**AP US History**

**Final Film Assignment—50 points=1/2 final exam grade**

**Due: Final Exam time June 6th**

By popular demand, over the next week, we will watch the following films in class:

* *Argo. 2012*. 120 min. color. Dir by Ben Affleck.
* *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), directed by Steven Spielberg, 169 min.
* *Forrest Gump*. 1994. 142 min. color. Dir by Robert Zemeckis.

As you watch these films, you should pay attention to the film as both an art form and as a primary source from the period during which it was made. Understanding not just the film’s text, but how the narrative is presented and why, and how decisions have been made in the creation of the film’s scenes, will help individuals to appreciate this unique, collaborative art form. At the same time, individuals will come to terms with a very powerful and persuasive medium and recognize why and how motion pictures exert such immense influence on us.

There are a number of considerations in film analysis, including:

• Does the film’s theme make a significant social statement? (Alternatively, is the

film propagandist in its presentation of events?)

• How has the film made a direct communication with the audience to produce an

emotional response?

• Do we find similar techniques and themes in literature?

After we see these films, you must write a two-page analysis of how **at least two** of these films depict or reflect social ideas about **one** of the following topics:

* **the role of the military and war in American life, both on the military and on the home fronts;**

**OR**

* **how the American public perceives the role and performance of the U.S. President;**

 **OR**

* **race and bias in American society—who’s inside and who’s outside the norms of society?**

For your reflections, you will need to analyze the historical context--the events and social atmosphere of American society—that may have influenced the directors as they conceived of and made these films. I am looking for pithy analysis that is able to identify and analyze parallels between (or criticism of) what is happening on film and what was happening in America as each film was made. Your paper should have specific references both to aspects of the films and historical events outside the film.

**Watch carefully—and take notes to support your thesis.**