**1A Pathways** Fall 2016 **Critical Analysis Project**

**Overview**: As part of our study of film as both a form of rhetoric and a form of art, you will write a critical analysis of a film, which will be similar to the sort of writing done by the more elite film reviewers and by film scholars. You will make some arguable point for a specific audience based on what this film has to say. **Length/format:** Approximately 1400 words, typed, MLA format

**Audience/forum:** Write for a specific audience who would be interested in the film. Feel free to be creative in choosing a specific audience. For instance, if you are interested in history and politics from a Latino perspective, you might write about *Walkout* and post it on a relevant blog, such as <http://latinopoliticsblog.com/>. Or if you have a point to make about what it’s like to grow up with immigrant parents, you could write about *Double Happiness* or *Bend it Like Beckham* for a parenting blog.

**Content:** Below are the tasks to accomplish.

**Specific cultural and historical context**: Tell us what timely issues the film addresses. For example, *The Lost Boys of Sudan* is based on a particular population that went through a terrible civil war, a grueling journey as refugees, and a decade living in refugee camps before coming to America, where they faced new challenges trying to assimilate and finish their education. This relates both to the current refugee crisis in Syria (and elsewhere) and to America’s long history of dealing with—and learning from--immigrants who come from societies very different from our own.

**Enduring human concerns:** A good work of art transcends its time. For example, in addition to the specifically contemporary context, *The Lost Boys of Sudan* also explores timeless problems like the struggle of marginalized communities to establish their human worth, both in their own minds and in the hierarchy of the dominant society, and the struggles of orphans to forge a sense of identity and find a path toward autonomy. It is also about the bonds of family and friends tested by hardship and distance.

**Analysis/Interpretation/Response:** This is the key task: here’s where you get to make your own point, the main reason you chose this film to comment on for this audience. Choose a central theme of the work and articulate what the film demonstrates about that theme. Explain what insights the film offers on some concern of interest to your specific audience.

**Procedure**:

1. **Select a title** from the film list posted on the course site based on your own interests. However, don’t choose one you have already written about in another class. Expand your horizons.
2. **Write a topic proposal**: briefly identify **which film** you chose, **why**, your **audience,** and **forum**.
3. **Watch/read the work**, taking notes.
4. **Read what others have said about it**, especially professional critics. It is also good to read what the filmmaker/writer/director has to say about it. **Cite *at least two* good sources in your paper** and respond to them.
5. **Write a full rough draft** in proper MLA format, clearly citing your sources, print out two copies, and bring them to the peer review on the assigned day. (You can earn 15 points *only* for 2 printed copies of the full draft.) After the peer review, consider the advice you got and **revise the paper**.
6. **Print** out the paper, after **submitting your final draft to Turnitin.com**. Staple the final draft to the peer review sheet and the rough draft you got comments on.
7. **Submit the stapled bundle** at the beginning of class on the day it is due.

**The Film List**: The titles are posted on the course website in the assignments category. Feel free to pitch other titles to me if you have more candidates, but be ready to defend your suggestions of the grounds of depth and appropriateness.