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Hollywood History & Mythology

by [Joe Escobar](#) – Friday, January 22, 2016, 9:30 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Hollywood History & Mythology topic.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

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BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, something that describes which question(s) you are addressing . Do NOT simply leave it RE: Hollywood History & Mythology

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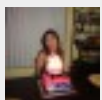
The Hollywood lies we all know.

by [Titus Young](#) – Sunday, January 24, 2016, 9:05 AM

I think the reason we all except the lies that Hollywood tells us is because we want to believe them. At least for entertainment purposes. Inherently, we all know that some things Hollywood puts in their movies are false, but we ignore them for a short time to enjoy our movie. Professor Blight points out that the underground railroad, while it did exist, has been greatly exaggerated to the point of him calling it "Mythology". What do you think? Are most consumers completely ignorant, or do they put up with a few falsehoods to enjoy the cinematic experience?

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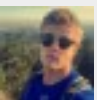
Re: The Hollywood lies we all know.

by [Nicole Tapia](#) – Saturday, January 30, 2016, 8:29 PM

I think they put up with a few falsehoods to enjoy the cinematic experience. Many of us, no matter how tough it is to understand slavery for example, we are scared to know the truth. We are scared to face the truth that most of our founding fathers were terrible to the people who seemed like foreigners. I believe that Hollywood sugarcoats films in Hollywood only so we don't face the reality of our history.

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Re: Hollywood History & Mythology

by [Jason Petersen](#) – Sunday, January 24, 2016, 2:25 PM

Although these Hollywood movies claim to be “historically based” they are obviously over exaggerated to a certain extent.

However, that doesn't mean that what actually happened wasn't as over the top as the directors make it out to be. The directors are simply taking history out of text and telling a story to capture an audience's attention. Although it may be exaggerated, there is still much truth in the story as to what we have already learned. To an extent, that is.

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Our History Today

by [Cheree Scott](#) – Monday, January 25, 2016, 4:49 PM

Personally, I feel angry and disgusted when historical events are not told correctly. Academically I feel cheated as a scholar to not be given accurate information. We as students in life should know about our own history at least, and know it accurately. We should know the good, the bad, and the ugly of our own history.

When it comes to Hollywood, I know the history that it is trying to portray has been embellished on. There is a reason why they put the disclaimer "Based on True Events".

In school as a young child, I was taught that what our ancestors did to the Native American's was okay. But they also did teach us about the genocide that took place, or that the federal government paid people to kill Natives and the buffalo in the plains area. Our history is just glossed over in the public school system. It is given to our children through rose tinted glasses.

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Re: Our History Today

by [Coal Taylor](#) – Saturday, January 30, 2016, 9:41 PM

I understand your frustration at the manipulation and inaccuracy of some historical events, and I do think that the public school system should do as you suggested, and be completely straight-forward and never give out inaccurate facts. However, I do think that Hollywood has the right to show the story only partially accurately in pursuit of a better story. An example of why Hollywood should be able to change the story a little bit is the movie Alamo, which Joe introduced us to in class. Though it was very accurate to the original historical story, it did not sell very well, and was not a very interesting movie. This is because in pursuit of perfect historical accuracy, the quality of the dialogue and the action scenes decreased, resulting in a less interesting final product, and hurting the sales of the film.

That being said, Hollywood should not be able to influence the story to the point where it's not even really related to the original story, because at that point, they are just downright lying to their audience, and manipulating the knowledge of the American people. I do take a problem with that.

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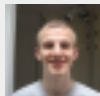
Feeding Us False Information Is Wrong

by [Hailey Cordier](#) – Monday, January 25, 2016, 6:27 PM

I personally think that it is completely and morally wrong to be teaching people non fact based information. People go to school to learn, not to be fed false information. It should be against the law to teach a class with wrong historical information. Movies should have to state to the audience before the movie starts that the information they are giving in the film is not true and not fact based. My High School history teacher made us watch the film Amastad and portrayed the film to us as a true story. After hearing that information from my teacher, I believed it and went on to talk about the story with other people. I am immensely concerned when historical truth is kept from me because I want to know the cold, hard, dirty truth. I don't care how bad the history is or makes us (the U.S.) look. If we sugarcoat slavery or any part of our U.S. history just because we don't want the situation to seem as bad as it really was, we are making the subject not as serious as it needs to be in order for people to understand the terrible things that have been done so we don't do them again. It is important to know the truth and facts about history so that we can change and become a better place to live with wiser and more fact known people who live in it.

