



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1996 Volume III: Race and Representation in American Cinema

Mosaic America on Film: Fact Verses Fiction

Guide for Curriculum Unit 96.03.11
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Mosaic America on Film: Fact Versus Fiction is designed to allow the students and teacher to examine how minorities, ethnic groups and history are portrayed in film. The potential difficulties of intercultural and historical communications can be reduced if students recognize what they view in films as either fact or fiction.

Using this curriculum unit, seventh grade students will become more aware of the values and struggles of minorities and ethnic groups in the United States. As students view select films, they will be asked to develop a portfolio that demonstrates skills in writing, creative thinking and the ability to differentiate between fact and fiction. The students will examine the origins, development and significance of ethnic representations in American film. They will explore the various ways films helped to shape people's perceptions of themselves and the world about them.

Since motion pictures serve many functions a form of art, entertainment, an instrument of propaganda, a medium of social change, and a transmitter of cultural values and events the students will research facts shown in certain films (*Glory*, *Pocahontas*, and *Mississippi Burning*) through written materials (print and electronic print) and the INTERNET. Hopefully, students will develop a systematic way to view films and distinguish what is fact and what is fiction.

(Recommended for History/Social Studies, grades 7-12)

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