

# Summer Assignments 2019

## L&N STEM Academy

### Film Studies

Mrs. Bays

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Welcome to Film Studies! Summer assignments are meant to help prepare you for the upcoming year and allow us to hit the ground running in August. One of the ways they help prepare you for the year is by letting you see the teacher's expectations and how she thinks about the class you're about to take. A second way they are meant to prepare you is by giving you a chance to practice the skills you'll be using throughout the year. Finally, they may introduce ideas or themes that run throughout the course, and by encountering them in the weeks before class starts, you're ready to begin discussing them and making connections early in the year. These assignments accomplish all three.

This film studies course focuses on American films, specifically Hollywood films, as an example of American mythology. In this course, you will watch, discuss, and write about films that communicate a sometimes idealized and often problematic view of American identity. We will use critical lenses to analyze messages in these Hollywood films -- whether intended or unintended -- regarding race, gender roles, age, and class divisions.

Start your assignment by reading the following introduction to the text, *The Film Experience*, which is a textbook we will use occasionally throughout the course ([pdf](#)).

### ***Gone with the Wind (1939)***

The first film you will watch for this course is *Gone with the Wind*. The making of and release of this film was the event of the 1930's and this film has much to teach us about the priorities and attitudes of American society during that time.

**A brief synopsis:** Scarlett O'Hara is the vain, self-centered 16 year old daughter of a rich plantation/slave owner. She spends her days wearing fancy dresses that restrict her movement and flirting with every man in the county. Then the Civil War happens and all the men sign up for the army and leave. As the war drags on, Scarlett has to figure out how she's going to survive and save her family's plantation. And that's only the first half of this gorgeous, yet problematic, four hour American epic.

For your summer assignment, you need to watch this movie. You can find it on multiple streaming services, check out a copy from the public library, or possibly find a cheap used copy on McKays or Amazon Marketplace.

## Other Reading

Continue your reading with the following articles. I have supplied you with a pdf version, as well as a link to the original website for each of these texts.

**Read this essay from *Deep Focus Review* by Brian Eggert:**

- <https://drive.google.com/file/d/11i9uyS9jZISpBThWhm7PiZo69sJpV2Kn/view>
- <https://deepfocusreview.com/definitives/gone-with-the-wind/>

**Read this article from NPR published in 2014:**

- [https://drive.google.com/open?id=1We\\_QRs5XBC0yYxgorvdZLyHmXFK-cmly](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1We_QRs5XBC0yYxgorvdZLyHmXFK-cmly)
- <https://www.npr.org/2014/09/25/351437425/when-it-comes-to-gone-with-the-wind-do-kids-today-give-a-damn>

**Read this blog post from 2015:**

- <https://drive.google.com/open?id=12z-lanSPrYv7gin9CGTPkTI6YmmsJiP4>
- <https://midatlanticmusings.wordpress.com/2015/10/27/theres-no-getting-away-from-it-if-youre-irish-gender-the-irish-diaspora-and-gone-with-the-wind/>

**Read the *Variety* article published in 1939:**

- <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1KNH0WHgdhrvPI2XbXE1fCmkDPzWijonU>
- <https://variety.com/1939/film/reviews/gone-with-the-wind-2-1200412649/>

## Write an essay

Using no outside sources, please compose an essay that answers the following prompt:

Why is it important to watch, discuss, and write about films that have a mythical portrayal of America, even though they might communicate outdated or problematic ideas about our society?

To write your essay, you should cite:

- explicit examples from the film
- the introduction to *The Film Experience*
- and at least one other article listed above.

If you are unsure how to cite these sources, please refer to [PurdueOWL](#).

Your essay should have a thesis that makes a claim. The claim is the answer to the question in the prompt. Follow the conventions of standard written English and use proper MLA formatting.

**A Note from Ms. Bays:**

Please keep in mind that this essay will be your instructor's first impression of your level of commitment to this class. If you are not immediately thrilled by the opportunity to watch and reflect on an American classic, for all its virtues and deficits, that this assignment provides you, consider the possibility that this social studies elective may not be the best fit for you and change your schedule now.

On the first day of school, I will provide you with a syllabus and a tentative list of films we may watch as a class. How many films we are able to cover, as well as how deeply we are able to explore them, will depend on your commitment to doing the work required of you outside of class and coming to class prepared.

Go ahead and buy yourself a notebook that you will reserve for film studies and take notes while you are watching the film. You may even consider watching the film twice so that you can catch more information than just the storyline. You will take notes on every movie we watch and discuss in class, so it is a good habit to go ahead and practice now.

All films will comply with the [KCS Guidelines for use of audiovisual works](#).