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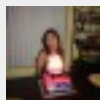
Re: Feeding Us False Information Is Wrong

by [Robert Driver](#) – Friday, January 29, 2016, 2:30 PM

I would agree that people shouldn't be taught incorrect history. But I would have a problem with making it illegal to teach anything that isn't factually correct. The problem with such a law is that someone has to decide what's "factually correct" and what isn't. And sooner or later those people will start deciding that the parts of history that they don't like or that make them look bad aren't "factually correct." Such a law wouldn't help anyone learn the truth about history, it would only make one official version of history that no one is allowed to disagree with.

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In The Dark About Slavery

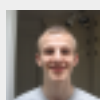
by [Nicolle Tapia](#) – Monday, January 25, 2016, 10:59 PM

I personally feel like there is a lot of censorship when it comes to slavery. Obviously when I was just a child in elementary school they were not going to teach the gruesome and horrid side of slavery. But in terms of the underground railroad, I do believe that they made the Underground Railroad seem like it was a nice trip to freedom, and I am sure it was not a fun trip to freedom. As Blight mentions in the video, the Underground Railroad was not run by white men and it was not a wide variety of systems that took fugitive slaves to places they would like. The underground railroad consisted of mostly black men helping fugitive slaves escape to freedom. As we get older, I feel that we are deprived the right to get the real story behind slavery. Just like in our textbook when it talks about the films about slavery that come out in hollywood and viewers say it makes them "feel uncomfortable"– then good. The film is supposed to make you feel uncomfortable so that you could see how the history of our country came about.

I would say that I am concerned just because I feel that we are not getting the real history and the true story about slaves. Slaves went through terrible situations as slaves and I could not even begin to imagine the physical and emotional pain they went through, so the very least the educational system could do for us is to give them justice in the sense of letting us better understand the history of slavery. Giving us the right to learn the harsh truth.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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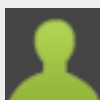
Debates about historical accuracy

by [Robert Driver](#) – Tuesday, January 26, 2016, 7:19 PM

I think the thing that bothers me most about this whole issue is when the creators of incorrect sources (such as the movie *Amistad*) accuse historians of suppressing the "real history," (like Debbie Allen (the producer of *Amistad*), according to the Eric Foner article). It's okay for people to have differing opinions and debate about them, but it's a problem when people start viciously attacking the other side for being "incorrect" instead of debating the actual facts. And even if the other side is incorrect, it doesn't mean that they were intentionally and maliciously suppressing the truth. They could just as easily have just made a mistake. I know that it's less likely for a trained historian to be mistaken about history than any random bus rider, but it can still happen on rare occasions.

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Re: Debates about historical accuracy

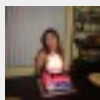
by [Coal Taylor](#) – Saturday, January 30, 2016, 8:58 PM

That's a very good point. It is one thing to create a Hollywood film that differs slightly from the original story, and then just leave it at that. It's on an entirely different level to make a Hollywood film that is extremely different from the original story, and then to accuse other people of intentionally suppressing the truth about the way the story actually happened, like what Debbie Allen did. That is not only hypocritical, but also shows ignorance. I also liked that you brought up how Allen did not open up a debate about the facts, instead just attacking the other side.



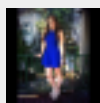
Re: Hollywood History & Mythology
by [Clayton LeaMaster](#) – Wednesday, January 27, 2016, 6:27 PM

It really irritates me when Hollywood sugarcoats stuff or leaves important information out of historical stories. To me, well done, accurate films are way better movies than ones who have false information to “jazz” up the story. Not telling the whole story or adding things to make a “better” movie is not right and also promotes false facts to younger (and even some older) viewers who haven’t studied the true story. Americans need to know the truth about their country and not the Hollywood perception on United States history.



Re: Hollywood History & Mythology
by [Nicolle Tapia](#) – Saturday, January 30, 2016, 8:01 PM

I honestly completely agree with you. It's as if they sugarcoat everything real that happened in the past and what made our world today. An example that hollywood sugarcoats reality is in the movie El Norte, two siblings tried to jump the border to get into the United States and to do so all they had to do was crawl in a very long tunnel and it just seemed too easy to cross the border. I have read multiple articles where the journey is incredibly dangerous, and this movie sugarcoated the reality of it.



