephones, cameras of any kind, and any similar devices. Students may not use voice or video recorders of any kind, nor may they record any lectures without the prior permission of the instructor.

!! NO COMPUTERS IN CLASS !!

Students are not permitted to employ laptop, hand-held computers, digital notebooks, netbooks, iPads, Chromebooks, smartphones, nor any other electronic computing device in class without prior permission of the instructor. Any student authorized, but who abuses this privilege by engaging in activity unrelated to the class (checking e-mail, messaging, surfing the Web, recording, gaming, etc.), will forfeit permission to use the device in class for the rest of the term **and will receive a 3-point reduction in the final course grade.**

Several major studies by Stanford University and other schools have shown, independently, that typically, students who type notes during class usually have less comprehension of the lectures'
contents and implications than students writing notes by hand. Similarly a recent study by McMaster University shows that students multi-tasking with a laptop in class—including those students sitting near them using pen and paper(!)—both achieve average lower grades than other students. Freaky but true.

**Cell Phones in Class and Exams.** Students may not make or receive cellular telephone calls, podcasts, text messages of any kind, nor accept any electronic pages during the class period. Please turn off all cell phones, pagers, iPods, iPads, and all other devices at the start of class.

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**Copyrights, Class Access, etc.** All lectures are the copyright of the instructor. He is their owner, and he reserves all rights to their content. Students do not purchase the lectures, but similar to computer software, they license access to them and their content for study purposes. Students may take and keep written notes from them, as detailed as they wish, and make all necessary use of them for their studies and to meet the academic requirements of this and other courses. Only registered students (or students in the process of registering) and those formally auditing are permitted to sit in this class. Any unregistered persons and guests must have the prior permission of the instructor to sit in on any class.

**Lectures and Assignments Schedule**

The complete schedule of lectures and assigned readings for this course are found on the course Web pages under the link, "Reading Assignments," URL:

[https://piccionepeople.cofc.edu/hist115film/hist115assign.html](https://piccionepeople.cofc.edu/hist115film/hist115assign.html)

The readings consist of the texts and Internet source described above, as well as a large selection of other documents freely available for downloading (marked "W" in the Reading Assignments-schedule).

Class will adhere to the assignments and course schedules found there. **The instructor reserves the right to alter the schedule of lectures, discussions, video presentations, and reading assignments, quizzes and exams at any time.** Students are responsible for the full course material through the readings listed on the Web pages. Students should keep up with the schedule of weekly reading assignments, regardless of any deviation in the schedule of classroom lectures. Students must obtain or acquire access to all the textbooks and readings, since the exams and quizzes include significant amounts of reading material not covered in class lectures. Thank you. Have a nice course!