We Live in a Digital and Technological Age
by [McKalie Bellew](#) – Thursday, January 28, 2016, 9:51 AM

We live in a digital and technological age, which means that basically, the majority of America is lazy. In just about any class you take you can find some kind of summary, shortened video or article to give you the gist of the subject you are learning about. And because of this laziness, we don't fact check or pay attention to the details to see if what we're reading or watching is actually true or not. Now, of course, there are some historical events that have been made into movies that are portrayed for the majority correctly such as "Saving Private Ryan" or "Apollo 13", both movies that have been used as examples and helpers for understanding both in my high school courses as well as my college courses. But sometimes historical events aren't interesting enough for Hollywood, so they try to make it better. OR sometimes, directors try to make it so realistic it ruins the film all together; in some cases, it's a mixture of both.

From what I read in "The Amistad Case in Fact and Film" by historian Eric Foner, he discusses how terrible this film was especially as it pertains to the correct portrayal of history. He writes, "But given that Steven Spielberg is the director, Anthony Hopkins and Morgan Freeman the stars, and a reported \$75 million was spent on production, it can only be judged a disappointment." Foner discusses how the slaves in the movie speak a West African language of Mende so their are subtitles when the Africans speak. "A courageous decision by Hollywood standards, this device backfired along the way when someone realized that Americans do not like subtitled movies...". Which brings me back around to the laziness that we inhibit nowadays. Another problem with this movie, Foner mentions, is that the main characters are white not black. What???

There will always be certain things in historical or true story movies that are either lost in translation or added for effect. But how does that affect us, the ones actually trying to learn the truths behind the history of the world? In my freshman year of college we read a book in my English 101 class titled, "Lies my Teacher Told Me" by James W. Loewen. In this book, Loewen goes through important points in history that are taught in high schools across the U.S. and tells the truth about events and people. There is SO MUCH that we didn't learn about certain events and people throughout history because of the focus high school teachers, textbooks and curriculum base off of heroism. If someone in history did something great either before or after doing something terrible, all we will be taught is what they did that was great. I learned so much that I didn't know that I should have known all because everyone wants us to focus on the better parts of history rather than the bad. But in my opinion, the bad is probably what shaped America to be what it is now more than the positive. I am definitely concerned with what historical truth has been kept from me and everyone else whether it be from spreading mythology or by outright manipulation of the truth.



Manipulation
by Clayton LeaMaster – Thursday, January 28, 2016, 10:14 AM

Yes, I am concerned about historical truths and facts being kept from me (all of us). Sometimes it seems as if we aren't supposed to know the negative things that happened within our country so that it gives the United States a better look. In reality, no country is perfect or has ever been perfect, they make mistakes and no country should be ashamed to tell their citizens the truth about its history, whether good or bad, because there will always be both.



Re: Manipulation
by Robert Driver – Thursday, January 28, 2016, 8:00 PM

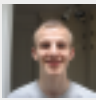
I would agree that it is a bad thing when people try to erase the uncomfortable parts of history from the record. We can learn many good lessons from the past, but only if we remember the unpleasant parts of the past along with the pleasant parts. Like the old saying goes: "Those who forget the mistakes of the past are doomed to repeat them."



Re: Hollywood History & Mythology
by Coal Taylor – Thursday, January 28, 2016, 11:30 AM

Personally, I am not bothered much when Hollywood takes small liberties with historical fact to create a film of historical fiction, as long as they remind viewers that the film is merely based on a true historical story, and is not completely accurate. If they do not remind viewers of this, then I would take issue with the film, because they would essentially be lying to their viewers by telling them the story was completely true and then not showing a film that reflected this statement. I do take some issue with films that take serious liberties to the point of changing up the original historical story, because then I think that at that point saying that the film is only based on a real story, and not completely accurate isn't even true anymore. By that point, the film is more of a piece of fiction than a piece of historical fiction, and should be treated as such.

I am concerned when I find out that historical truth has been kept from me, whether by spreading mythology or by outright manipulation. I want the facts I know about my history and the history of the world to be accurate, and when something is misleading my understanding in a way that causes me to misunderstand an event, historical figure, or even just a statistic it is problematic for me.



How could we solve this problem?
by Robert Driver – Friday, January 29, 2016, 3:31 PM

It sounds like we all agree that it's a problem when the historical truth is being covered up. Unfortunately, there will always be people who want to portray history favorably for themselves (or avoid the unpleasant parts of history), even if they aren't doing it intentionally. Making it against the law for people to teach history incorrectly wouldn't solve this problem, for the reasons I stated in a previous post. So I'm wondering, what do you think would be a good solution?

